Challenges of the TVET system in Iraq:
• Fragmentation of responsibilities into different ministries
• Insufficient policy development
• Limited budget allocation
• Outdated and obsolete educational infrastructure and equipment
• Curricula irrelevant to the needs of the labour market
• Lack of substantial practical training
• Inadequately skilled teachers

Result:
Few students are offered the opportunity to acquire the skills to access a decent job, and few graduates have the skill set to transfer into a skewed labour market.

With funds of the European Union, UNESCO Office for Iraq in collaboration with the Government of Iraq is implementing the project Reforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Iraq which envisions a modern, demand driven TVET subsector oriented towards the needs of the labour market. This project looks at TVET as a pivotal sector to influence employability, productivity and social well-being.

Duration
51 months (2015 – 2019)

Funded by
The European Union

budget
EUR 12.3 million

Direct Beneficiaries:
• Young people who choose to enrol in TVET institutions across Iraq
• Employers who are in need of work force with technical and vocational skills
The project aims to achieve four major objectives:

1. **Improve the quality of the TVET system by creating a governance framework**

   The current TVET system is fragmented among several ministries and lacks coherence and internal coordination. To address this issue, the project seeks to establish a functioning governance system able to coherently express roles, responsibilities and relationship between actors, identifying the processes, mechanisms and tools to make the system work efficiently.

   In parallel, UNESCO is supporting the Government of Iraq to develop a Vocational Qualification Framework to improve international comparability of Iraqi qualifications and as well as to improve the recognition of learning, including prior learning, in within an agreed structure of levels and credits, and giving access to citizens that have previously been denied learning due to wars and sieges.

   The participation of employers in the TVET subsector is essential for the success of the project and this is addressed throughout the entire project at different levels. The project envisions to establish a framework for employers’ participation that would be endorsed at the policy level.

2. **Develop new demand driven curricula**

   For a modern TVET system to effectively contribute to economic growth and development, it needs to respond to the current requirements of the labour market, be able to analyse the market demands, forecast skills and training needs and be flexible to effectively adapt to them.

   To support this process, UNESCO in collaboration with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Kurdistan Region Statistics Office (KRSO) is conducting a sectoral skills analysis of priority economic sectors across Iraq.

   Based on the analysis, new competency based curricula is being produced with the involvement of the employers in the development of students’ technical skills and competencies.

   The curricula will be framed in a comprehensive form showing their objectives, contents, teaching methodologies, means of teaching as well as evaluation. Simulation and computer based programmes will be introduced. Skills training will be complemented in cooperation with employers and companies through well-defined training programmes. A strong capacity building process targeting instructors will also represent part of the intervention to improve the quality of training.

3. **Build the capacity of TVET teachers, instructors, managers and supervisors and Establish mechanisms for continuous training**

   A comprehensive, coherent and long-term capacity development plan for TVET has been designed to minimize the proliferation of random and irregular training offers disconnected from comprehensive training mechanisms and strategies.

   The project includes the design and implementation of a one-year Leadership Training Programme for deans, principals and other senior officials from the TVET sub-sector.

   In addition, an In-service Training Programme for teachers has been developed.

   The training focus’s on modern teaching methodologies in TVET both concerning theoretical and practical learning, adopting a learner and subject focused approach. In addition, the training will cover how to improve curricula implementation based on the new curricula framework developed within the project. Finally, training will focus also on how contacts with employers can be established at the institutional. Training material will be developed and endorsed at the national level to allow its circulation and distribution after the end of the project.

4. **Facilitate school-to-work transitions for students and recent graduates**

   In order to facilitate school to work transitions for students in colleges, institutes and polytechnic universities across Iraq, the project will support the enhancement of 13 Career Development Centres (CDCs) in selected institutions. The CDCs will serve as a focal point for prospective and current students as well as recent graduates. The centres will provide career guidance and orientation sessions and sessions on different subjects such as how to choose jobs that most suits students’ individual capacities and attitudes; how to look for a job, to retain it, to write a resume and to prepare and conduct an interview.

   The CDCs will also liaise with the employers to connect the graduating students with the private sector and will facilitate the participation of the employers at the learning process through the organization of seminars, conferences, presentations, etc. The establishment of cooperation with the employers for facilitating the “schools to work transition” can actually represent the first step for improving the collaboration between TVET and employers at school level, building the foundation for a stronger collaboration.