

Transnational Education (TNE) Sustainability Framework

December 2024

Annex B.

Transnational Education (TNE) Sustainability Pillars and Indicators

What it is

The TNE indicators are developed based on the TNE Sustainability Framework, designed to aid UK universities and their international counterparts in creating robust and long-lasting partnerships. The framework is structured around five key pillars:

- Mutual benefits
- Financial viability
- Partnership breadth and depth
- Effective leadership and people development
- Mutual trust and openness

How it was developed

The TNE Sustainable framework and its indicators were developed through a comprehensive study on TNE sustainability in the MENA region, involving extensive desk research, literature reviews, consultations with policymakers, university leaders, faculty and students in Egypt,

Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Four expert consultations with university leaders were conducted to validate their relevance and applicability.

Intended use and limitations

These indicators are designed for universities involved in TNE partnerships to assess and enhance their sustainability. The guide covers two stages of TNE development: the developing stage and the maturing stage, capturing TNE partnerships as they evolve, supporting growth and expansion both within the region and beyond. For universities with smaller TNE operations, these indicators can be adapted to fit their needs. While the indicators are designed based on the MENA context, they can be adapted for use in other contexts.

1. Mutual benefits

1.1. Developing stage (Year 0-3)

- Expand access to quality education; enable TNE for students, including women and disadvantaged groups, who choose to study in the host countries.
- Support employability through domestic and international internships, exchanges, and job placements.
- Enhance the student experience with international curricula and extracurriculars.

1.1.2. Faculty development and quality enhancement

- Enhance host institutions' capabilities and educational quality through training and alignment with UK quality assurance standards, emphasising improved pedagogy and assessment practices.

1.1.3. Reputation building

- Ensure consistent education quality across campuses to maintain equivalency in academic standards.
- Strengthen the reputation of both UK and host institutions, such as enhancing teaching and research quality and advancing internationalisation.

1.1.4. Alignment with local needs

- Ensure educational programmes align with the host country's development goals, measured by relevance to local industries, stakeholder feedback, and integration of national priorities into the curriculum.

1.1.5. Integrated sustainability practices

- Integrate sustainability practices into educational programmes and operations, aligning with local environmental and development goals, and reducing environmental impacts in both regions.

1.2. Maturing stage (After year 3)

1.2.1. Sustained benefits for students

- Enhance career development and global mobility through more international internships, job placements, and two-way exchanges between the UK and host institutions.
- Demonstrate graduate career success and adapt educational access to meet domestic and global market needs.
- Refine the global curriculum and extracurricular activities to enrich student experience.

1.2.2. Advanced institutional development

- Elevate educational excellence and capabilities through sustained CPD programmes for faculty.
- Foster and expand research and academic collaborations.

1.2.3. Equitable knowledge and resource sharing

- Promote balanced knowledge exchange and equitable resource sharing, including designing co-curricula between UK and host institutions.

Indicators for mutual benefits

- Percentage of graduates employed or pursuing further study within six months; growth rate in student enrolment in TNE programmes; participation rates in internships, exchanges, and job placements.
- Percentage of faculty engaged in CPD programmes and joint research; growth in joint research projects and faculty exchanges.
- Number of co-designed curricula and collaborative projects; number of roles filled by each institution and number of tangible benefits, including funding, shared between institutes.
- Percentage of programmes developed or adjusted based on feedback from employers and stakeholders; alignment of programmes with local and market needs.
- Changes in global rankings, partnership growth, and reputation survey scores; extent of integrated sustainability practices in programmes and operations.

2. Financial viability

2.1. Developing stage (Year 0-3)

2.1.1. Market viability assessment

- Conduct market research on demographics, student demand, fee structures, and competitors.
- Analyse regulatory and legal requirements, including qualification recognition.
- Assess political and economic stability and develop contingency plans.
- Define risk tolerance and limits on Return on Investment (ROI) and sunk costs.

2.1.2. Strategic business case development and alignment

- Align the TNE business case with strategic goals, including student projections, tuition structure, and revenue forecasts.
- Evaluate the TNE model for its impact on finance and operations, considering whether it requires extensive collaboration or offers more autonomy in decision-making.

2.1.3. Student enrolment growth strategies

- Build institutional reputation to attract students and offer graduate pathways.
- Align growth with market demands emphasising complementing rather than duplicating domestic provision, as well as fostering industry partnerships and internships.
- Improve student services and extracurricular activities to enhance retention and satisfaction.

2.1.4. Operational efficiency and technological integration

- Integrate technology and operations while aligning administrative processes and student services across UK and host universities.
- Develop HR plans with a focus on local and international recruitment.

2.2. Maturing stage (After year 3)

2.2.1. Achieving self-sustaining operation and ROIs

- Attain full self-sustainability and achieve a positive return on investment through effective management of initial capital and ongoing operational costs.

2.2.2. Exploring expansion and diversification

- Continuously conduct competitor analysis and monitor the competitive landscape, including new TNE entrants and government's TVET initiatives.
- Develop new programmes to expand offerings and market presence through regional partnerships or by replicating successful models in new regions. Assess staff workload, resource needs, and other due diligence factors to support sustainable expansion.

2.2.3. Diversification of revenue streams and strategic partnerships

- Expand revenue sources beyond tuition fees by establishing partnerships with other educational institutions, industry, and government bodies.

2.2.4. Sustainable operational practices

- Adopt and integrate sustainable practices and technologies among university campuses to ensure cost efficiency.

Indicators for financial viability

- Completion of market research, regulatory analysis, risk assessments, and competitor analysis; alignment score of the TNE business case with strategic goals.
- Growth rate of student enrolment vs. demand forecast; percentage increase in student satisfaction and retention; number of new programmes launched.
- Cost savings from integrated technology and operations across campuses; achievement of break-even and ROI.
- Percentage increase in revenue from non-tuition sources; number of new strategic partnerships; percentage of operations adopting sustainable practices; reduction in environmental impact metrics.

3. Partnership breadth and depth

3.1. Developing stage (0-3 years)

3.1.1. Education: Development of degree programmes

- Develop programme offerings meeting the demands of the host institutes/countries, focusing on expanding or diversifying offerings, including graduate-level programmes.
- Cultivate ties with regional institutes or industry partners.

3.1.2. Research: Increase capacity for collaborative research initiatives

- Enhance research collaboration by supporting graduate students, facilitating two-way exchanges, and establishing communication channels.

3.1.3. Operation: Initial integration and system implementation

- Analyse and integrate system and administrative practices to enhance operation efficiency, with hosting institutes (including IBC) adopting best practices from UK campuses.
- Assess the implementation and effectiveness of integrated administrative and technological systems.

3.2. Maturing stage (After year 3)

3.2.1. Education: Programme enhancement and strategic expansion

- Regularly review and adjust degree programmes to align with global trends and industry demands, maintaining strong relationships with governments and industry to ensure relevance and impact. Expansion should only be pursued if it supports these goals.

3.2.2. Enhanced research and innovation collaboration

- Expand research initiatives through joint project funding and strengthen researcher connections. Focus on advancing research impact and improving academic

3.2.3. Operational: Advanced integration and optimisation

- Optimise systems, supporting data integration for strategic analysis and the replication of successful models across institutes.

Indicators for partnership breadth and depth

- Number of new programmes launched annually and percentage increase in offerings.
- Number of new partnerships with regional institutes and industry.
- Number of joint research projects and researcher exchanges.
- Percentage of systems integrated and operational efficiency improvements, as measured through system metrics and user feedback.
- Growth in programmes aligned with global needs and replication of successful models.

4. Effective leadership and people development

4.1. Developing stage (Years 0-3)

4.1.1. Strategic leadership and stakeholder engagement

- Measure leader effectiveness in managing relationships with investors, university boards, and regulatory bodies throughout the partnership lifecycle.
- Assess leader effectiveness in aligning the development plan of the strategic goals of UK and the host universities.

4.1.2. Distributed leadership development

- Establish governance structures that ensure collaborative decision-making and involve diverse stakeholders (students, academics, staff).
- Evaluate collaboration between UK and local leaders in managing operations.

4.1.3. HR policy and people development

- Establish operational policies on academic freedom, equity, diversity, and inclusion policies while integrating local cultural understanding and ensuring inclusivity.
- Develop clear job roles, particularly in joint or dual degree arrangements, where academic responsibilities may be shared.
- Develop an HR plan that includes professional growth opportunities for staff.

4.2. Maturing stage (After year 3)

4.2.1. Sustained distributed leadership practices

- Evaluate the effectiveness of leaders in both sending and hosting institutes in managing relationships with investors, university boards, and regulatory bodies, and assess how well they align the development plans of UK and host universities with shared strategic goals.
- Review the effectiveness of collaboration between UK and local leaders in managing operations and driving joint initiatives.

4.2.2. Ongoing policy review and improvement

- Evaluate the effectiveness of policies on academic freedom, equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Review job role clarity.
- Assess and update the HR plan for staff development.

Indicators for effective leadership and people development

- Number of stakeholder engagements and strategic goals achieved.
- Number of joint committees and review meetings, with stakeholder involvement (students, academics, staff).
- Staff satisfaction related to clarity of job roles and professional development opportunities.
- Number of ongoing stakeholder engagements and joint initiatives, effectiveness of policy reviews, and updates to HR plans based on feedback and development needs.

5. Mutual trust and open communication

5.1. Developing stage (Year 0-3)

5.1.1. Building initial trust and effective collaboration

- Establish both formal and informal communication channels to foster mutual exchange and understanding between members in both institutions.
- Provide induction training to international (including fly-in) faculty to address cultural and work environment adjustment, fostering effective working relationships.

5.1.2. Managing student and parent expectations

- Develop and assess strategies to manage student and parent expectations through satisfaction surveys and ongoing engagement.
- Offer training on academic freedom to students to ensure clarity and adherence to institutional policies.

5.2. Maturing stage (After year 3)

5.2.1. Enhanced collaboration and continuous improvement

- Assess the effectiveness of both formal and informal communication channels and make improvements based on feedback from faculty, staff, and students.
- Co-develop and implement advanced training programmes to address cultural adjustments and integrate lessons learned from initial phases.

5.2.2. Advanced management of student and parent expectations

- Regularly review satisfaction surveys and communication feedback to refine strategies for managing student and parent expectations and address emerging issues.

Indicators for mutual trust and open communication

- Number of communication channels established, percentage of faculty completing induction training, and follow-up surveys on effectiveness.
- Percentage of positive feedback in surveys and focus groups, number of academic freedom training sessions, and frequency of communication channel reviews and improvements.

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