

Presentation on the National Strategy for Accelerating the Transformation of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation System

1. A Consistent and Integrated Reference Framework Based on a Clear Vision and an Inclusive Participatory Approach

The National Plan to Accelerate the Transformation of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation System is part of an ambitious program that establishes the strategic vision for Morocco's future. It aligns with the high royal orientations aimed at empowering the human capital of our country, promoting youth, and enhancing their capabilities to make them a driving force for comprehensive and sustainable development. It is also based on the recommendations of the Development Model and the conclusions of national reports, reaffirming the priorities of the government program related to the enhancement of human capital and access to the knowledge society.

The plan's philosophy is grounded upon a clear vision of the university's essential role as a space for empowerment and lifelong learning, serving as a comprehensive framework for living. It goes beyond the goal of acquiring knowledge and obtaining a diploma but rather contributes to the personal development of students and the acquisition of life skills that enrich their personal experience through active participation in cultural, artistic, and sports activities.

This plan has been formulated through a collaborative approach, involving consultative meetings held across all regions of the Kingdom with various stakeholders, including local authorities and socio-economic partners, as well as civil society representatives. In addition to engaging university stakeholders, including students, researcher professors, and administrative and technical staff, Moroccan competencies abroad were also involved in its elaboration as witnessed by the organization of 13th Region's debate.

2. Comprehensive and Integrated Reform Based on Four Strategic Pillars

The National Plan is founded on a new generation of reforms aimed at upgrading the higher education, scientific research, and innovation system, enabling it to optimally meet developmental demands and adapt to the rapid structural changes in the international context in various fields through:

- **A comprehensive and integrated pedagogical reform** that prioritizes digitalization and supports the acquisition of personal and life skills.
- **Scientific research of international standards:** This pillar is based on national developmental priorities and draws its dynamism from a new generation of doctoral students selected from among the best talents, as well as from national thematic research institutes to bolster efforts and maximize potential.
- **An integrated innovation system** that relies on a strong partnership between universities and their economic and social environments through the valorization of the results of scientific research and technology transfer for the benefit of the productive sectors.
- **An effective governance system** that supports the autonomy of higher education institutions within a contractual framework that emphasizes responsibility and fosters a culture of results and performance.

3. Implementation of the Pedagogical Reform Project

Comprehensive and integrated pedagogical reform is one of the main pillars of the National Plan, placing the student at the heart of its priorities by supporting their academic qualifications and encouraging creativity and initiative. It aims to enhance their adaptability to the changes in the job market.

Supporting sports, cultural, and artistic activities, as well as encouraging both internal and international mobility are key components for strengthening the student's personality and acquiring life skills that are just as important as academic training.



- With reference to activating the pedagogical reform project, the focus has been placed on the bachelor's and doctoral programs for implementing this reform starting from the upcoming academic year.
- Regarding the bachelor's program, a new set of national pedagogical regulations has been prepared, which includes several important features:
 - Adoption of a standardized credit system.
 - Diversification of teaching methods: in-person, distance learning, and blended learning between the university and the economic sector.
 - Inclusion of modules on language and digital and soft skills, alongside the enhancement of knowledge-based modules.
 - Launch of new training pathways in line with the requirements of productive sectors and territorial areas.
 - Mandatory certification in the language of instruction for obtaining a diploma and enhancing the status of foreign languages (French and English).
 - Institutionalization of student mobility programs at both national and international levels.
 - Inclusion of a diploma supplement as a document that provides a clear vision of the student's training.
- In the same context, the new pedagogical model aims to establish flexible bridges between disciplines, pathways, and institutions by creating centers of excellence, starting from two years post-baccalaureate (Bac +2) in open-access institutions. In addition to providing students with the opportunity to reorient their studies, it leads to the promotion of certain significant disciplines, notably those related to artificial intelligence, data science, strategic studies and diplomacy, applied legal studies, sociology, etc.
- To adapt to the rapid technological changes in the international context and to anticipate their structural impacts, considerable importance has been placed on training in artificial intelligence. This includes the launch of new units accessible to all students, allowing them to acquire necessary skills in this field, along with the establishment of specialized pathways

and two schools dedicated to artificial intelligence, aimed at training engineers specialized in AI technology.

• As for the doctoral program, the reform outlined in the scientific and academic regulations includes several key measures, including:

- The requirement for research topics to align with national development priorities;
- Setting deadlines for each stage of the doctoral program;
- Specifying the conditions related to scientific publication for doctoral students;
- Including certification training in foreign languages (DALF, TOEFL);
- Ensuring the quality of the scientific portfolio of the members of the thesis defense committee.

4. Centrality of Scientific Research and Innovation within National Plan Priorities

Significant importance has been placed on improving the quality and effectiveness of the scientific research system through two main approaches:

- Training a new generation of doctoral students selected from the top talents, who will benefit from innovative pedagogical training and joint thesis supervision with international universities as part of international mobility programs. To ensure doctoral students' commitment to research, financial incentives will be provided during the completion of their theses.
 - Structuring scientific research within national thematic research institutes aligned with national development priorities, to intensify research efforts and strengthen financial resources. National research institutes are currently being launched in fields such as medical biotechnology, water and climate change, artificial intelligence, etc.
- In the same context, several measures have been implemented to enhance and transfer technology to businesses by gradually establishing

innovation cities across all regions of the kingdom. Efforts will focus on improving their governance through promising partnerships between universities and companies, as well as promoting patents via incubators and accelerators for innovative projects in the industrial and digital fields.

5. Aligning the Legal and Regulatory Framework of the System With National Plan Priorities

Developing a draft framework for the research faculty to make the teaching profession more appealing in order to attract top competencies, including Moroccans abroad, by improving the material and professional status of researchers. This framework, agreed upon with unions, is based on several key principles:

- Establishing a professional advancement pathway based on transparency, merit, and scientific excellence;
 - Implementing an effective hiring policy for faculty that prioritizes professionalism in training and develops high-level scientific research.
- A comprehensive review of higher education law is currently being conducted to align it with the strategic priorities of the new reform direction. This aligns with the objectives to improve the governance of the entire system and enhance the contractual mechanisms between the state and universities, ensuring efficiency, a results-oriented culture, and performance.

6. Strengthening Financial and Human Resources

To ensure the smooth implementation of these strategic directions, the financial resources allocated to the ministry have been boosted for both operational and investment expenses, with a strong focus on improving pedagogical and administrative support.

- A multi-year continuous training program has also been launched to strengthen the capabilities of human resources in higher education and scientific research sector through certification training in favor of research professors and administrative and technical staff, which will serve as one of the pillars of professional advancement.



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