**About the Project**

**Rehabilitation of the Higher Education System in Iraq**

**Introducing Quality Assurance to Higher Institutions in Iraq**

“Towards self-assessment of 12 Colleges of Engineering in Iraq”
Doha (Qatar), June 6 -10, 2011

Quality assurance for the higher education in Iraq was launched in March 2nd , 2011 in Erbil, Iraq. Following a two day conference gathering Iraqi universities' presidents from central and Kurdistan governments, as well other parties involved in Higher education in Iraq, participants decided to introduce quality assurance to this sector.This new initiative aims to:
 . Raise universities' awareness about the importance of quality assurance in the higher       education institutions;
 . Increase the role of institutional strategic planning based on quality;
 . Create sufficient awareness about the objectives of the global project of "The Rehabilitation of the Higher Education System in Iraq", its future stages, and expected outcomes, in order to induce the general commitment towards achieving the project's final objectives.

This major conference was the result of a first meeting organized by UNESCO and held in cooperation with  the office of Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, on 27 and 28 of September 2010 in Doha, Qatar. During which representatives from the Prime Minister office in Iraq, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Baghdad and Kurdistan region discussed the sector's main needs and took the first steps towards improving its global status. Among the main recommendations of the conference, a follow-up committee has been created composed of QA Director in MoHESR Bagdad (Mr. Mehdi Eidan), QA Director in MoHESR Kurdistan (Salahaddin Kako) and chaired with Head of Prime Minister Office (Dr. Quraish Qasseer).

**Recommendations**:

1. To focus while implementing Quality Assurance on capacity building and self-assessment of HE institutions;

2. To start with implementing a Quality Assurance and Accreditation pilot project with a selection of Iraqi universities based on international standards in self-assessment and external review, to present a review report on the adjustments to be done and to follow up on their implementation. This could be taken as a foundation for an accreditation process by specialized international agencies;

3. To organize training workshops for the management and academic teams of Iraqi universities on QA under the auspices and supervision of UNESCO and in collaboration with the project experts based on a clear work-plan and a timeline;

4. To ask each President of University to provide a case study on the status of QA, self-assessment procedures/measures and criteria applied or to be applied by the university to collect accurate data supporting the QA plan;

5. To organize a training course for trainers to foster ToT initiatives in QA;

6. To organize a conference to review and discuss the various experiences of the pilot projects to be implemented in the 6-10 universities;

7. To build a national plan/strategy for the establishment of a QA system for HE institutions and the building of capacities to plan, set policies, manage, monitor and evaluate this process. This would be a preparation for the launch of a High Council for Quality Assurance in HE institutions in Iraq (HCQAHEI) that could in the mid-term shift to Iraqi Quality Assurance Agency (IQAA).

As a first step onwards, UNESCO-Iraq Office went through consultation processes with its network of experts and partners and identified a series of relevant activities where most specifically NISA[i] experts would be much involved, in view of their knowledge of Iraqi context and HE background and of their accurate expertise in Quality assurance.

Accordingly, 12 universities have been selected (8 from Central Government and 4 from KRG) to start a QA pilot project. Further to specific study, it has been decided to start the experience with the Colleges of Engineering, then to proceed with Colleges of Medicine, then with Colleges of Science and Education (including selected core team from both colleges). A capacity building workshop on Quality Assurance is to be organized in order to train a core team of selected managers of QA in the relevant CofE on the system and processes of Quality assurance, including self-assessment techniques, benchmarking, planning and implementing quality improvement and quality control end, etc…), and introduction to accreditation processes and procedures.