

REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC-EDUCATIONAL CENTER



STRATEGIC PLAN
2019-2023

YEREVAN 2019

PREAMBLE

The given strategic plan outlines the fundamental directions of the International Scientific-Educational Center of the National Academy of Sciences (hereinafter ISEC or the Center) for 2019-2023, having the institutional development perspective as the starting point. The plan combines the traditional and new approaches of ISEC's activities in favor of the competitive and multisectoral professional-research education, individual and societal progress. The plan has been developed with the active participation of ISEC structural divisions taking into account the analysis results of the current fundamental issues of the academic multisectoral professional-research education and processes, the Center's internal and external stakeholders, the Center's competence and activity environment. The conceptual approaches of ISEC are defined in the document orienting its forthcoming activities and pretensions in the scientific, educational, research and social responsibility areas. The given conceptual framework will be the basis for the development of an action plan and strategic plan implementation, the control and evaluation in the following institutional directions – educational and research process, student organizations, the faculty staff, scientific and research activities, internationalization of the International Scientific-Educational Center activities, financial and economic activities and technical facilities, information technologies, management, education QA, anti-corruption programs and social responsibility. The plan implementation process will be accompanied by the stage analysis and evaluation of the Center's achievements, the internal and external environment. It will enable to move in pace with new and initiative challenges. Considering modern educational requirements, regularly striving for innovations in education, ISEC NAS RA has been conducting distance learning courses since 2014 when certain social groups (graduates, unemployed, housewives, people with special needs, etc.) embraced distance training opportunities. This experience has shown that online courses are of significant public interest, which is the best model of continuing education.

DESCRIPTION OF ISSUES UNDERLYING ISEC'S STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2019-2023

The motivations for the strategic planning process of the International Scientific-Educational Center are based on the following issues:

- The growing and changing demand for higher education, the research sector, the increasing and globalizing competition requires ISEC, as a research institution prototype, to assess, combine, and continually increase its competitive advantages and potential.
- Carrying out research activities of young personnel using intellectual, scientific-pedagogical, innovative potential and technical-laboratory capabilities of the NAS RA

system. Involvement of the scientific community.

- The innovative transformation of the economy towards science-based, high-tech areas has significantly changed university-trained professional researchers' quality requirements.
- New challenges facing science and requiring specialists with fresh thinking, the tendency of keeping up with the scientific development of the world and preparing competitive scientific personnel in the 21st century need ISEC to introduce and effectively implement modern ways and methods of learning and teaching directly in the system of the National Academy of Sciences, due to which NAS RA scientific and educational potential, the technical and laboratory facilities will be used in the best way.
- The emergence of student-centered modules in line with the Bologna process, the increasing gap between the public education requirements, the labour market needs and the Center's educational offer, factors that require the redesign of the Center,
- Insufficient state funding, which requires the Center to become more initiative and enterprising to fill the growing financial deficit from other sources,
- The imperative of the role of higher education in reducing social inequality.

ISEC NAS RA, as a prototype of a research-educational institution, is a scientific-educational research institution of national-regional significance. Its primary mission is to promote socio-economic development and integrate into the international educational and research environment to promote continuous personal development and acquisition of research skills. Through the creation and transfer of knowledge in science and education, the smooth transition from education to science and their interrelatedness.

International Scientific-Educational Center, being one of the NAS RA system structural subdivisions, interacts with the NAS system's scientific organizations through horizontal links, which are implemented by placing the Center's professional chairs in the relevant NAS research organizations, where current scientists teach. Masters' training in this environment enables postgraduate students to integrate as quickly as possible into the scientific community, to gain scientific thinking. These steps to bring education and science closer together contribute to the renewal of the academic system's scientific cadres. Education at ISEC is organized exceptionally based on higher education programs at the secondary and tertiary levels. Today, more than 700 Master's and 350 postgraduate students and applicants teach and research at the Center.

ISEC'S MISSION

- Preparation and retraining of specialists following modern requirements of science, education and economy using innovative modern technologies,
- Development of the Center's research opportunities and promotion of research, scientific and methodological activities,
- Internationalization of education and ensuring competitiveness,
- Introduction of innovations into learning, research and public service areas,
- Implementation of scientific and educational activities to provide active civil and social life for society, professional advancement and lifelong learning,
- Preparation of Master and PhD students in compliance with the globalized society and labour market's current requirements.

ISEC'S VISION

International Scientific-Educational Center of NAS RA seeks to become an institution that

- aims to maintain close ties with the scientific society of NAS RA and the academic research institutions, to create new Departments at the institutions of the Academy;
- contributes to the recruitment of young scientists in the Academy system;
- plays a significant role in national and regional programs of innovative economic development;
- teaches Master's students for full self-expression, professional development and career;
- provides advanced education through effective collaboration with the Faculty and learners;
- continues contributing to the rapid integration of Master and PhD students into the scientific society;
- is responsive to the needs of society through its scientific-educational, research activities and public services;
- offers study programs to its Master's students providing comprehensive knowledge and skills based on an excellent traditional experience, advanced research, creative and innovative work;
- is primarily available to young people pursuing the path of science and provides a wide range of options for different segments of society;
- whose educational programs follow the basic principles of the Bologna Process and European Higher Education Area (EHEA);

- seeks to provide its Master's students and the Faculty with appropriate modern educational infrastructures, technical resources and equipment to carry out high-quality education and research;
- tries to conclude international and national (interstate) agreements ensuring continuous education and professional mobility for Master's students relevant to its name;
- where the comprehensive development of Master's students and staff are used in the educational, social, cultural and professional life of the University;
- aims to become an exclusive international scientific-educational center engaging with postgraduate students and lecturers of both Armenian and foreign citizens;
- aims to develop collaboration with leading foreign universities and scientific-educational centers continuously;
- shall continuously improve its scientific and educational potential using NAS RA resource opportunities;
- shall steadily expand its international recognition and fame relevant to the image and reputation of NAS RA.

ISEC'S ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

- ✓ Educational
- ✓ Scientific-
Research
- ✓ Services to public

ISEC'S CORE VALUES

The activities of NAS RA are based on the following core values:

1. High-quality education
2. Academic freedom
3. Transparency
4. Freedom of speech
5. Dignity
6. Principle stand
7. Justice

8. Responsibility
9. Accountability

ISEC'S PRIORITIES

- High-quality education and research
- Public involvement and services
- Qualified potential of human resources
- Modern infrastructure
- Diversified access to admission in line with the state requirements and acceptable standards
- Scientific and innovative activities
- Foreign relations and internationalization
- Intellectual activity and spreading advanced educational experience
- Financial sustainability, effective management
- Strategic partnership

ISEC'S ACTIVITY PRINCIPLES

- Continuous and uniform modernization and replenishment of the type and content of education,
- Quality assurance of education,
- Progress, unification and internationalization of education, science and research,
- Creative collaboration of the Faculty and students as well as that of external stakeholders,
- Using innovative approaches in management,
- Development of academic freedom and university autonomy,
- Protection of intellectual property rights,
- Human resources management and strategic planning.

ISEC NAS RA 2018-2022 GUIDELINES AND ACTION PLANS

GUIDELINE 1. ENSURING QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE GROWTH OF STUDENTS

Actions

- Improving the managerial-organizational system of applicants' admission at ISEC NAS RA.

- Regular conduct of surveys, needs identification, modernization of the academic environment among stakeholders on ISEC NAS RA's educational environment.
- Expansion of resources for the organization of high-quality research and educational process, expansion of an effective educational-research environment, increase of students' satisfaction with the educational-research environment level.
- Analysis of internal and external educational environments to assess ISEC's competitive advantages and internal opportunities.
- Upgrading and improving ISEC NAS RA distance learning components.
- Stimulating the demand growth for distance learning admission, quality, technical capacity, development of additional and lifelong education forms.
- Enhancing cooperation between ISEC and Fundamental Scientific Library of NAS RA, providing opportunities for students and lecturers to work with digital libraries, internet scientific- information sources.
- Improving the electronic database of the professional Faculty, administrative staff and ISEC students, providing comprehensive electronic communication between the students and the Faculty.
- Based on the country's development priorities, introduce some promising new professions Master and/or specializations into ISEC, develop public relations, organize performances, attract foreigners, carry out training in English or Russian in some departments, implement joint or dual degree programs.

GUIDELINE 2: RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Actions

- Implementation of Master's degree programs taking into account the country's long-term development visions and National and Sectorial Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) conformity
- Continuous modernization of Master's degree programs in accordance with NQF appropriate levels and employers' requirements.
- Adjusting the list of new professions to State administration bodies' priorities, developing and implementing programs with educational standards defined by law.
- Developing program specifications with a new methodology for newly established Master's programs focusing on the interconnectedness and complementarity of educational and research components.

- Continuous improvement of the final certification process taking into account the technical, research, innovative, creative and analytical components, modification of the evaluation criteria.

- Monitoring the demand for additional continuing professional education(CPE) to identify the list of required courses and ensure their development.

GUIDELINE 3: DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION RESOURCES AND APPLICATION OF INFORMATION TECCHNOLOGIES

Actions

- Equipment and modernization of auditoriums and halls with modern technical Means.
- Expansion of the information technologies and resources' use in educational and research processes.
- Development and improvement of e-learning system operating in the enter, regulating and expanding online courses.
- Training of Professional Faculty in the development of electronic resources and distance learning courses.
- Development of motivation mechanisms and introduction of e-learning resources in the learning process. Access to electronic information resources of Fundamental Scientific Library of NAS for professional Faculty, students and staff.
- Improvement of the Center's official website.
- Improvement and development of the electronic internal management system of the Center.
- Subscription to electronic science journals.
- Organization of distance learning.
- Development of various tools, information materials and manuals on the use of electronic resources.
- Digitization of printed, audio-visual information materials within the framework of distance learning.
- Upgrading of the Center's information system server park.
- Development and expansion of IT service at the Center.
- Modernization of technical equipment at the Center, as well as development and expansion of the internal computer fiber-optic, wired and wireless network.

GUIDELINE 4: RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Actions

- Modernization and improvement of the environment for the process of research, development of the concept for commercialization of research results.
- Improvement of the motivation policy of young scientists and the best Master researchers based on indicators of quality and relevance of research results.
- Guarantee academic honesty and improving procedures to prevent plagiarism. Obtaining necessary technical means.
- Introduction of effective mechanisms to contribute closer educational and research activities.
- Organization of effective work directed to Master's theses, scientific research works, improvement of existing mechanisms, which proceeds from the socio-political, socio-economic, socio-psychological and other priorities of the RA Government system.
- Integration of research and educational processes, improvement of mechanisms that facilitate joint activities of researchers and students.
- Expansion of cooperation in the field of research with leading national research institutions abroad, universities, enterprises and other business entities. In addition, a number of international research projects involving students have been launched.
- Provision of modern academic, research, methodological and material-technical environment necessary for high-quality postgraduate education.
- Improvement of the scientific-activity quality of the Center's professional departments. Multidisciplinary review of scientific topics of the master's and postgraduate theses, publication of scientific novelty, scientific-publishing activities, development and introduction of uniform standards of academic-scientific journals, creation of a portal.

GUIDELINE 5: WORK WITH STUDENTS.

Actions

- Continuous modernization, strengthening of versatile knowledge, skills and abilities aimed at comprehensive vocational research among students, expansion of possibilities of practical application through internships.
- Enhancing communication skills in foreign languages, expansion of contacts with students of international-educational institutions and scientific-educational centers, exchange of experience in the field of research.
- Start of the process of using Google Classroom among students.
- Expanding the activities and incentive mechanisms of student self-governing bodies such as the Student Council, the Council of Young Scientists and the Student Scientific

Society, encouraging volunteer work, encouraging the best students interested in science to continue their education and.

- Ensuring inclusion in the research themes, international grants and international experience exchange programs in the NAS RA institutes, creation of an information database, constant updating.
- Expanding the possibilities of publishing and publicizing the results of student research in rated local and international scientific journals, creating motivation to engage in science by deepening the research component in the educational process.
- Ensuring that students and staff are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Increasing students' role in anti-corruption activities at the Center, attracting graduates as mentors or as employers.

GUIDELINE 6: ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Actions

- Ensuring flexibility and predictability in the Center's management, based on the principles of academic honesty, social justice and participation in decision-making.
- Ensuring a real-rational distribution of authorities, functions and responsibilities among the structural subdivisions of the Center.
- Accountability of the Center's structural subdivisions: continuous improvement and publicity of the toolkit, application of new mechanisms for measuring performance.
 - Continuous improvement and expansion of the Center's infrastructure and resources
 - In accordance with the strategic objectives, financial planning and accountability toolkit, implementation, modernization of the Center's development planning, management and monitoring policy toolkit according to funds.
- Implementation of human resources management policies, maintaining stability of qualified Faculty and administrative staff, use of compensation and reward systems, and clear legal regulation of labour relations.
- Promotion young lecturers' professional growth, encouragement of the publication of research results in international peer-reviewed scientific journals, development of a diversified remuneration system based on the rating results and gradual implementation.
- Encouragement of teamwork: organization of events for staff, regular trainings, courses and seminars-discussions.

GUIDELINE 7: FINANCIAL -ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Actions

- Modernization of ISEC's financial management policies, ensuring financial stability through accurate planning of financial flows and efficient use of revenues.
- Modernization of alternative financing flows/services supporting educational activities, grant programs, etc.
- Provision of tuition benefits for socially disadvantaged students at the expense of the Center's income and other resources, to the extent possible, as well as moral and material incentives for staff, both at the expense of ISEC budget and the trade union.
- Maintenance and expansion of the existing material and technical base at ISEC, supplementing and modernizing it with modern information technology equipment in accordance with laboratory base, training area, scientific-educational and research requirements.
- Expanding the base of educational and research practices.
- Introduction of accounting software.
- Improvement and development of internal e-government system.
- Development and provision of new educational services based on public demand (surveys, research, lifelong education, training...).

GUIDELINE 8. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Actions

- Expansion of ISEC's cooperation with top foreign universities and scientific-educational centers, start of joint projects, exchange of experience, educational and research programs.
- Development and introduction of mechanisms to encourage article publications in high-ranking foreign scientific journals, participation in international prestigious conferences.
- ISEC's increased participation in international programs, integration of the Center into the European Research Area (ERA), internationalization of the Center.
- Ensuring continuity of joint educational programs with foreign research universities.
- Expansion of the experience exchange process, knowledge, skills and abilities of professional Faculty and students.
- Expanding the practice of foreign language lectures of vocational courses taught in all specialities of the Center.

- Development, testing and implementation of foreign language courses in a distance format.

GUIDELINE 9: IMPLEMENTATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Actions

- Study of the educational needs of different segments of society and other public administration spheres and offer additional lifelong educational programs in line with them.
- Assessment of the Center's staff and students' social needs, assistance if necessary.
- Use of employees' compensation and other forms of financial and moral incentives.
- Creation of an inclusive educational environment, provision of access to education for people with disabilities.
- Protection of the Center's internal Stakeholders' rights and legal interests and insurance of effective cooperation with partners.
- Proper presentation of the Center's activities and educational services via mass media and the Internet, provision of accurate information to the public.
- Provision of multifaceted "Employer-Center" cooperation, expansion of the partner list.

GUIDELINE 10. QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND ANTI-CORRUPTION PROGRAMS

Actions

- Ensuring policy, transparency and accountability of internal quality assurance processes.
- Implementation of improvement measures based on evaluation results.
- Ensuring open dialogues with stakeholders, their involvement.
- Preparation of ISEC for external evaluation by ANQA.
- Application and modernization of new methods of education quality monitoring toolkits, publication of results, analysis, clarification and completion of quality assurance structures with stakeholders involvement.
- Detection of corruption threats and prevention, anticipation of possible corruption risks at all stages of the education process, objective assessment: taking measures to reduce and overcome them.
- Setting norms of academic honesty and rules of conduct.
- Development of intolerance towards corruption, provision of a corruption-free educational environment.
- Adherence to democratic principles in the management and decision-making

processes of the Center clear performance of decisions and orders.

- Improvement of the Center's vertical and horizontal (from head to toes), cooperation, accountability and control structures.

- Implementation of functions aimed at reducing possible corruption risks using information technologies.

- Demonstration of will, determination and commitment to the implementation of the anti-corruption strategic program by all the subdivisions of the Center

- Cooperation with self-governing student bodies. Joint implementation of anti-corruption measures, ensuring their effectiveness.