



Higher Education Council  
Quality Education - Our Aim

# State of Higher Education & Future Directions in Rwanda

*African Conference Education Systems: Transformation Dynamics*

*Morocco, Rabat – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2025*

- 1. Rwanda's development trajectory**
- 2. Overview of the Higher Education Council**
- 3. State of Higher Education in Rwanda**
- 4. Future Direction of Higher Education in Rwanda**



# 1. Rwanda's Development Trajectory



# Rwanda's Recovery and Rebuilding (1994–2000)



During the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda's human capital was devastated; more than 1 million lives lost.

Rwandan economy shrank by 50% in 1994. GDP per capita fell to 146\$, inflation was at 64% and poverty was estimated at 78%. The civil service had very low capacity with more than 80% lacking tertiary education.

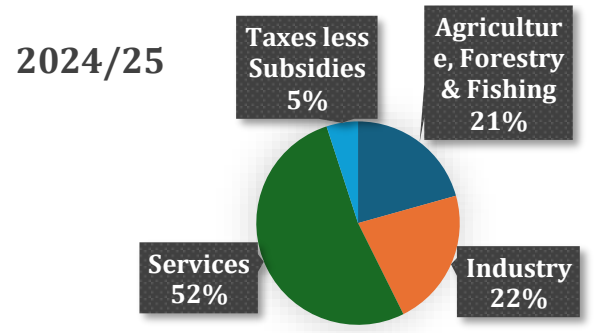
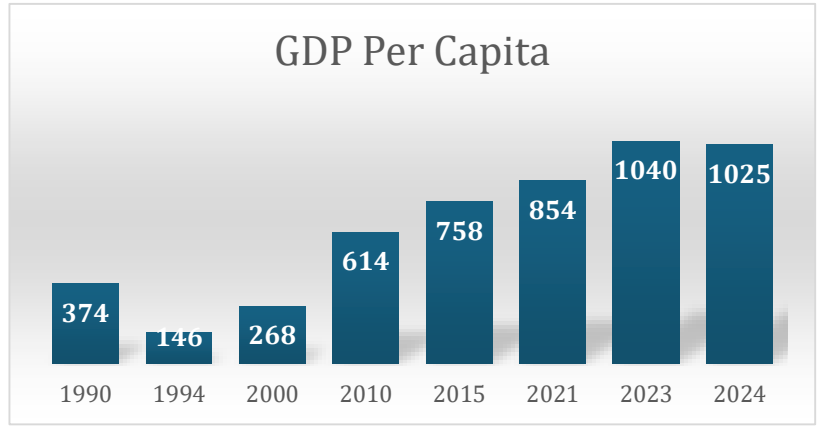
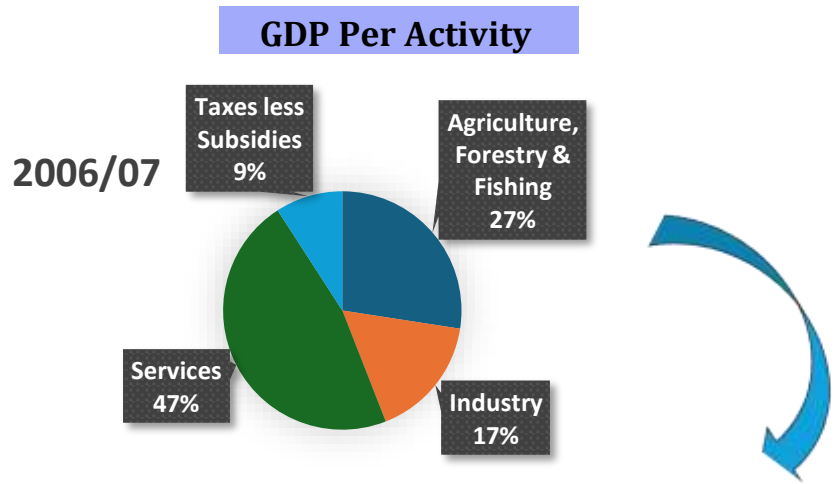
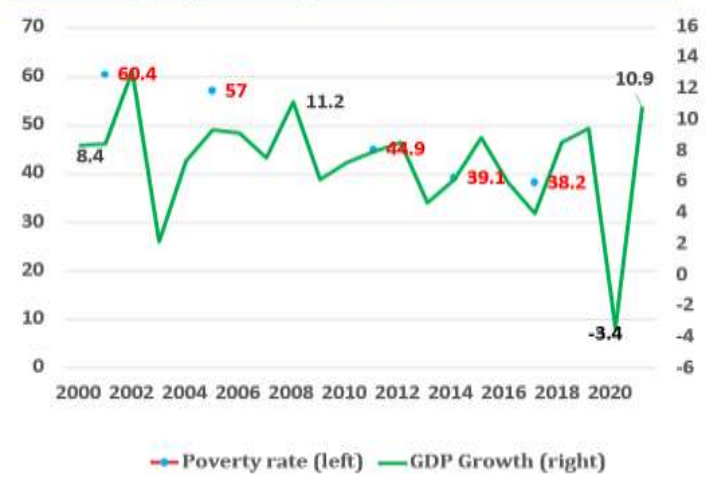
Government prioritized peace, unity, and reconciliation as foundations for national recovery and established key institutions: Gacaca courts, National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, and Vision 2020 framework.

Key priorities were restoration of education, health, and security systems to rebuild human capacity.



**Launch of Vision 2020 — transforming Rwanda into a knowledge-based, middle-income economy**

**Sustained economic growth has lifted more than 1 million people out of poverty between 2006-2011**



# Some Achievements in Social progress

Indicator	Achievement
Extreme Poverty (reduced)	5.4% (2024) from 40% in 2000
Delivery in Health facility	94% (2020) from 27% (2000)
Under 5 mortality per 1,000	45 (2020) from 196 (2000)
Maternity Mortality per 100,000	203 (2020) from 1,071 (2000)
Life expectancy	69.6 years ( 2022) from 49 years (2000 )
Subscription to health Insurance	93.1% in CBHI (Mutuelle), 97.3% of the population access Health
Literacy rates	87.7% in 2024 from 35% in 2005
Access to electricity (% of population)	72% in 2024 from 34%
Access to unshared improved sanitation facilities	94.3% in 2022 from 20% in 2000
Access to clean water (% of population)	89.7% in 2024 from 52% in 2000
Education	Primary School Net Enrolment 67 % (2005) to 95% (2024)
	Secondary School (12-17 yrs) Net Enrolment 9% (2005) to 47.1% (2024)
	Gross enrollment rate in HEIs from 7.4% (2019) to 9% (2024)



## 2. Overview of the Higher Education Council



## Set Quality Standards

- Set policy & institutional framework for HLIs
- Set accreditation standards for higher learning institutions.
- Prepare educational standards and approve curricula and academic programs

## Ensure Adherence to Quality Standards

Accredit higher education institutions (Including approve or discontinue academic institutions & programs respectively)

- Monitor institutional compliance with academic standards.
- Enforce compliance, taking action against institutions violating established standards
- Verification of proposed graduates' files from HLIs
- Approve opening or closure of faculties, schools, colleges, academic programs and research institutes within HLIs
- Promote academic internationalization

### Issue Equivalence

- Evaluate and provide equivalence for foreign degrees and certificates

### Manage Student Loan and Bursary

- Coordinate student loan and bursary programs (Locally and internationally)

### Coordinate the HE sector

- Disseminate and monitor implementation of higher education policies
- Coordinate stakeholders in higher education

### Promote Research

- Monitor and enhance the quality of research in HLIs
- Align research to learning enhancement



## 3. State of Higher Education in Rwanda



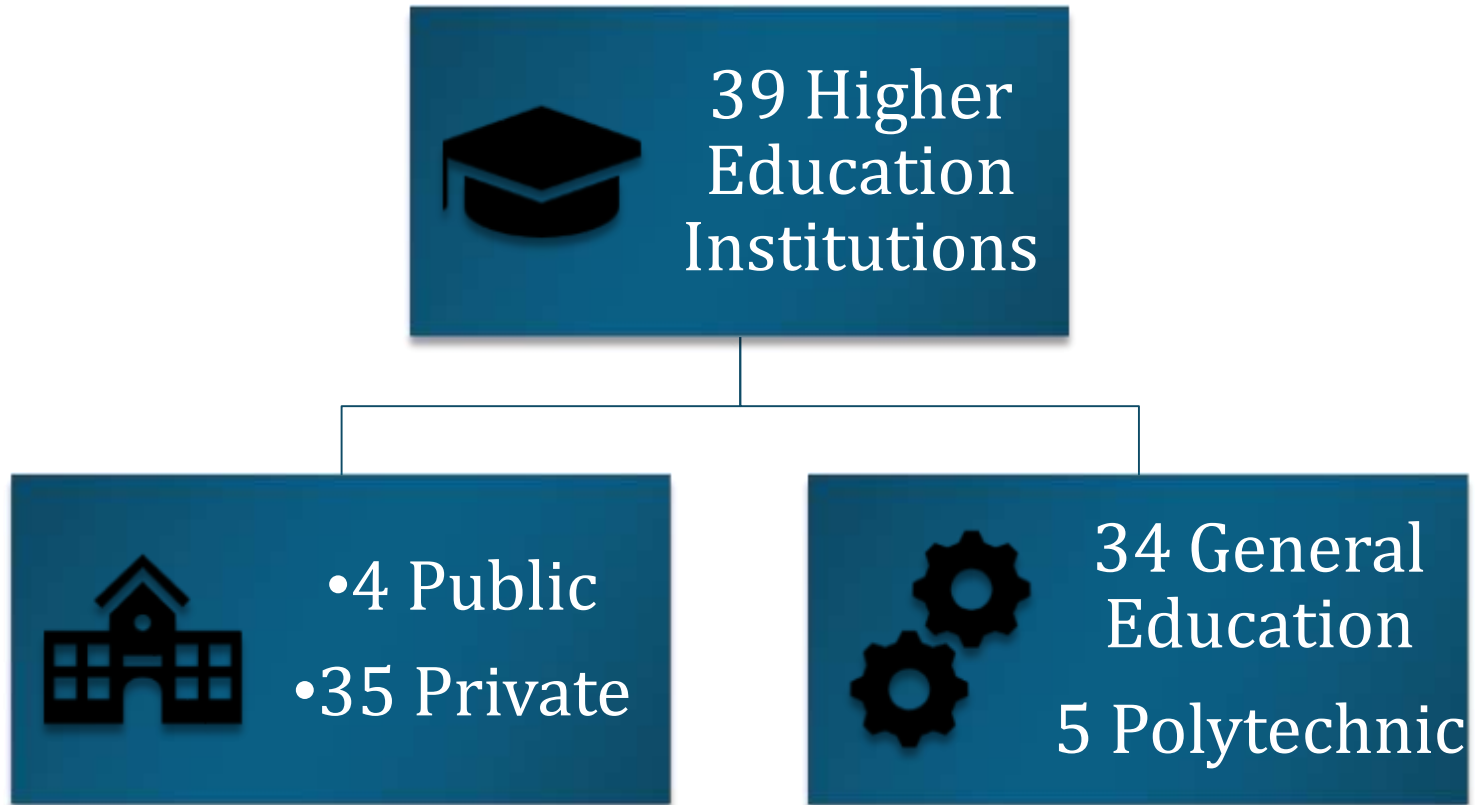
# Strategy on Higher Education in Rwanda

- The Government of Rwanda has prioritized the building of a robust and functional higher education sector.
- Higher education is expected to play a critical role in enabling Rwanda to realize her ambitions of attaining a sustainable development and economic growth as well as building **knowledge-based economy**.

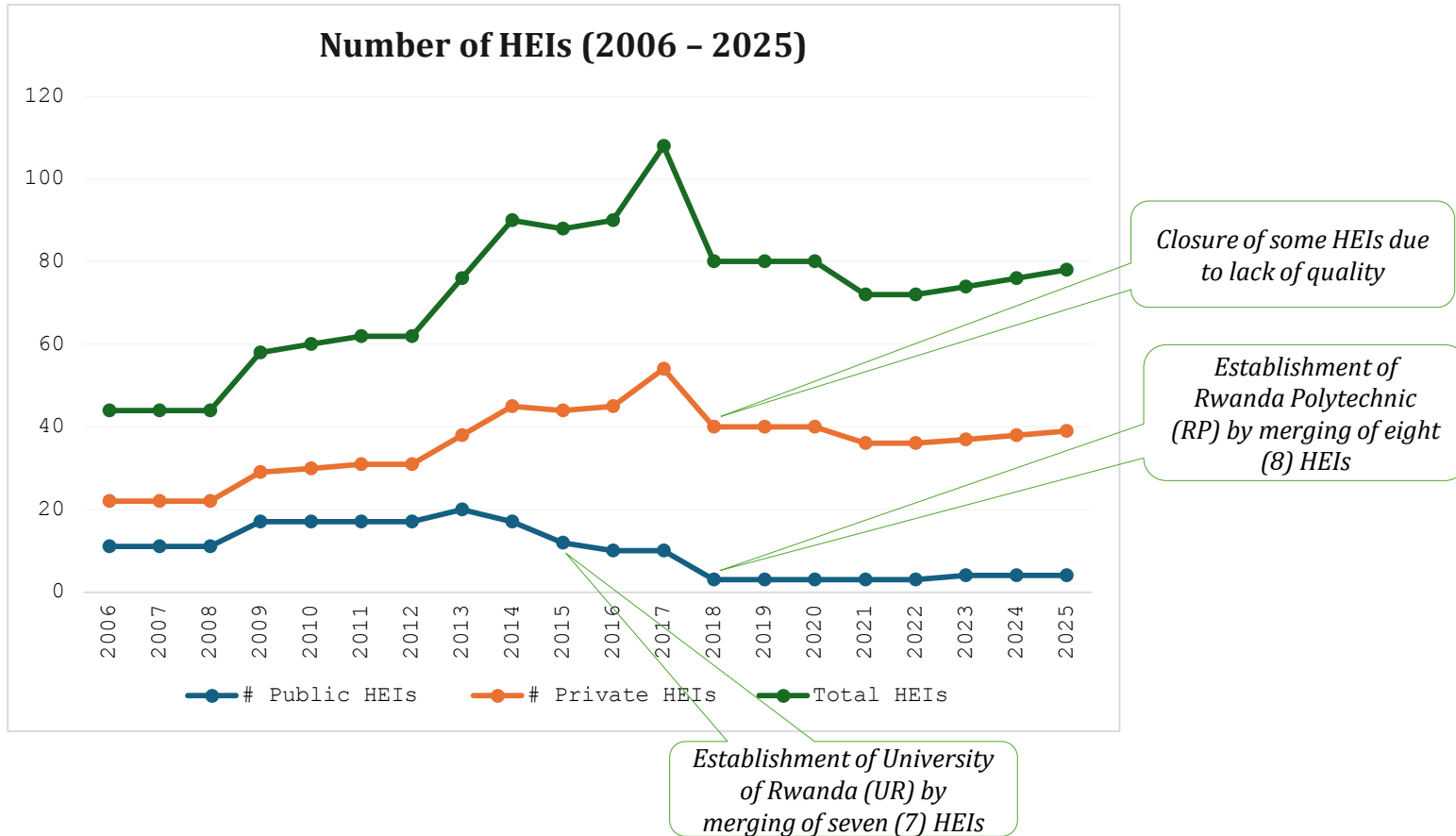


The Vision 2050 is underpinned by the National Strategy for Transformation (NST-2) which seeks to transform *Rwanda into a prosperous, inclusive and resilient nation.*

HEIs are required to produce **competent graduates**, conduct **research**, and **community engagement** to support the social and economic development of Rwanda.



# Growth trends of Higher Education Institutions

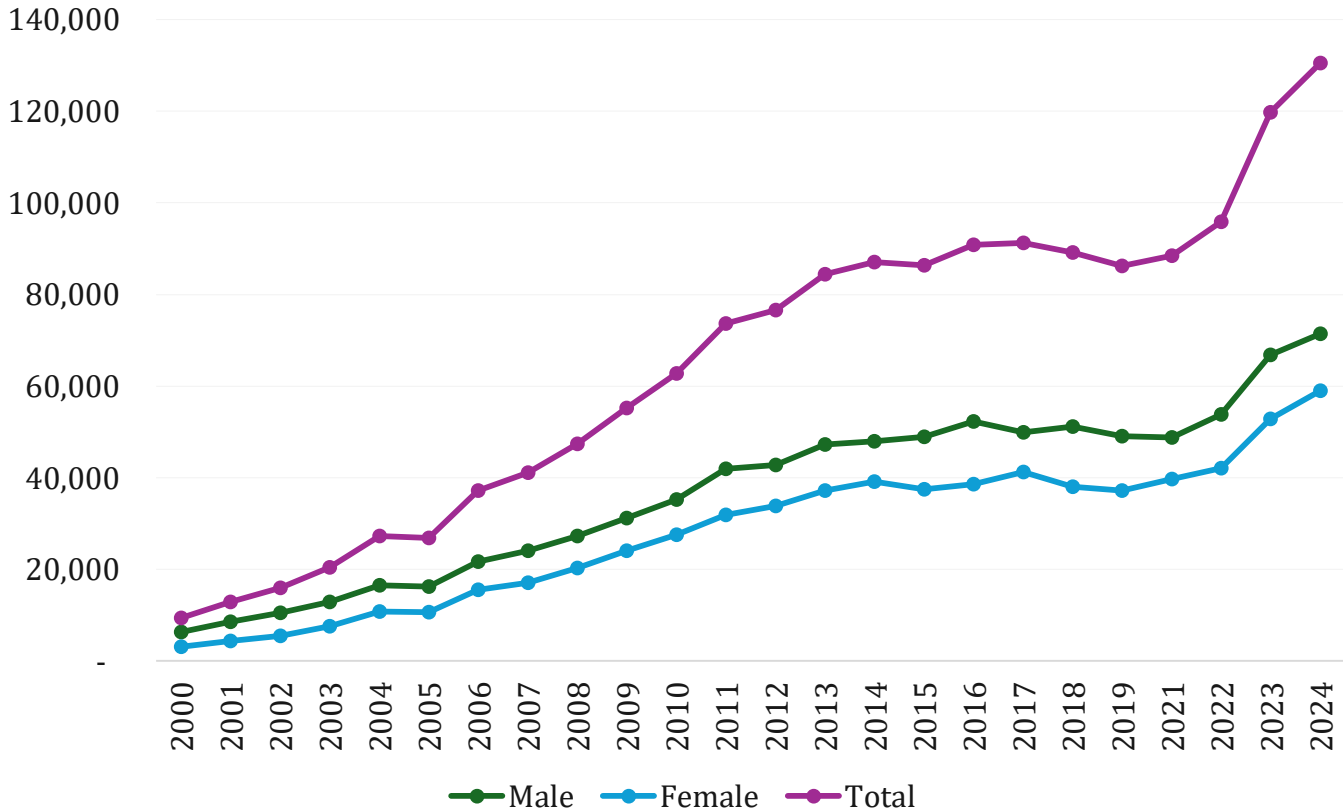


Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks



# Growth trends of Learners in HE from 2000-2024

**Number of Learners Enrolled in HE from 2000 to 2024**

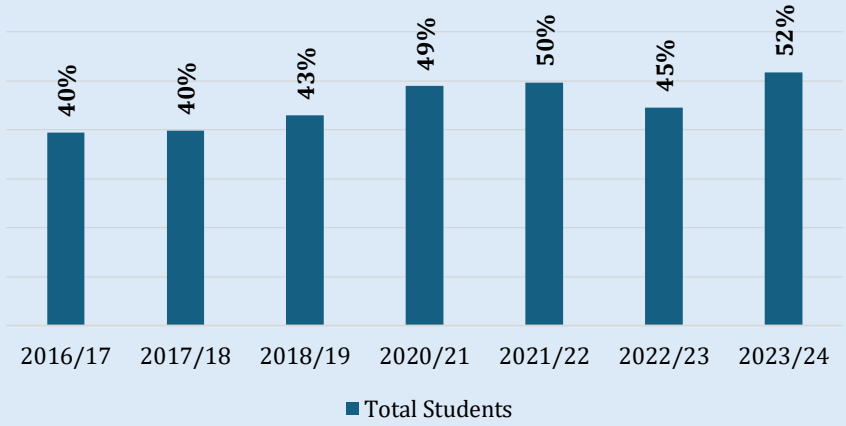


From **9,357** learners in 2000 to **130,474** in 2024

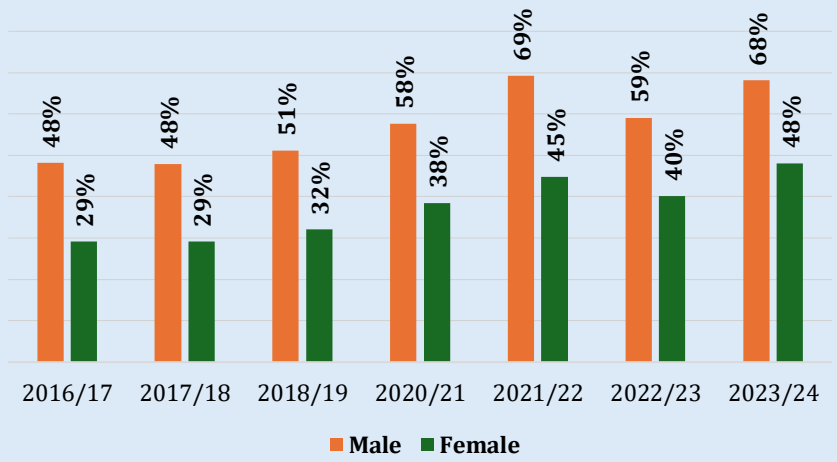


# Trends of STEM Students Among all Learners in HLIs

### % STEM Students in HEIs



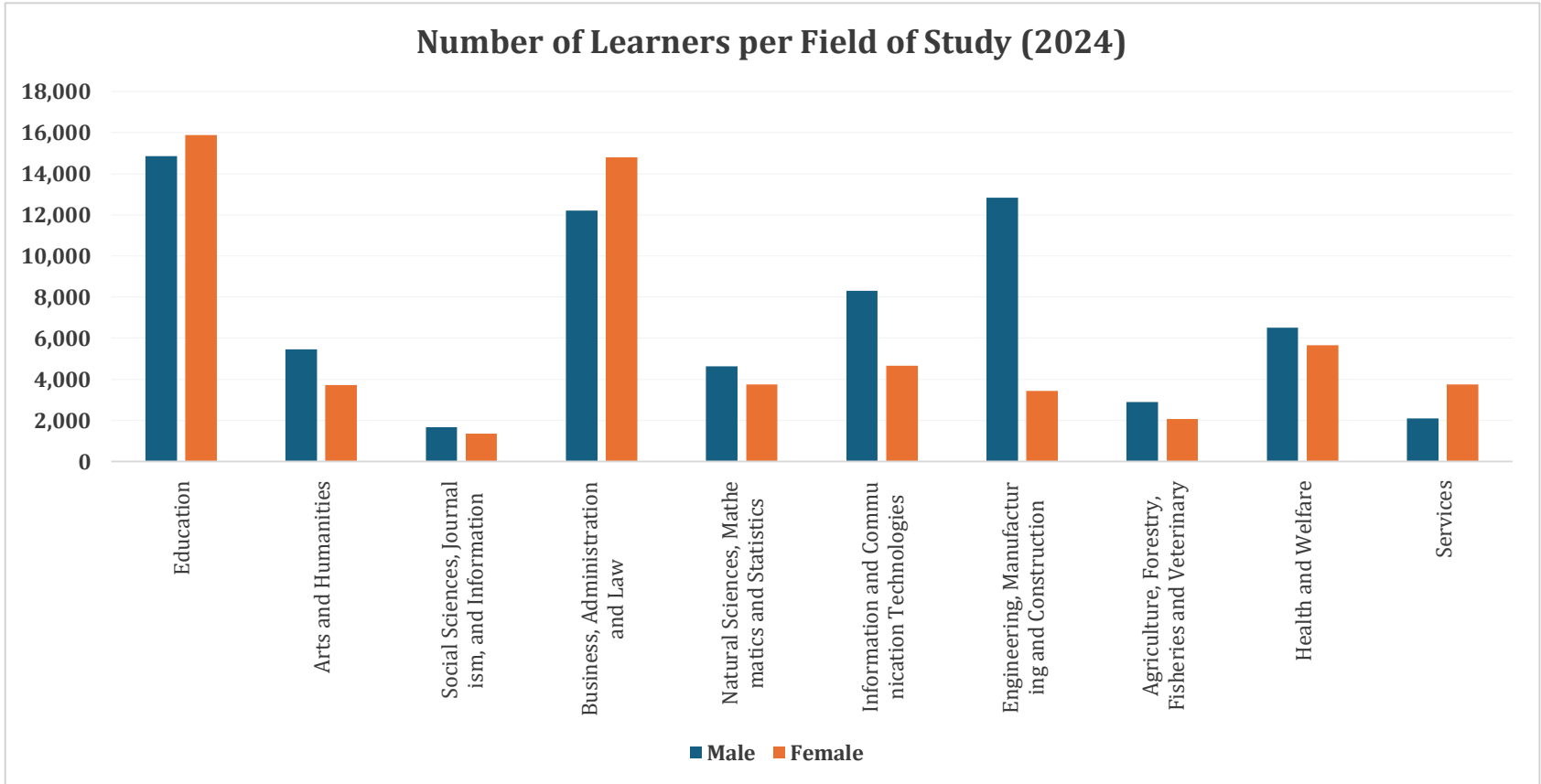
### % STEM Students in HEIs by Gender



Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks



# Distribution of Learners per Field of Study

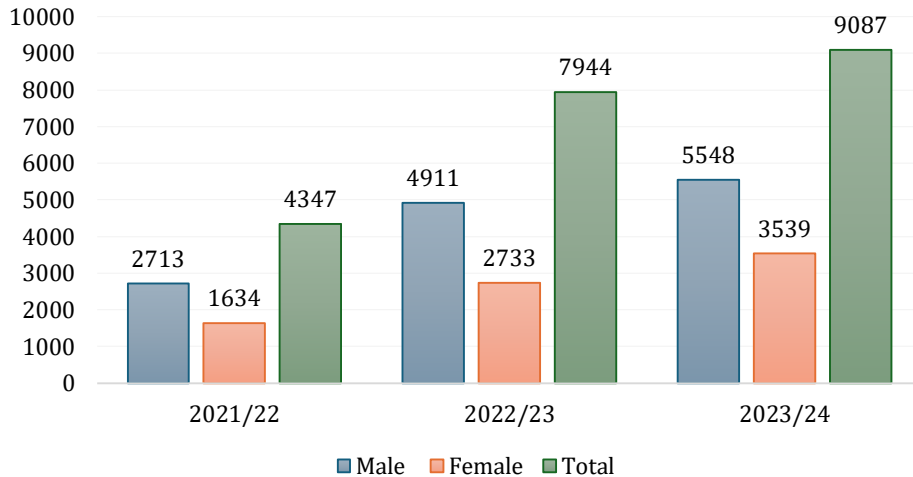


Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks

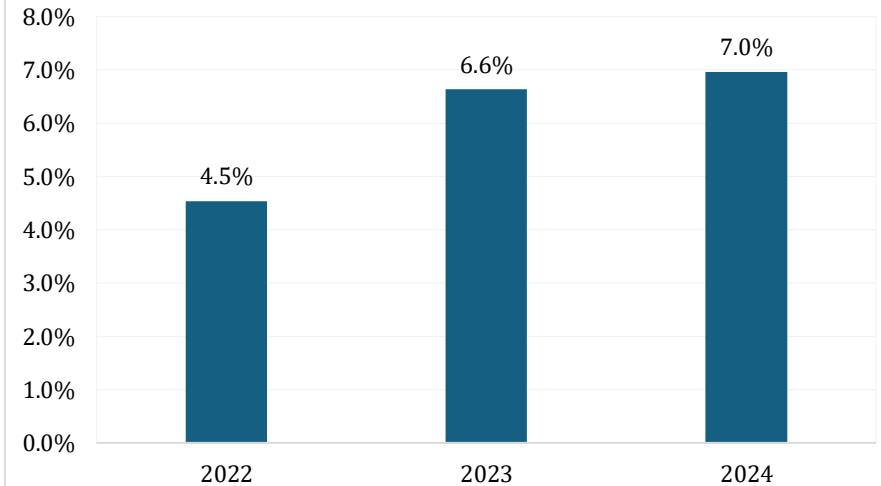


# International Students v's Total Students

### Number of International Students by Gender

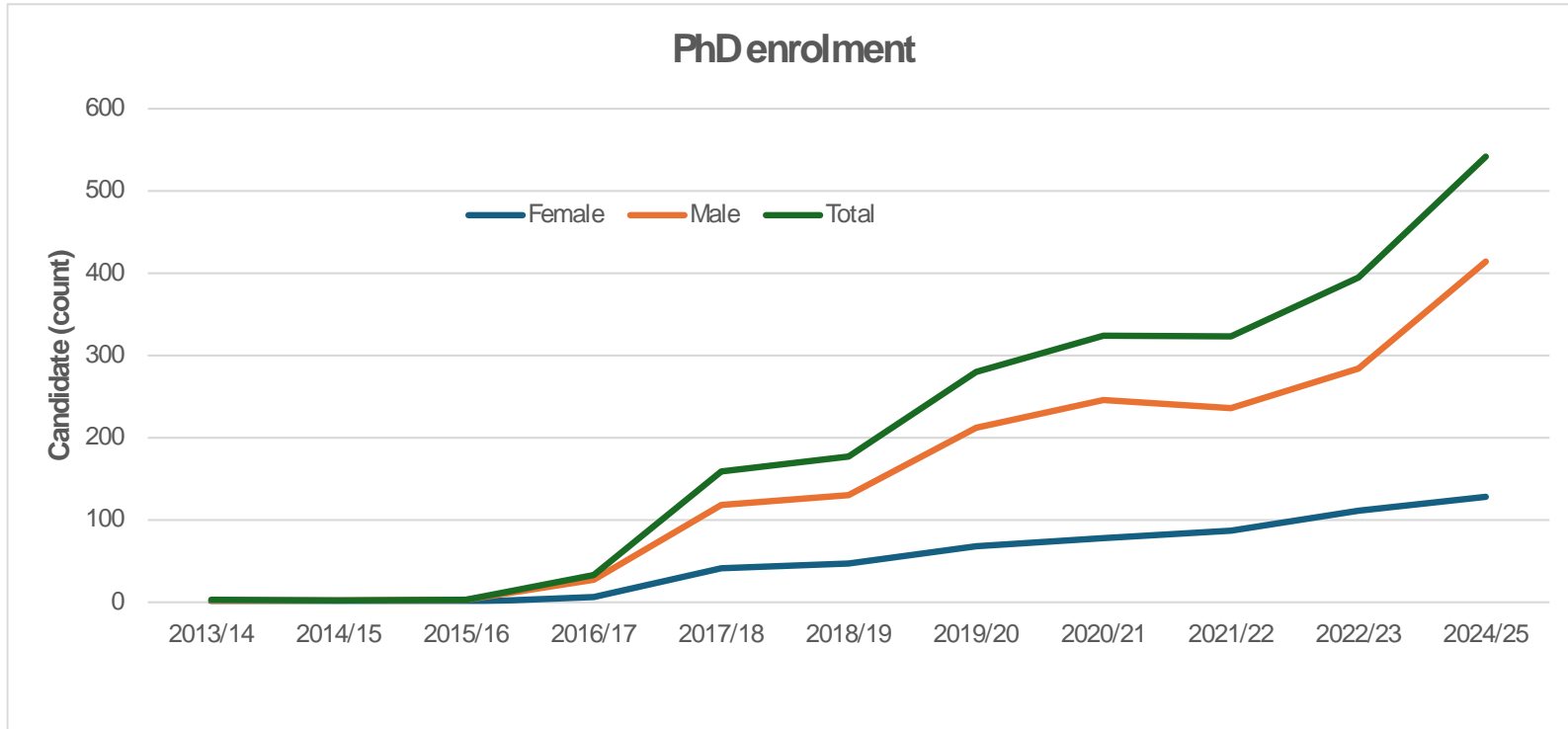


### % International Students to Total Students



Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks



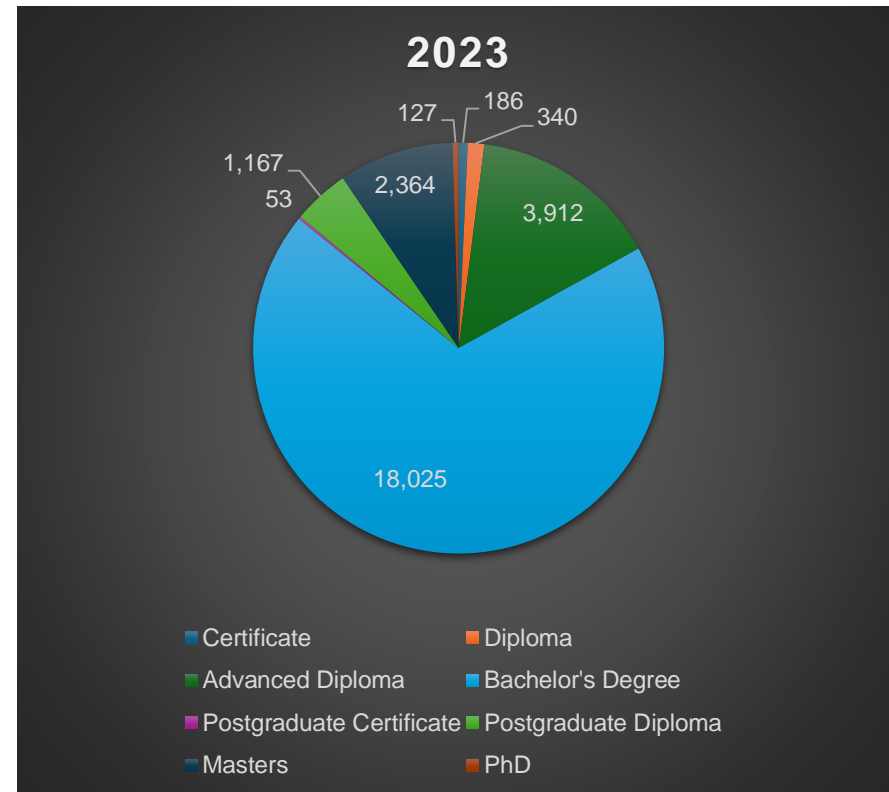
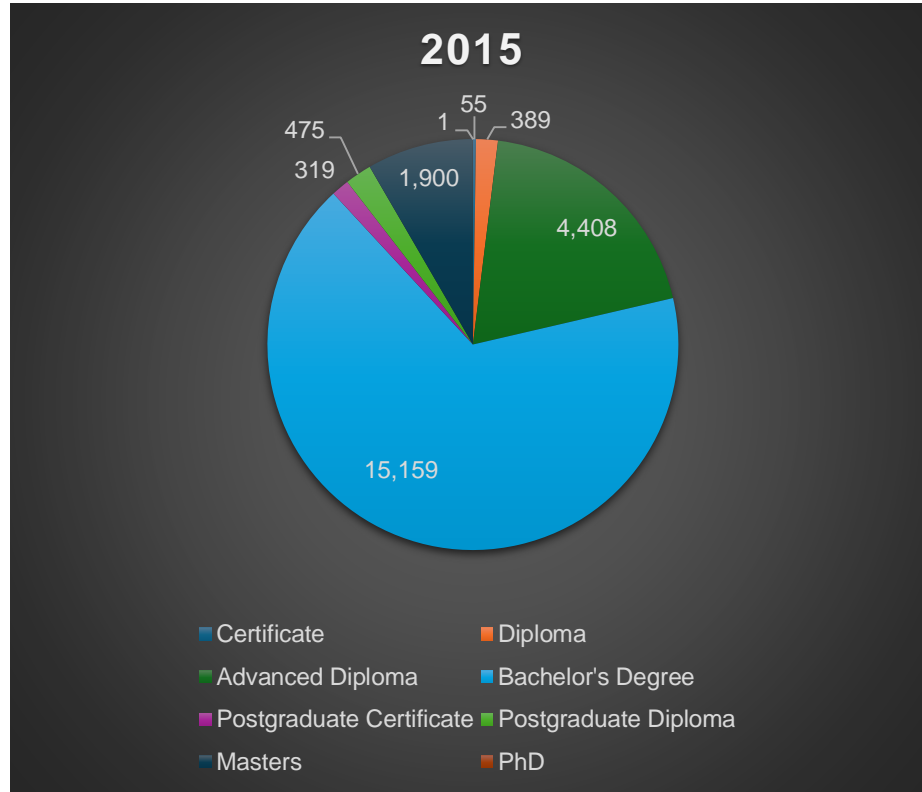


- Accelerating growth
- Retention and graduation
- High drop-out rates
- Supervision capability

Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks

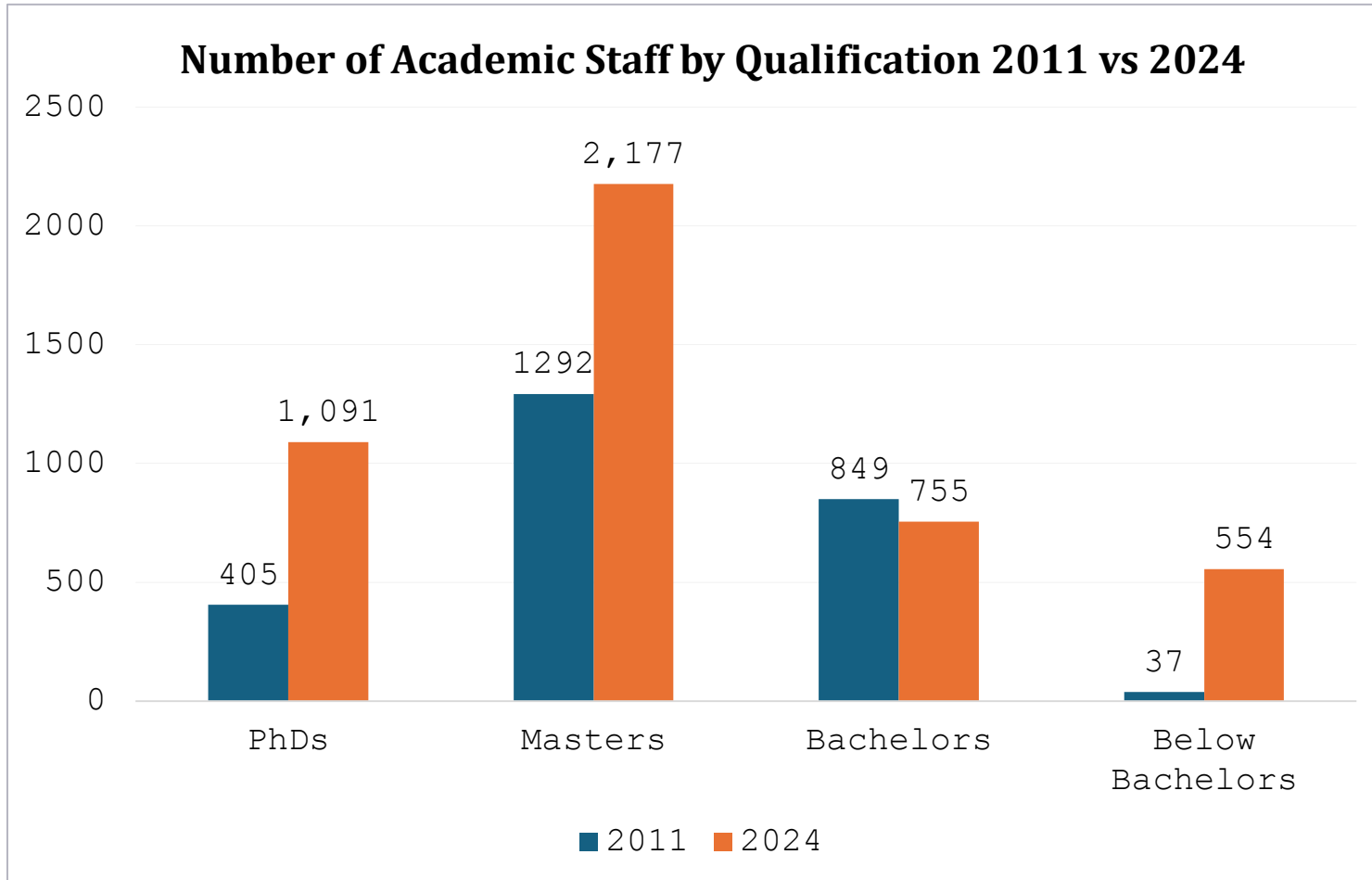


# Number of Higher Education Graduates between 2015 & 2023



Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks



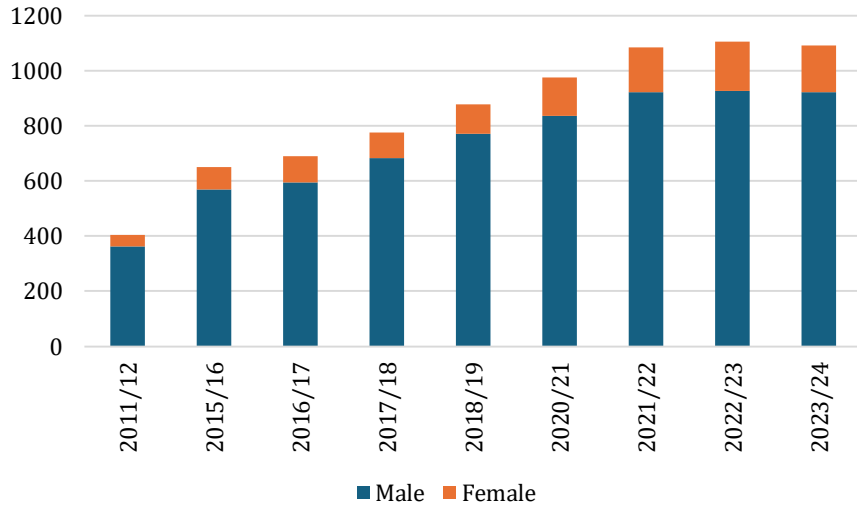


Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks

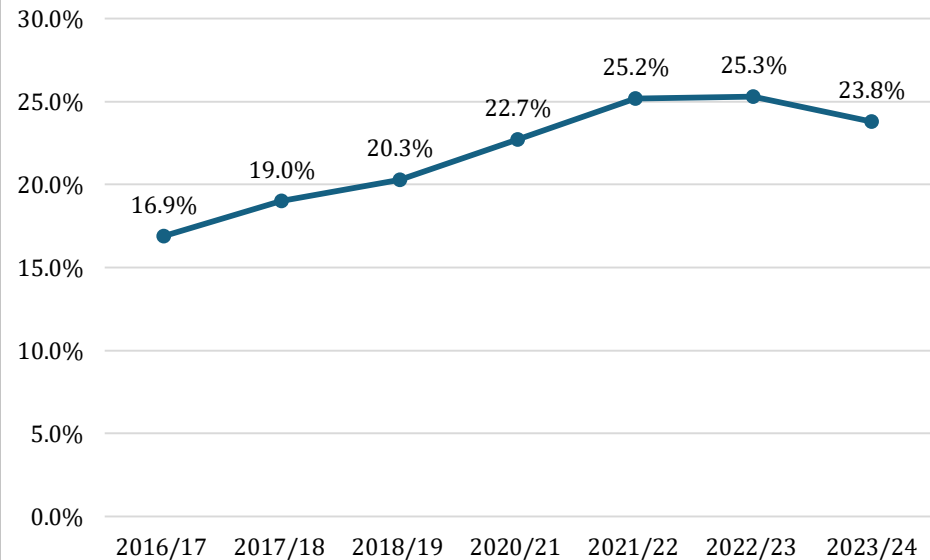


# Growth trends of PhD Holders among Academic Staff

### PhD Holders Among Academic Staff by Gender



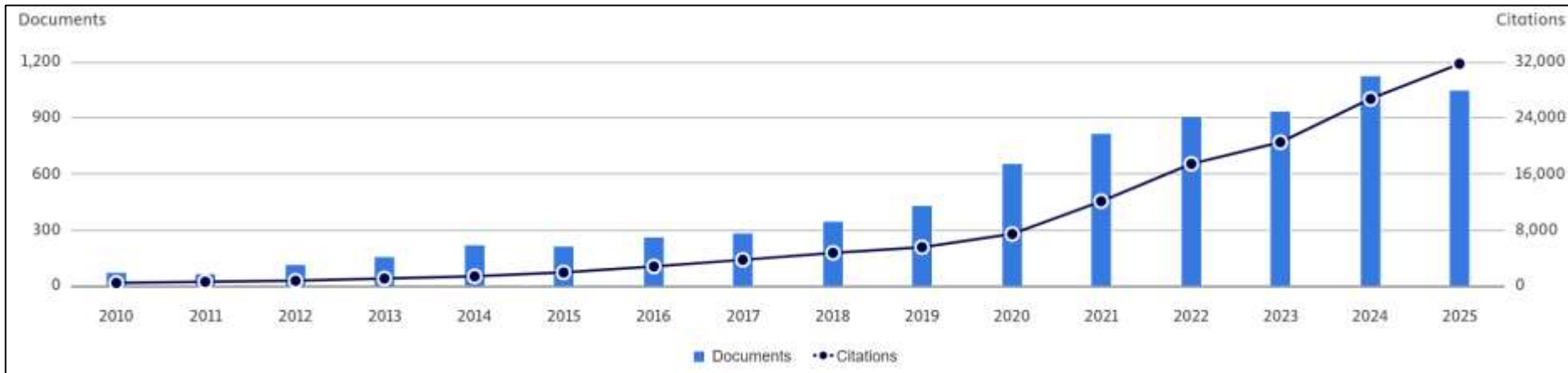
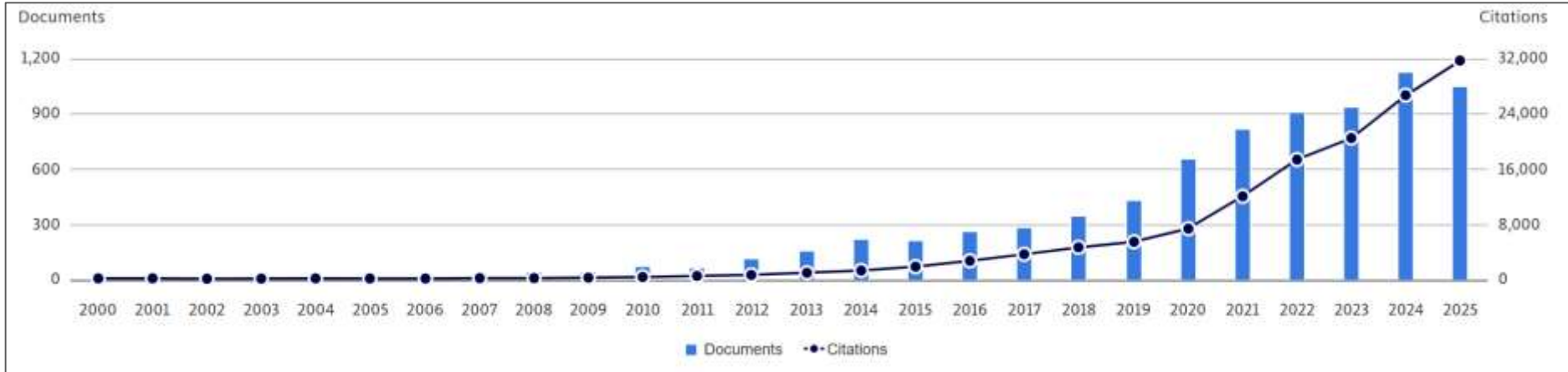
### PhD Holders Among Academic Staff



Source: MINEDUC & NISR Statistical Yearbooks



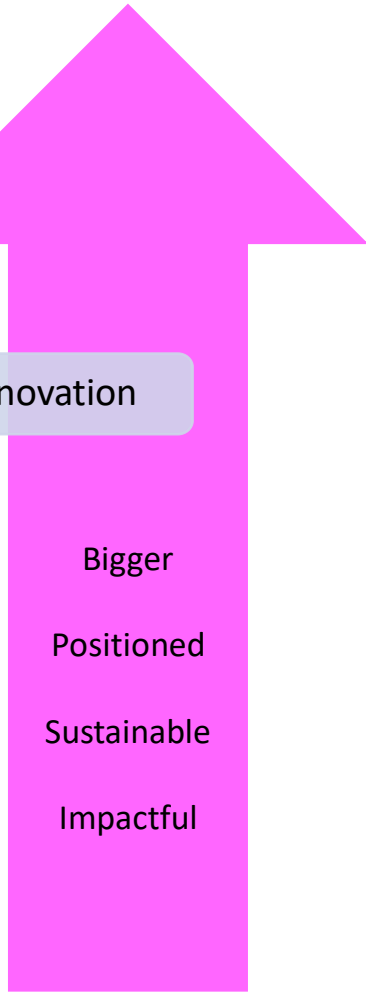
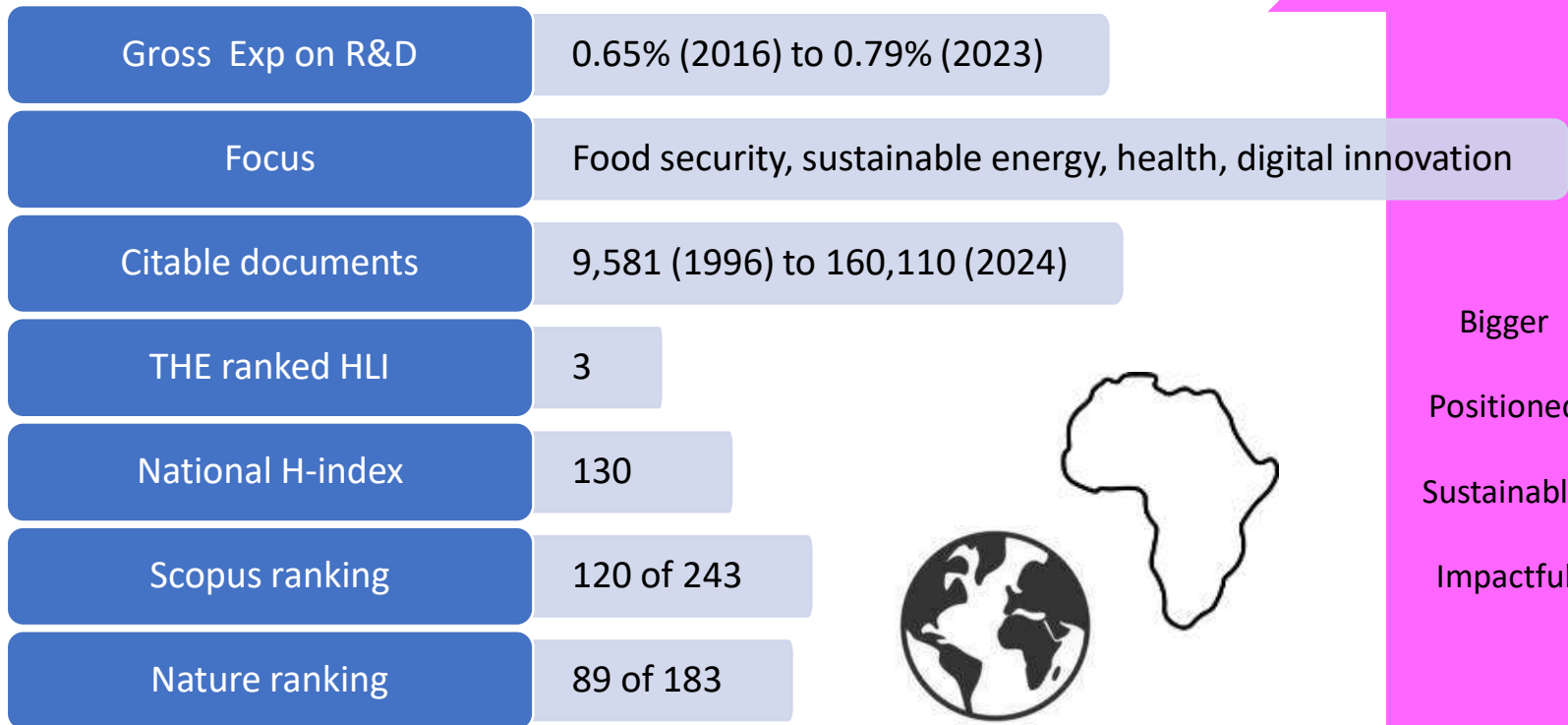
## # of Publications V's Citations



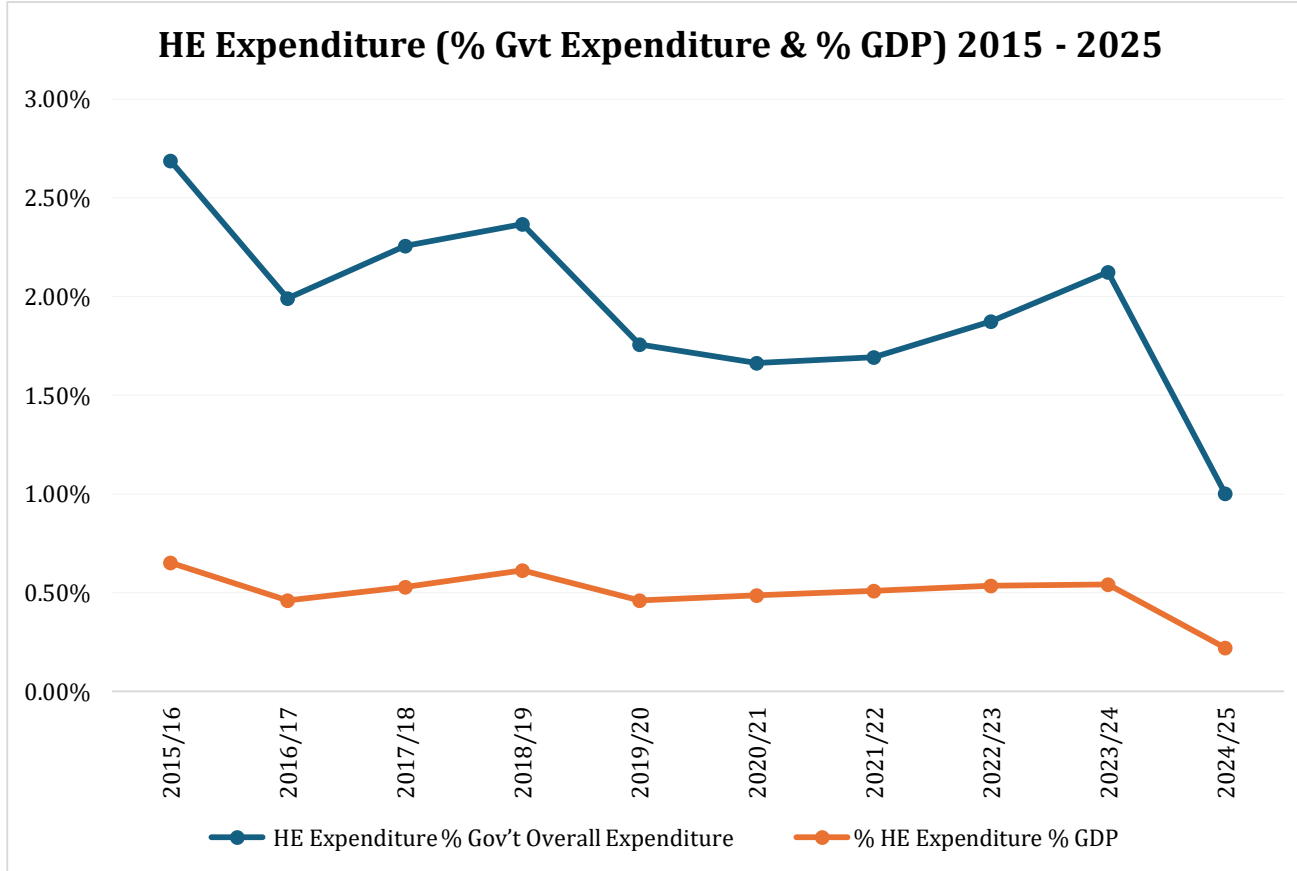
Source: Scopus



# Impact of Research and Development



Bigger  
Positioned  
Sustainable  
Impactful



**HE % Gov't**  
 – Reduced 2.69 % in 2015/16 to 1% in 2024/25

**HE % GDP**  
 – Reduced 0.65% in 2015/26 to 0.22% in 2024/25



# Gross Domestic Expenditure on Research & Development (GERD) as a Percentage of GDP

## High-Income Country

- Increase the Number of R&D Personnel
- Promote equal participation of women and men in research in HE



1.5%

2050

3%



## Upper Middle-Income Country

- Enhance Academia Industry Collaboration
- Strengthen Public-Private Sector Collaboration
- Encourage companies to contribute R&D
- Stimulate business sector funding to HE -R&D

2035

2023

0.79%



## Rwf 129.9 B

- Government: 51.9%
- HEIs: 5.8%
- Private Non-Profit: 10.8%
- Private Sector/ Business Enterprises: 6%
- Foreign Funding: 25.5%

## Rwf 70.6 B

- Government: 62%
- HEIs: 2.3%
- Private Non-Profit: 0.5%
- Private Sector/ Business Enterprises: 8.4%
- Foreign Funding: 15.3%
- Other: 11.5%



0.69%

2019

## Rwf 44.4 B

- Government: 77.4%
- HEIs: 6.8%
- Private Non-Profit: 1.8%
- Private Sector/ Business Enterprises: 4%
- Foreign Funding: 10%

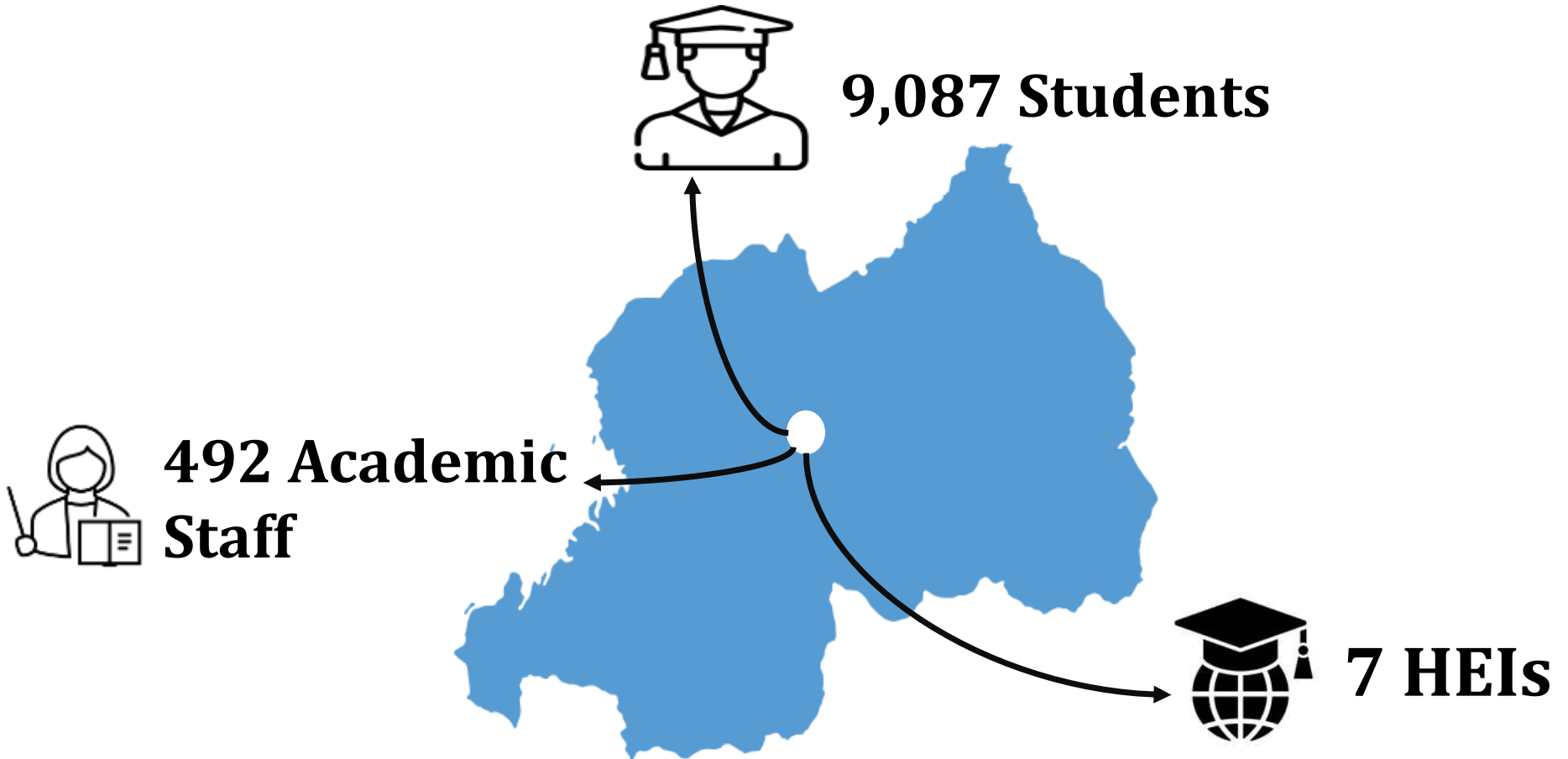
2016

0.66%



Source: Rwanda National Research and Experimental Development, NCST





*International HEIs: AIMS Rwanda, ALU, CMU-A, UGHE, Vatel School, OCU, UMST*



## 4. Future Direction of Higher Education In Rwanda



# Toward Vision 2050 – Rwanda’s Future Directions

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Vision 2050 targets a high-income, inclusive, knowledge-driven economy by 2050.



Education Sector Strategic Plan 2024–2029 focuses on quality learning, research, and innovation.



Emphasis on STEM, entrepreneurship, and digital transformation for global competitiveness



HEIs are positioned as drivers of innovation, research, and sustainable development.



## Vision 2050

- High-income nation by 2050, ensuring all citizens enjoy quality education, healthcare, housing, and social welfare.
- Knowledge-based, and innovation-driven economy supported by high productivity, advanced technology, and strong private sector growth
- Environmental sustainability, good governance, social inclusion, and regional integration

## 2<sup>nd</sup> National Strategy for Transformation

- Accelerated economic growth from an agriculture based to a knowledge and service driven economy and creation of productive jobs
- Improving quality of education and health services, promoting innovation & research, strengthening skills to meet labor market demands.
- Sustainable Urbanization and Accountable Governance

## Education Sector Strategic Plan

- Improving the quality, relevance, and equity of education at all levels to equip learners with relevant skills & competencies for the future
- Expanding access to education for all by strengthening infrastructure, teacher development, and early childhood education.
- Promoting research, innovation, & digital learning



## 01 – Vision 2050

**High Quality of Life for All Rwandans:**  
Achieve universal access to quality education  
Modern, Knowledge-Based and Competitive Economy

## 03 – Education Sector Strategic Plan

ESSP (2024-2029)

- Enhance access, relevance and responsiveness: Ensure that HEIs and programmes are aligned with national development priorities;
- Improve quality, research and innovation capacity: Strengthen higher education institutions to provide high-quality teaching and learning, produce research that addresses local and global challenges

01

02

03

04

## 02 – 2<sup>nd</sup> National Strategy for Transformation

NST2 (2024–2029) builds on NST1 and aims to accelerate Rwanda’s journey toward becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2035  
Social transformation (quality health, education, and social protection)  
Aligns national development trajectory of Vision 2050

## 04 – Higher Education Sector Strategic Plan

- Education Quality and Success
- Research and Innovation
- Financing and student welfare
- Academia industry collaboration
- University governance and leadership
- Internationalization



# Higher Education Hub Strategic Programs

## 1 Higher Education Hub Strategy

Establish Rwanda as a choice destination for **1 Million** Africans by 2035, with the aim of providing **equitable access to quality education**

## 4

Deliver high-quality educational programs and research opportunities with strong private sector linkages and top-tier faculty

## 2

## 2 Regional Positioning

Support the vision of an integrated, prosperous Africa and Rwanda as a **competitive knowledge-based economy**

## 5

## 5 Target # Students

85% National  
15% International

## 3

## 3 Regional Destination

Create a dynamic and engaging educational experience that equips talent with the **necessary skills for meaningful work**

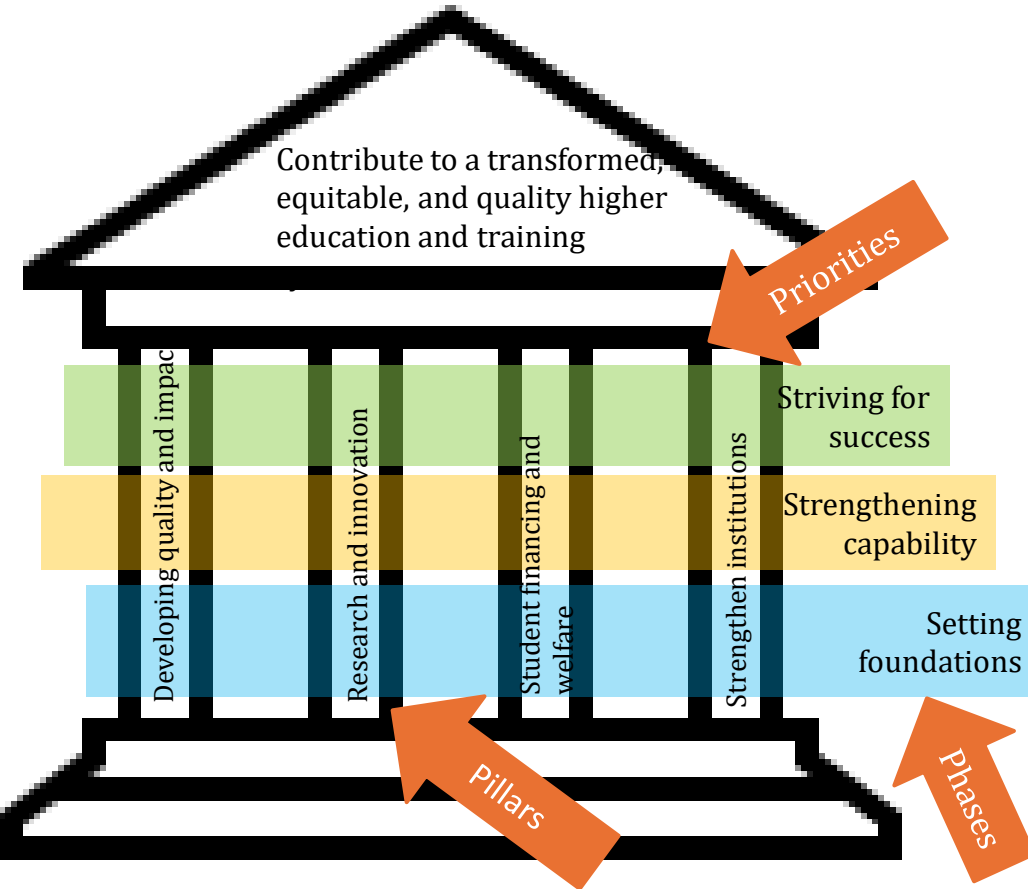
## 6

## 6 Enablers

Good Corporate Governance in HEIs, Strategic Partnerships, Regulations (HEC), Adequate financing, Outstanding infrastructure, Marketing & Communication



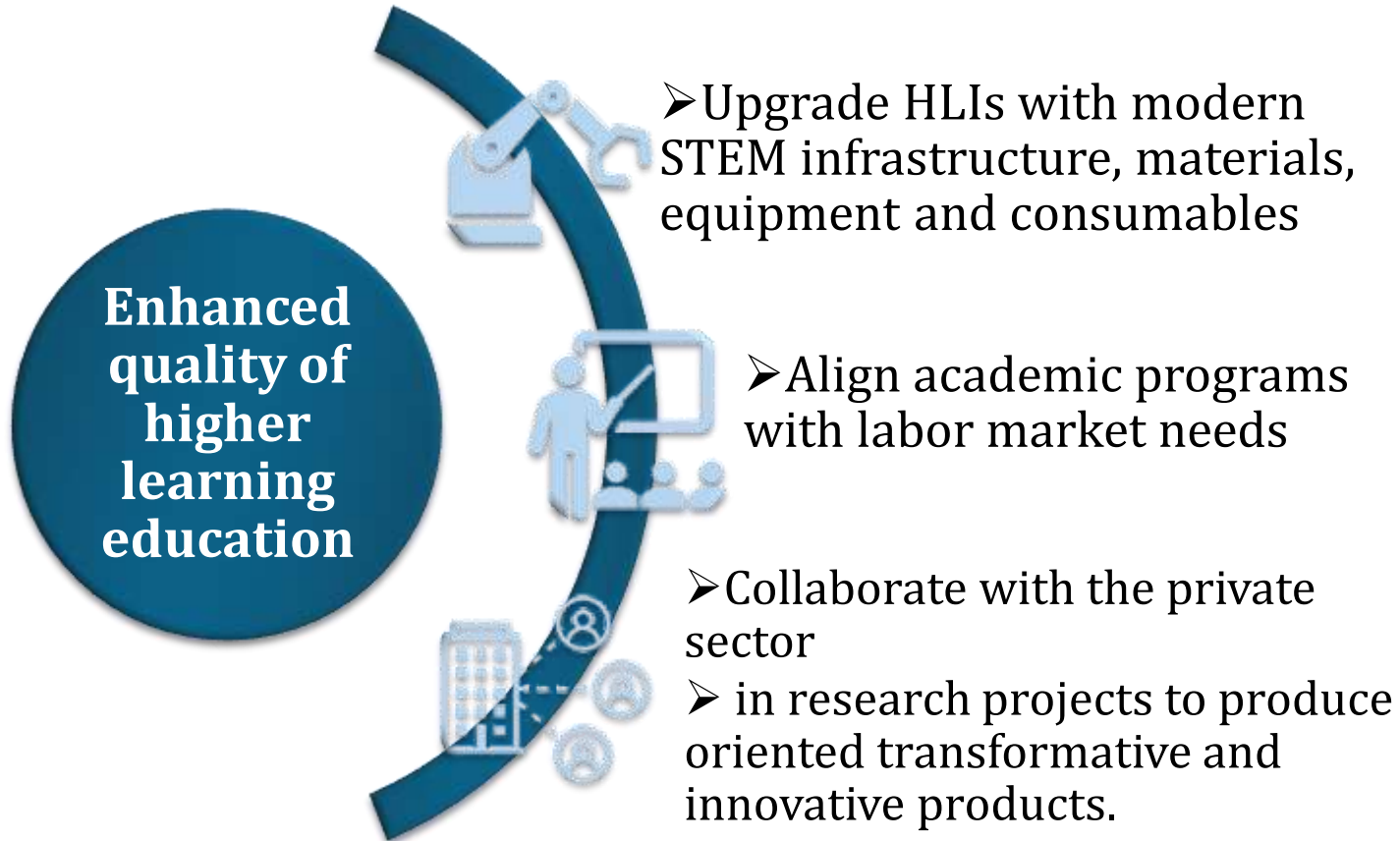
# The Key Pillars of the Higher Education Strategic Plan



- Strengthen relevance and quality of HE to align with national and regional development priorities.
- Enhance research, innovation, and technology transfer to address socio-economic challenges and industrial transformation.
- Expand access and equity through inclusive policies and infrastructure for all learners, including women and students with disabilities.
- Promote internationalization and partnerships to improve academic standards and global competitiveness.
- Advance digital transformation and the use of ICT in teaching, learning, and administration.

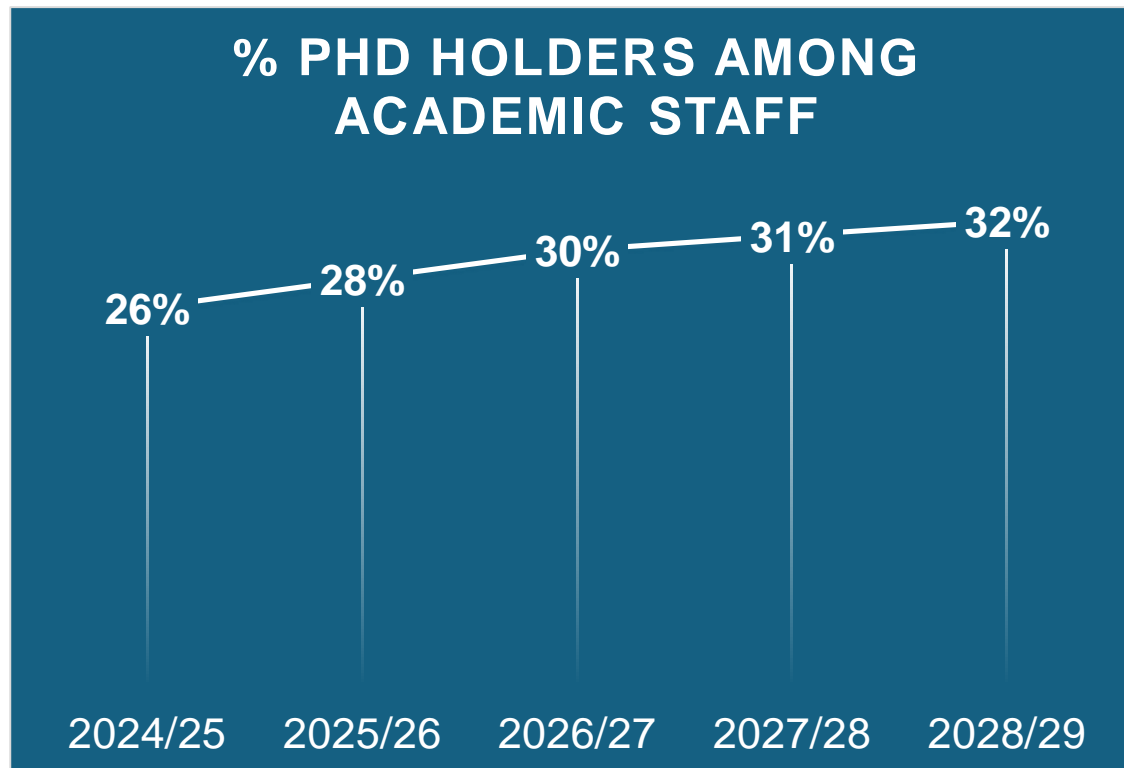


**NST2 PA-28** Scale up access to market-relevant education in higher education and boost research productivity.



# NST-2 Roadmap – PhD Holders & PhD Programs

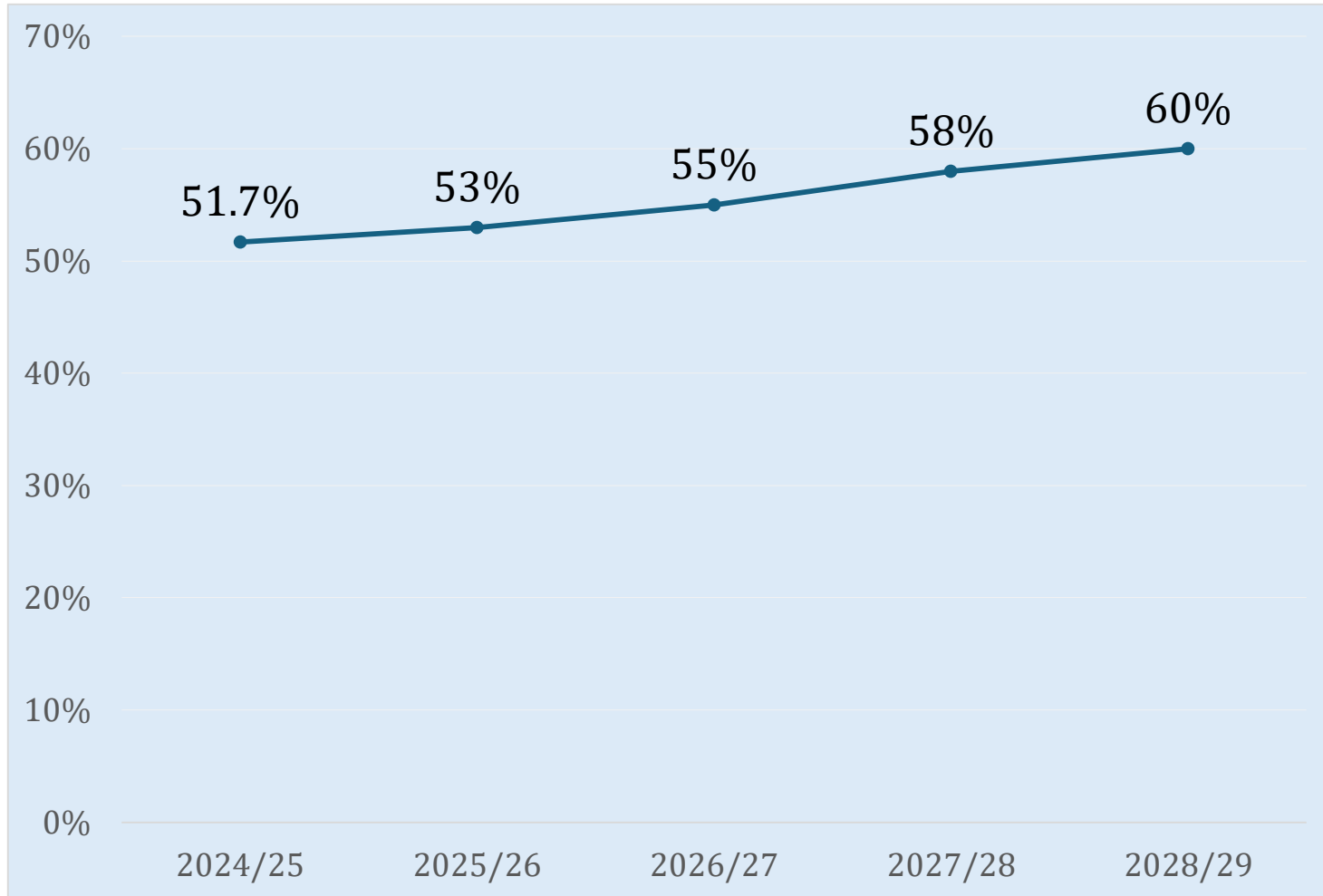
**ESSP Key Intervention:** Increase the number of PhD programs from 39 programs to 64 PhD programs in Public Higher Learning Institutions with annual target of 5 new PhD programs till 2028/29



Source: Education Sector Strategic Plan



# NST2 Roadmap : % Students Enrolled in STEM

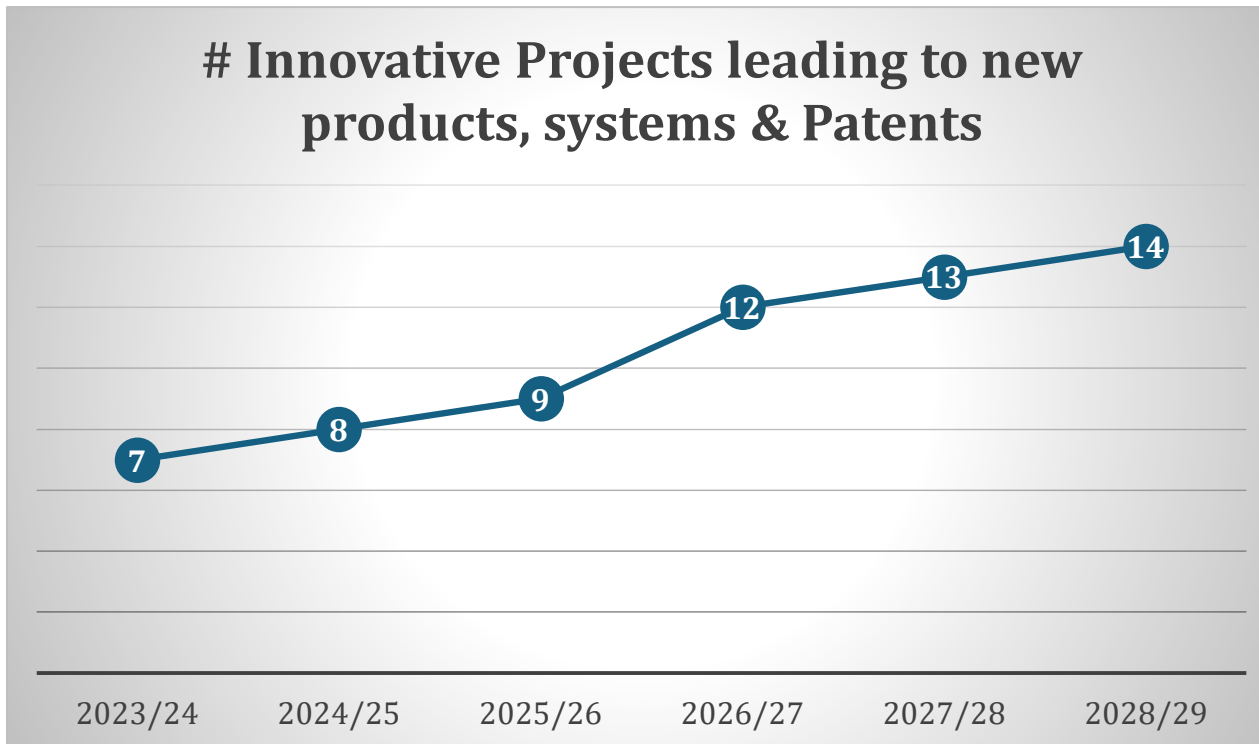


Source: Education Sector Strategic Plan



# NST-2 Roadmap : Research and Innovation

- Strengthen the centers of excellence to enhance innovation and research with private-sector engagement.
- Collaborate with the private sector to produce new product- oriented transformative and innovative research projects.



Source: Education Sector Strategic Plan





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*Quality Education - Our Aim*

*Thank You*

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