



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



STRATEGIC PLAN

2020/2021 - 2024/2025

JUNE, 2020



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Foreword

The National Council for Higher Education was established as the regulator of higher education to implement the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of Parliament (UOTIA, 2001). By the provisions of the Act, NCHE is mandated to guide the establishment of institutions of higher learning as well as ensure delivery of quality and relevant education to all qualified persons. NCHE has strived to achieve its mandate to ensure that sustainable quality higher education is provided at all Higher Educational Institutions in Uganda.

Quality University Education will be crucial in the production of the human resources required for implementing the Uganda's Vision 2040. The NCHE Strategic Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 therefore, is in line with the Vision 2040, the National Planning Framework and International Commitments, aimed at providing equitable access to higher education for all eligible students as well as quality instructional programs through efficient use of the limited resources available to the Sector. The development and review of programmes at higher education have not kept pace with emerging social and economic challenges. In the next 5 years the Higher education subsector requires a deliberate leveraging and repositioning **staff and curriculum development and STI infrastructure** to optimize their human capital development role to support Uganda's Vision 2040 and the technological advancements like the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR).

The NCHE Strategic Plan 2020/21 - 2024/25 endeavors to address issues affecting the higher education sector by providing broad-based strategies that can give it meaningful opportunities to maximize its potential in providing services. This Strategic Plan is a positive step by NCHE in addressing the underlying challenges facing the Higher education sub sector in Uganda. The Plan will guide NCHE in the delivery of tangible results to its Stakeholders for the next five years, as well as playing its role in achieving the national goals of the country and Society.

I wish to emphasize that this Plan is a statement of intent. Its key result areas will only be realized if it is effectively implemented. The responsibility for the execution of the strategies rests with all stakeholders. Special thanks and tribute go to the Government of Uganda, MoES, NCHE Council and staff.

I sincerely thank all those who participated in the formulation of the Strategic Plan for their ideas and commitment.

Prof. Dr. Eli – Rwakishaya Katunguka

CHAIRPERSON

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Acknowledgements

I am pleased to present the NCHE Strategic Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 which is aligned with the Education and Sports Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2020/21 – 2024/25) Strategic Direction, National Development Plan 3 (NDP III) and Uganda Vision 2040. Uganda's overall development agenda is guided by Vision 2040 (the Republic of Uganda, 2007). The Vision envisages a transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years. This Strategic Plan builds on the excellent performance of the last three year planning cycle 2017/18 -2019/20.

The 2020/21 -2024/25 Strategic Plan explicitly states the desire and aspirations of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) within the mandate of NCHE as enshrined in the Universities in the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTA 2001 as amended).

We are cognisant of the fact that the status of NCHE as the regulator of Higher Education in Uganda confers a big responsibility in promoting, sustaining and ensuring quality higher education which impacts on national human resource development. To realize this mandate, NCHE will employ a participatory and inclusive approach in working with the relevant Government Ministries, Agencies and Departments, Universities, Industries and Other relevant stakeholders in the development of competitive quality university education, training and research programmes.

1. NCHE acknowledges the achievement of certain targets from the expired the 2 year Strategic Plan 2017/2018-2019/2020; Notable achievements from this planning period include: The roll out and commissioning of the integrated Management Information system which has improved efficiency of internal processes and services through online transactions with higher education institutions .
2. Improved quality Audit and standards management with the digital /online capacity indicators to mainstream E-learning in higher education institutions.
3. Staff recruitment to support Research and Planning Unit, the Legal department and ICT Unit. Staff number s have risen from 40 to 47
4. Improved dissemination and data management and publication with 100% of NCHE publications conducted and targets for participation and funding achieved at the exhibition
5. Several Strategic partnerships to improve regulation, alignment with human capital planning and management and visibility.

This Strategic Plan articulates the shared vision, mission, core functions, policy

priorities, strategic objectives and resource requirements of the Council for the period 2020/21 -2024/25. In developing this Strategic Plan, we have recognized the Council's strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Similarly, NCHE has been able to fully appreciate some of the underlying challenges facing the sector. In realizing its Vision and Mission, the Council is guided by its mandate, key result areas and strategic objectives which also take into consideration the environment within which the Council operates.

To actualize the strategies and activities outlined in this document, the Council shall continue to prioritise strategic engagement of key stakeholders. The operational processes will be reviewed continuously to provide any necessary strategic adjustments.

The formulation of this Strategic Plan was a product of consultative and participatory process of all stakeholders in Higher Education and is hence a commitment of NCHE to ensuring quality of Higher Education. We thank the Ministry of Education and Sports for continued support and guidance. We profoundly acknowledge the professional input provided by Mr Godfrey Bwanika and his team of consultants on the Strategic Plan.

We acknowledge the contribution of NCHE Council, Management, Staff and all the stakeholders who contributed to the formulation of this document.

Professor Okwakol J. Mary PhD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

List of Abbreviations

AU	African Union
BTVET	Business Technical Vocational Education Training
DR&BC	Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity
DRFP&A	Directorate Finance Planning and Administration
DICT,R&I	Directorate of Information, Communication, Technology, Research and Innovation
DQAA	Directorate of Quality Assurance and accreditation
EAC	East African Community
ESA	Education Situational Analysis
ESSP	Education and Sports Strategic Plan
HE	Higher Education
HEI's	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information Communication Technology
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NDP	National Development Plan
ODeL	Open Distance e-Learning
PAQAF	Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
STI	Science Technology and Innovations
STISA	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UOTIA	Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act
WDI	World Development Indicator

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Executive Summary

NCHE was established as the regulator of higher education to implement the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of Parliament (UOTIA, 2001). The Act, mandates NCHE to guide the establishment of institutions of higher learning as well as ensure the delivery of quality and relevant education to nationals. To operationalize the law, the National Council for Higher Education has formulated a strategic plan to provide a framework for implementing and delivering its mandate as spelt out in the Act. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to provide a policy and development framework for the National Council for Higher Education to address institutional capacity challenges and delivering on the 17 functions spelt out in the Act. The Strategic Plan is anchored in the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 4.3 which requires equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education by 2030, the Africa agenda, 2063 with a commitment to a Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) to support educational quality standards across the continent. The Strategic Plan is aligned with Uganda's Vision 2040, the NDP III, the education situational analysis report, and the Education Sports Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP).

In light of the above, NCHE envisions "A Uganda with accessible, quality and transformative higher education". Relatedly the NCHE 2020 – 2024 Strategic Plan has been developed in pursuance of the Council's mission to regulate Higher education through setting standards to ensure the provision of relevant quality Higher education in Uganda. NCHE will pursue the mission through six strategic objectives;

1. Promote and strengthen Leadership and Governance capacity of the National Council for Higher Education.
2. Strengthen the Licensing and Accreditation Function of Higher Education Institutions and Programmes.
3. Advance relevant research and innovation for higher education
4. Strengthen Standards for equating qualifications and regulation of higher education qualifications.
5. Strengthen Monitoring, Compliance and Audit function of HEIs.
6. Promote use of Information Communication Technology in all sectors of the Council and in HEI's.

To achieve the six strategic objectives, the NCHE will be guided by four core values of independence, professionalism, integrity, and accountability. Relatedly, strategic actions have been developed to guide the NCHE work for the next five years. In addition, a robust implementation arrangement has been explained that will facilitate implementation of the strategic plan

The Plan requires a total of 26,300,000,000, over for the entire five-year period, which calls for vigorous resource mobilization and utilization.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This is a 5-year Strategic Plan for the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) for the period from 2020/2021 to 2024/2025. The plan specifies the Council's strategic direction, interventional priorities and implementation strategies. The Plan further delineates the context in which the Council is operating including the political, economic, social, and legal and policy environment. The Plan is anchored in the global development framework, overall government policy direction guided by major government policy documents namely: Vision 2040, National Development Plan III (NDP III), Education Situational Analysis Report, 2019, and the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25. Being the second strategic framework for NCHE, this Plan highlights the key achievements the organization has realized from the previous planning frameworks.

The Plan builds on the achievements registered during the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the period 2017/2018 – 2019/2020 and seeks to align the NCHE stakeholders' priorities with the emergent Higher Education and development pathways, both within the country and the East African Region.

1.2. Background

NCHE was established as the regulator of higher education to implement the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of Parliament (UOTIA, 2001). By the provisions of the Act, NCHE is mandated to guide the establishment of institutions of higher learning as well as ensure the delivery of quality and relevant education to nationals. Specifically, the key functions of the National Council under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 as Amended include: to implement the objects of this Act; promote and develop the processing and dissemination of information on Higher Education for the benefit of the people; to advise the Minister on the establishment and accreditation of public and private institutions of Higher Education; to receive, consider and process applications for the establishment and accreditation of public and private institutions of Higher Education; and the accreditation of the academic and professional programmes of those institutions in consultation with Professional Associations and Regulatory Bodies. The Council is also mandated to: register all institutions of Higher Education established under the Act; receive and investigate complaints relating to institutions of Higher Education and take appropriate action; monitor, evaluate and regulate institutions of Higher Learning. In co-operation with the relevant government departments, private sector, or the different institutions of Higher Education, NCHE is mandated to evaluate the overall national Human Resource requirement and recommend solutions to the requirements; ensure minimum standards for courses of study and equating

of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by the different public and private institutions of Higher Education; but also set and co-ordinate national standards for admission of students to the different institutions of Higher Education. The Act further mandates NCHE to: require and ensure that all universities, whether private or public, adhere to minimum criteria set by the National Council for admission to undergraduate and higher degree programmes; determine the equivalence of all types of academic and professional qualifications of degrees, diplomas and certificates obtained elsewhere with those awarded by Uganda institutions of Higher Education for recognition in Uganda. Other functions spelt out in the Act include: certification that an institution of Higher Education has adequate and accessible physical structures and staff for the courses to be offered by it; promotion of national interests in courses of study and professional qualifications among the different types of institutions of Higher Education; and ensuring that the institutions of Higher Education provide that adequate facilities and opportunities for career guidance and counselling; to collect, examine and publish information relating to the different institutions of Higher Education; generally to advise government on policy and other matters relating to institutions of Higher Education; and, to perform any other function incidental to the objects of this Act or relating to Higher Education in Uganda or as may be conferred upon it by the Minister or any other law.

However, the legal framework is yet to be made more comprehensive to address gaps in financing strategies; principles for allocating public funds; incentives for private institutions; enforcement and conflicting mandates between NCHE and BTVET. Amendments will have to be made in the near future to provide legal basis in these important areas.

1.3. Purpose of the NCHE Strategic Plan

The NCHE Strategic Plan (2017/2018 – 2019/2020) ends the financial year 2019/2020 and the Council needs a new strategic plan to deliver on its mandate. In addition, Government has developed the NDP III which emphasizes human capital development for which NCHE is mandated. These two forces motivated NCHE to develop a strategic plan to properly fit into the new operating environment but also enable the Council to effectively and efficiently deliver on its mandate.

This strategic planning process was also necessitated by the need to respond to the changing nature and complexity of the challenges that NCHE seeks to address as evidenced in shifts in the overall operational and higher education environment as analyzed in Chapter Two. To this end, the Plan seeks to address the evident internal weaknesses of NCHE so as to confront the external threats effectively and leverage the Council's strengths to transform the available opportunities into concrete benefits for the higher education actors.

This strategic plan, therefore, clarifies NCHE's direction for the next five years in responding to the country's higher education needs and mandates spelt out in the Act.

1.4. Context of the NCHE Strategic Plan (External Analysis)

1.4.1. Global Context

As an active member in the international arena, Uganda subscribes to protocols on higher education emanating from the United Nations (UN); the African Union (AU); the East African Community (EAC); and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. The following are instruments that are relevant to this Strategic Plan:

a) United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in which they announced 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets as a commitment for a new universal Agenda.¹ Sustainable Development Goal 4 is dedicated to education. Higher education is mentioned in target 4.3 of SDG 4 which states: "By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university."² After signing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, countries have taken action to integrate the Goals and targets into their national and sector development plans and to align policies and institutions behind them. Since Uganda is a UN member state, it is incumbent on all its ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to align their development frameworks to the relevant SDGs. This NCHE strategic plan comes in to facilitate the promotion of equal access to quality higher education for the next five years.

b) African Union (AU) Agenda 2063

As a continental umbrella organization, the African Union adopted the Agenda 2063³ Framework during the Summit in January 2015 as the basis for Africa's long-term socio-economic and integrative transformation. The summit adopted seven⁴ aspirations including aspiration 1, which provides for a prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

1 https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

2 <https://en.unesco.org/themes/higher-education/sdgs>

3 <https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063-first10yearimplementation.pdf>

4 <https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063-aspirations.pdf>

In addition, the African Union Agenda's First Ten-Year Implementation Plan (the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016 – 2025) includes a commitment to a Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) to support educational quality standards across the continent. In this NCHE Strategic Plan, the objective on standards, equating qualifications and regulations of the higher education system is a direct response to PAQAF.

As part of the agenda 2063, African Union developed a ten year Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024)⁵. The Mission of STISA-2024 is to "Accelerate Africa's transition to an innovation-led, Knowledge-based Economy". The strategy guides that the development of Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa requires the upgrading of science laboratories and the establishment of world class Science Technology and Innovations (STI) infrastructure. This includes research and innovation facilities such as laboratories (for teaching, engineering and clinical trials), teaching hospitals, ICT equipment and infrastructure, Innovation Spaces, Living Labs and National Research and Education Networks. Therefore, realising the full potential of Science, Technology and Innovation to support sustainable socio-economic growth and development, and improving African competitiveness in global research and innovation, require that Member States continue to expand the availability of quality post-graduate education, and in particular programmes leading to doctoral qualifications. In Uganda, the National Council for Higher Education is the mandated body to regulate higher education through the STISA goals and objectives shall be realized.

c) East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education

The Heads of State of the East African Community (EAC) Partner States declared a Common Higher Education Area whereby the national higher education and training systems shall operate and be guided by a common regional framework under which curricula, examinations and certification as well as academic and professional qualifications, and the quality of the educational and training output in higher education will be harmonised.⁶

This means that the Common Higher Education Area will facilitate and enable the mobility of students and teachers and promote the free movement of labour, people and services as envisioned under the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community signed in 1999 and the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market in 2010. The National Council for Higher Education is the legally mandated body to drive the commitment of the East African Heads of State to make higher education a common higher education area.

⁵ https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/33178-wd-stisa-english_-_final.pdf

⁶ <https://wenr.wes.org/2018/12/common-higher-education-area-chea-of-the-east-african-community>

This Strategic Plan contributes to the implementation of the Protocol by ensuring compliance with the regional standards and guidelines for programme accreditation.

1.4.2. NCHE National Context

a) *About the Republic of Uganda*

Uganda's population was estimated to be 42.9 million in 2017 (World Development Indicators, 2018). Uganda has one of the most rapidly growing and youngest populations in the world. Since 2000, the population growth rate has remained unchanged at between 3.2% and 3.3% per year, and nearly half of the population (47.7%) was estimated to be below the age of 14 in 2017 (WDI, 2018).

b) *The Political and Administrative Environment*

For a long time, Uganda was under a non-partisan political system called the Movement where leaders from grassroots to the national level were elected on individual merit. However, in 2005 it reverted to multi-party politics where leaders gain political office on the basis of party affiliation. Administratively, power is devolved through decentralization to the district and sub county levels. However, there is limited management capacity and rampant corruption at these tiers of government. Limited capacity notwithstanding, this arrangement presents opportunities for HEIs to train and produce personnel required for strengthening the management of government agencies.

c) *Uganda's Economy*

As in many other African countries, paid jobs are the exception rather than the rule. Data from the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) show that of the working population in 2016/17, 43.8% were subsistence workers and contributing family workers. Around a third of the working population was self-employed, which also tends to be in the informal sector. Only 23.2% of the working population had paid jobs, with about 80% in industry and services, and 20% in agriculture (UNHS, 2016/17).

Uganda's economic growth has slowed since 2016 as government spending and the public debt have grown. Uganda's budget is dominated by energy and road infrastructure spending, while Uganda relies on donor support for long-term drivers of growth, including agriculture, health, and education. The largest infrastructure projects are externally financed through concessional loans. As a result, debt servicing for these loans is expected to rise, which presents a challenge for funding the activities of NCHE.

d) *Alignment to the Uganda Vision 2040*

Providing quality education for all is guaranteed by the country's Constitution. Education and training are embedded in the country's strategies for socio-economic development. Vision 2040 recognizes the provision of universal primary and secondary education as a human right and emphasizes the objective of improving girls' completion rates. Vision 2040 also highlights the importance of changing the curriculum and methods of instruction and examination to adapt the education system to Uganda's development objectives.

e) *Alignment with the National Development Plan III*

The third National Development Plan (NDP III) came in to consolidate the gains from the NDP II, and human capital development features prominently, both as a means to provide Uganda's emerging higher value-added private sector with the human capital needed for growth and productivity, and also as a crucial means to promote universal and equitable socio-economic development for Uganda's population (National Planning Authority, 2019). Strategic objective two of NDP III sets out to enhance the ability of the education and training system to supply high-quality skills which are more responsive to societal and economic needs. NDP III highlights key higher education undertakings including: build capacity of Higher Education Institutions to meet Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards by providing the threshold physical infrastructure, instruction materials and human resources; centralize and link higher Education admission and Financing to the National Human Resources Development Plan; build capacity of HEIs to meet Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards in HEIs; prioritize investment in incubation of research into goods and services for national growth and societal wellbeing; strengthen the link between Universities and industry; ensure strong alignment of curricular between University and the lower education subsectors.

f) *Education Situation Analysis Report (ESA)*

According to the Education Situational Analysis (ESA) report conducted by the Ministry of Education and Sports, access to Higher Education (HE) has been boosted through liberalization of higher education and continued government sponsorships in Public Universities. Student enrolment in HE institutions increased by 9.1% per year between 2004/05 and 2016/17.

Over the past decade, the network of HE institutions (universities and other degree-awarding institutions) grew by 59% from 148 in 2006/07 to 236 in 2016/17. In 2017/18, it grew by 61% to 241 institutions.

The enrolment of Uganda nationals increased by 33.2% between 2011/12 and 2016/17 (34% in 2017/18), while the number of international students increased by 7.7% only.

The share of international students in overall enrolment increased from 8.7% in 2011/12 to 9.5% in 2012/13 and has been gradually declining, reaching 7.1% in 2016/17.

The ESA highlights some of the key challenges that are affecting higher education in Uganda including:

- i. HE institutions conduct limited research and have few Ph.D. admissions;
- ii. HE institutions struggle to recruit quality teaching staff;
- iii. Entry requirements to HE institutions were raised substantially;
- iv. Some colleges struggle to enroll enough students;
- v. Uganda has the lowest enrolment ratio in East Africa of 6.8;
- vi. Increasing sexual harassment in the Higher Education Institutions;
- vii. Instabilities in Universities especially in Public Universities.

As a mandated agency, NCHE's five-year strategic plan targets the challenges higher education presents to students, HEIs, the MoES, and to NCHE itself.

1.5. Process of Developing the NCHE Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan is the result of consultation and deliberations with NCHE stakeholders as well as the leadership of NCHE. It was a critical self-examination process where personal and functional experiences were shared to help NCHE and its leadership to challenge the status quo, extract useful insights to guide the ambition to excel in regulating higher education in Uganda over the next five years, especially as it responds to the emerging challenges and opportunities. Internal stakeholder meetings were held, with support and technical guidance of a facilitator. These processes were further informed by a comprehensive review of literature at global, continental, regional, national and sector levels and consultative engagement of key stakeholders, as well as facilitation of a three-day planning workshop that attracted key NCHE stakeholders. The stakeholders' expectations, views and aspirations were collated and used to inform the preparation of the Strategic Plan in line with the global, regional and national development frameworks.

1.6. Structure of the NCHE Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is arranged in six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and it presents the background to the Plan, Uganda's context, the purpose of the plan, and the global, regional, and national context of the plan. Chapter two is situational analysis. It includes: the review of the performance of NCHE, focusing on key achievements of the Council; challenges; lessons learnt and experiences; political, economic, social and technological analysis; SWOT and stakeholder analysis of NCHE. Chapter three presents the strategic direction including: the vision; values; mission; strategic objectives; and strategic actions. Chapter four highlights the

strategic plan implementation arrangements in terms of key stakeholders; their roles and responsibilities in strategic plan implementation; and coordination and communication mechanisms. Chapter five lays out the financial arrangements in terms of funding sources, and expenditure estimates. The last chapter presents the monitoring and evaluation provisions. It explains how monitoring and evaluation will be conducted.

Chapter Two: Situational Analysis of the National Council for Higher Education

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the key successes realized by the National Council for Higher Education since it was established. The chapter also presents some of the challenges faced, the good practices and lessons learned from implementation of agreed upon undertakings. To provide a planning foundation for the NCHE strategic plan, internal and external environmental analysis was conducted focusing on the internal and external Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), and Stakeholder analysis

2.2. Review of the Performance of NCHE

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was established as the regulator for Higher Education to implement the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of Parliament (UOTIA, 2001 as amended). By the provisions of the Act, NCHE is mandated to guide the establishment of institutions of higher learning as well as ensure delivery of quality and relevant education to all qualifying persons.

Since its establishment, NCHE has focused on four pillars: regulation of education, documentation and dissemination, research and innovation, and organisational and institutional development. To deliver on its mandate, NCHE identified various initiatives, undertakings, and targets to guide its work. Review of NCHE reports revealed that a number of achievements have been realized, pointing to effective regulation of higher education in Uganda.

During the period under review, NCHE has made tremendous progress in operationalizing its mandate. Critical among them are:

- i. The construction of NCHE offices on Plot M834 Kyambogo after operating for 10 years from a rented former Kyambogo university residential house located at 34 Caver Crescent;
- ii. Recruitment of qualified staff;
- iii. Development of Quality Assurance framework for universities in Uganda comprising two major components, namely: regulatory component at the level of NCHE and the institutional component at each individual university level;
- iv. Issuance of various statutory instruments including: Statutory instrument No.80 of 2005; Establishment and Operation of Private Universities and Private Tertiary institution Regulations, 2005; Statutory instrument No.85 of 2005; Institutional

Standards Regulations, 2005; Statutory instrument No.1 of 2007; Naming of Universities, Other Degree Awarding Institutions and Other Tertiary Institutions Regulations 2007; Statutory instrument No.61 of 2007; Letter of Interim Authority for private universities and provisional Licenses for private Other Degree Awarding institutions Regulations, 2007; Statutory instrument No.62 of 2007; Equating of Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates Regulation, 2007; Statutory instrument No.63 of 2007; Minimum Entry Requirements for Admissions to Universities and Other Tertiary institutions Regulations, 2007; Statutory instrument No.34 of 2008; Quality Assurance Regulations, 2008; Statutory instrument No.35 of 2008; Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards for Procurement Education and Training Regulations, 2008; Statutory instrument No.50 of 2010; Awarding of Honorary Degrees and Academic Titles Regulations, 2010;

- v. Effective operationalization of Statutory Instrument No.17 of 2010 which permitted NCHE to collect one currency point (or 20,000/=) from each student registered in higher education institutions. This contribution has become NCHE's main source of income;
- vi. Compilation and publication of the annual State of Higher Education Report which highlights higher education issues that require scrutiny including the state of institutions at the time. This publication, which is one of the major achievements of NCHE, comes out on a regular basis.

2.3. NCHE Challenges

It is important for managers to understand and identify the pitfalls and challenges that can occur during the process to improve the effective implementation. Knowing which pitfalls can emerge could help to prevent them and can lead to a more proactive approach. During the process of delivering on its mandate, NCHE experienced various challenges including: Inadequate and sometimes late releases of funds to NCHE; conflict of interest of Council members; limited enforcement powers; inadequate staffing levels despite huge mandate of NCHE; limited staffing in some departments i.e. only 47% positions are filled; limited appreciation of NCHE's services among population; limited infrastructure for research, office space and ICT at NCHE; non-compliance of HEIs even when their licenses are revoked; low capacity of HEIs in research and innovation; and, inadequate funds to support innovations.

2.4. Lessons Learnt and Best Practices

Being the entity managing the higher education function in the country, NCHE has recorded various lessons and best practices in implementing strategic frameworks. These include:

- i. For NCHE to realize success in the implementation of the strategic plans, the

structure must be consistent with the strategy to be implemented. This therefore calls for development of a NCHE organizational structure that corresponds with the strategic plan's focus areas.

- ii. For Council to succeed in providing the oversight function to NCHE, they need to regularly review performance and provide feedback to management; but also collectively work towards mitigating the likely conflict of interest arising from the composition of Council members.
- iii. The culture of setting and working towards performance targets during implementation works in an environment where staffs have a clear understanding of their jobs, roles, and responsibilities in executing their work. This therefore calls for conducting a job analysis and job profile of all NCHE staff.

2.5. SWOT Analysis of National Council of Higher Education

An analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of NCHE was undertaken. This strategic plan will be implemented within dynamic internal and external environments. The internal environment analysis will assist in developing strategies, maintaining the strengths, and improving weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities. The analysis of the external environment will assist NCHE to exploit the available opportunities and have the ability to face the foreseeable threats during implementation of this strategy. A detailed SWOT is presented below:

Table 1: SWOT Results

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Autonomous legal mandate to manage higher education• Conducive working environment• Adequate space for future expansion• Existence of strong internal policies and regulations• Presence of a viable legal mandate (UOTIA, 2003)• Highly skilled & motivated human resource• Functional governance structure (Council, committees, management and staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weak NCHE standard operating procedures (SOPs)• Weak record management practices• Weak appraisal systems that are not linked to the strategic plan• Weak M&E function in NCHE• Inadequate staffing in the audit and compliance function• Weak enforcement provisions of the NCHE law.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political support in form of strong legislation and funding from government • Advancement in technology that can increase access to Higher education as well as availability of data for HE research • Increased uptake of STEM as a catalyst to relevance • Increased investment in Higher education • Increased uptake in doctoral training thus increase in quality staff to support HE • Uganda's attractive Higher education destination within the region • Increased shift to Higher education funding • Higher demand for university education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overlapping mandate with other agencies • Commercialization of higher education (Profit minded institutions) • Drop in foreign student enrolment • Increasing cost of higher education • High attrition rates of students • Disparities in access to higher education • Non-compliance of higher education institutions • Increased forgeries in academic documents • Duplication of academic programmes in HEIs

2.6. Stakeholder Analysis

As a vital component of environmental analysis, stakeholder analysis was undertaken to consider the interests and expectations of NCHE and its stakeholders. This involved taking an inventory of all actors and institutions that have a stake in the work of the Council. Below is a summary of the stakeholder analysis in terms of who they are, what they do, and what NCHE should do to deliver on its mandate.

Table 2. NCHE Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	What Do They Do?	What NCHE Needs to do To Obtain Their Support?
1. Uganda/Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create awareness • Promote NCHE good image • Disseminate information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust engagement • Periodic debriefings • Ensure publication of accurate information • Popularize NCHE roles
2. Professional Associations/Regulatory bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional training • Regulate conduct and practice of professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forge good working relationships through MoUs • Joint accreditation of programmes and facilities

Stakeholders	What Do They Do?	What NCHE Needs to do To Obtain Their Support?
3. Development Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support (technical and financial infrastructure) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and engage • Submit proposals • Accountability and timely reports • Provide sustainable strategies for funded projects
4. Government (Ministry of Education and Sports)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding NCHE • Policy guidance • Approval of regulations • Establish and regulate NCHE Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen research and strategic planning engagements with MoEs officials • Share sub-sector research • Attend MoEs meetings and activities • Strengthen advisory role to the minister through regular reports and briefs • Involve MoEs in the NCHE activities
5. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Public, religious, individual owned, foundation owned)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Higher education and training • Provide avenue for research • Provide expertise for NCHE activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide HEIs with info on NCHE • Support them in resource mobilization • Build staff capacity in HEIs
6. Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive tailored training from HEIs NCHE regulates • Contribute some financing to NCHE • Conduct research • Clients of HEIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure HEIs provide quality Higher Education. • Provide career guidance and support services • Provide feedback through their representations in the council • Provide feedback on quality issues. • Ensure regular engagement of student leaders
7. Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional skills to the HEIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate, engage and empower staff • Provide a conducive working platform

Stakeholders	What Do They Do?	What NCHE Needs to do To Obtain Their Support?
8. NCHE Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide works, supplies and services to NCHE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage them on a regular basis • Pay them promptly • Charge fees on services rendered
9. Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund NCHE projects • Train and build capacity • Avail international benchmark information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and encourage regular dialogue • Write fundable proposals • Initiate sustainable networks.
10. Government Agencies and Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Government policies and agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic engagement
11. Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking and employing graduates • Provide feedback on competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback on performance of graduates, and relevance of academic programmes. • Regular engagements

Chapter Three: Strategic Direction

3.1. Introduction

The NCHE strategic direction for the next five years (2020/2021 – 2024/2025) was informed by a review of operational context including external and internal factors, the legal, and policy context, institutional framework, the gains, and gaps, emerging issues and lessons learnt. The strategic choices in this strategic plan seek to consolidate the achievements NCHE has made since its establishment, harness opportunities, and address the weaknesses and challenges identified. The strategic choices and priorities are envisaged to invigorate NCHE's performance in delivering on its mandate.

3.2. National Council for Higher Education Vision

The vision for the next five-year period of the strategic plan is: ***A Uganda with accessible, quality and transformative higher education.***

3.3. NCHE Core Values (IPIA)

Table 3. NCHE Core Values

<i>Independence</i>	At NCHE we believe in knowledge and judgment. Freedom and independence. For our service consumers as well as Council and staff.
<i>Professionalism</i>	We are committed to continuous improvement and professional growth. We take pride in producing high-quality work and delivering exceptional service to internal and external customers. We exhibit pride in professional appearance, language and behaviour. We assume responsibility for a clean and safe work area. We maintain composure in challenging situations. We respect others, express sincere appreciation, and positively influence those around us
<i>Integrity</i>	Integrity is the act of behaving honourably, even when no one is watching. People with integrity follow moral and ethical principles in all aspects of life. At NCHE, we are committed to hiring employees with integrity who are equipped to provide high-quality service and maintain a positive reputation. When employees have integrity, their managers can trust their team is working diligently.

Accountability	This value will guide us in promoting the duty and obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions. NCHE staff shall; be answerable to stakeholders for their actions, promote efficient and effective use of resources, pursue value for money in all our undertakings. In addition, the staff and Council will be responsible for their actions, free from conflict of interest, and uphold the organization's credibility.
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3.4. NCHE Mission

The mission of the Council is: ***"To Regulate Higher Education through setting Standards to ensure the provision of Relevant Quality Higher Education in Uganda"***

3.5. NCHE Themes, Strategic Objectives, and Possible Strategic Actions

The NCHE Strategic Plan has been organised according to broad themes, strategic objectives, and strategic actions. The Council will focus on six themes including: (i) Management, leadership and governance capacity; (ii) Licensing and Accreditation; (iii) Research and Innovation (iv) Standards, equating qualifications and regulations; (v) Monitoring Compliance and audit; and (vi) Information, Communication and Technology.

3.5.1. Management, Leadership and Governance Capacity

This theme will focus on the capacity of NCHE including the technical staff, the Council and its committees to deliver their mandate. The theme will address the capacity of human resources, institutional development, resource mobilisation, and infrastructural capacity of NCHE. National Council for Higher Education plans to construct its Headquarters to provide office space to additional number of staff and has developed scheme design report and the overall project was estimated at 11 bn.

Management, leadership and governance capacity development will further bring out the key components of the functionality of the management, leadership and governance structures. Relevant strategic actions have been identified to guide NCHE in promoting this important function in public sector organizations. The strategic objective for this theme will be to: ***Promote and strengthen the management, leadership and governance capacity of the National Council for Higher Education.***

The strategic objective will be pursued through the following strategic actions:

- i. Strengthening the performance management system for Council, Management and staff
- ii. Promoting visibility and corporate image of NCHE
- iii. Facilitating the development, review and amendment of relevant policies, laws

and regulations

- iv. Building capacity for Council and staff
- v. Conducting a comprehensive human resource analysis for NCHE
- vi. Ensuring a conducive working environment for staff
- vii. Strengthening the internal audit function
- viii. Strengthening resource mobilization in NCHE
- ix. Strengthening the M&E function
- x. Improving NCHE structure for effective delivery of services
- xi. Establishing a NCHE gender and equity unit

3.5.2. Licensing and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Programmes

Licensing and educational accreditation is a type of quality assurance process under which services and operations of educational institutions or programmes are evaluated by an external body to determine if applicable standards are met. If standards are met, accredited status is granted by the appropriate agency in this case NCHE. Accreditation and licensing take place at a central government level. The strategic objective for this theme will be to: ***Strengthen the Licensing and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Programmes.***

The strategic objective will be pursued through the following strategic actions:

- i. Create awareness in the processes and procedures in licensing and accreditations
- ii. Enhance Higher education institutions' competences in programme development for accreditations
- iii. Strengthen the processes for licensure, institutional, and programme accreditations
- iv. Promote sound governance and strengthen corporate oversight in all HE providers in Uganda

3.5.3. Research and Innovation

Institutions in higher education, research and innovation play a central role in the advancement of societies and economies. They facilitate economic growth, strengthen technological progress, and enhance job creation. In addition, higher education institutions contribute to the personal development of individuals and help educate proactive citizens in societies. To achieve the best possible results, these institutions require modern and effective management of the research and innovation function. The strategic objective for this theme will be to: ***Advance relevant research, and innovation for higher education.***

The strategic objective will be pursued through the following strategic actions;

- i. Develop strategic partnerships in research
- ii. Establish a competitive NCHE research grant
- iii. Build NCHE & staff capacity to manage and coordinate research
- iv. Strengthen data management, documentation and dissemination
- v. Advocate for the establishment of national research funds
- vi. Develop mechanisms to convene scholars to share their research and findings
- vii. Provide the required infrastructure and facilities for research and innovation

3.5.4. Standards, equating qualifications and regulation

Setting and maintaining standards is a technically challenging issue and one that attracts a lot of public interest in Uganda. The Standards inform students and other interested parties of the expectations of higher education providers in relation to the delivery of higher education in Uganda. The Standards also enable and support prospective and enrolled students to make informed choices through the specific expectations articulated by the Standards for provision of comprehensive, timely, accurate and publicly-available information about a higher education provider's offerings and operations. This theme will facilitate updating higher education Standards to be able to equate and regulate academic qualifications in Uganda. As such, the strategic objective for the theme will be to: ***Strengthen Standards for equating qualifications and regulation of higher education qualifications.***

The strategic objective will be pursued through the following strategic actions:

- i. Develop, implement minimum standards and regulations
- ii. Review existing standards and regulations to enhance higher education
- iii. Strengthen the function of recognition and equating of qualifications
- iv. Strengthen and update recognized and equated qualifications

3.5.5. Monitoring, Compliance and Audit

Higher education institutions (HEIs) work in a complex environment and are subject to considerable regulation. A governing body should satisfy itself that the institution is complying with the requirements placed upon it. As HEIs are required to make returns to many organizations and agencies, this is not a simple task. HEIs are autonomous institutions that run their affairs with a lot of freedom yet they deal in a business that produces graduates that must fit in today's competitive environment. NCHE is mandated to establish standards as a framework to regulate HEIs, monitor for compliance levels and periodically conduct audits in the institutions. On top of NCHE's M&E framework, this theme will facilitate continuous collection, analysis and interpretation of data from HEIs to form a basis of evidence-based decision-making. NCHE will periodically conduct compliance audits in HEIs as a mechanism to check

on compliance levels in their teaching processes. Therefore, the strategic objective for this theme will be to: **Strengthen Monitoring, Compliance and Audit function of HEIs.**

The strategic objective will be pursued through the following strategic actions:

- i. Develop a mechanism to promote compliance
- ii. Build capacity of HEI's for compliance
- iii. Monitor and Audit HEIs for compliance
- iv. Strengthen relationship with other Government Agencies
- v. Ensure quality in access to Higher Education

3.5.6. Information, Communication and Technology

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) present numerous opportunities. The future of ICT in higher education will be shaped by the degree to which HEIs can adopt new sourcing options and management practices to simplify management of commodity IT infrastructure, platforms, application, and service and to increase their agility and ability to innovate.

ICT is an enabler in HEIs, the use of technology for information and knowledge gathering to improve pedagogy and develop entirely new forms of teaching and learning that can educate diverse students cost effectively, at massive scale and distance, and innovatively.

There are now a growing number of HEIs in the country that have proposed to offer programmes or are already offering programmes using ODeL mode of learning. It is therefore important to ensure that the quality graduates whether from ODeL or traditional mode of learning are not compromised. There is therefore need to regulate and develop standards for Distance and Online learning mode of learning and ensure that the quality of the graduates is not compromised. NCHE has developed the ODeL minimum standards to help in the accreditation of ODeL submitted programmes and also for ensuring that Institutions that seek to operate under this arrangement meet the minimum requirement. For this reason, NCHEs strategic objective for the theme will be to: **Promote use of Information Communication Technology in all sectors of the Council and in HEIs.** The strategic objective will be pursued through the following strategic actions:

- i. Enhance the use of IMIS in the licensing and accreditation of HEI's and programmes
- ii. Upgrade, improve the IT infrastructure, to meet quality standards and increase its capacity to support the administrative activities of NCHE and

future expansion

- iii. Implement Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity (DR and BC) plan to ensure continuous operation of IT systems
- iv. Implementation of Online and digital (ODEL) capacity Indicators to support mainstreaming Online/E-Learning in HEIs.
- v. Design and install video conferencing facility
- vi. Institutionalization of ICT guideline/manual for HEI's

Summary of NCHE Strategic Objectives

1. Promote and strengthen Management, Leadership and Governance capacity of the National Council for Higher Education.
2. Strengthen the Licensing and Accreditation Function of Higher Education Institutions and Programmes.
3. Advance relevant research and innovation for higher education.
4. Strengthen Standards for equating qualifications and regulation of higher education qualifications.
5. Strengthen Monitoring, Compliance and Audit function of HEIs.
6. Promote use of Information Communication Technology in all sectors of the Council and in HEI's.

Chapter Four: Institutional Arrangements for Implementation

4.1. Introduction

NCHE recognizes that successful implementation is dependent on several factors, which must be well defined to facilitate the smooth implementation of the plan. This chapter presents the structural, system, and human resource requirements to translate the document to results.

4.2. Strategic Plan Implementation Matrix

The strategic plan matrix is attached to this plan and provides a detailed description of activities and annual budgets. For easy implementation, each department will be required to draw annual work plans using the budget estimates. The work plans will be consolidated into an annual NCHE work plan, which will take into consideration the financial, human and other resources available in each year. The Council will approve all annual work plans which the Executive Director will use to effect performance management and follow-ups.

4.3. Implementation Approach

This strategic plan will be implemented within five years (2020/21-2024/25), and it will be anchored on the financial year system of the Government of Uganda, as resource allocation from government is key for the effective implementation. NCHE shall undertake both mid-term and end-term review of this plan. The mid-term review will provide the status of the plan implementation, and take corrective measures to address any deviations or emerging challenges from implementation. The review will therefore help keep the plan on course.

Over the next five-year period of this Strategic Plan, NCHE will focus on ensuring easier access to higher education for all the Ugandan population as per the NDP III focus. Special emphasis will be made to ensure that women, people with disabilities, rural-based students, and orphans, access higher education. NCHE will review minimum standards to ensure that HEIs' put in place proper infrastructure like ramps and lifts for people with special needs. In addition, NCHE will encourage HEIs to develop a Special Needs Education curriculum.

4.4. Key Stakeholders, their Roles and Responsibilities in Strategic Plan Implementation

Section four of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001 establishes the National Council for Higher Education and mandates it to monitor evaluate and regulate higher education institutions.

Council members will support implementation of the plan by formulating and reviewing the policies of NCHE; carrying out the functions of the Council as spelt out in the Act; setting targets for the annual performance of the Council; monitoring and evaluating the performance of the management of the NCHE; and, generally supervising the management of the property and business of the Council. NCHE will operationalize its mandate through holding statutory meetings, undertaking NCHE activities, and periodically review performance.

The Council consists of eighteen persons, the majority of whom are representatives of various social constituencies including public and private universities, students, religious organizations, commerce, industry, agriculture, the general public the Ministry of Education and people with disabilities. In executing its functions, NCHE will be guided by the Minister of Education and Sports on policy.

Under the supervision of the Executive Director, Management will be responsible for translating policies, programmes, projects, and activities into results. The day-to-day operations of the secretariat are vested in the Executive Director who reports to the Council. In the execution of the policies of NCHE, the Deputy Executive Director and Directors, who constitute the Management Team, assist the Executive Director.

As front-line providers of education, HEIs will execute the primary responsibility for improving the quality of the teaching and learning experiences they make available for their students. This Plan introduces various incentive mechanisms to facilitate the efforts of HEIs in carrying out their missions and in enhancing the services they provide.

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) will take the lead for the governance of the Education and Sports sector at the national level. In collaboration with other line ministries and local governments, the MoES will set the standards, provide technical guidance, support, coordinate, monitor and evaluate policies and regulate the sector players (NDP II, Republic of Uganda, 2015).

4.5. Coordination and Communication Mechanism

Communication and coordination are key issues for successful implementation of a strategic plan. NCHE designated the office of the Director Finance, Planning and Administration to take the lead in tracking the performance of Directorates with support from the Department of Planning and Development. The office of the Director Finance, Planning and Administration will coordinate and guide other Directorates to generate monthly performance reports for onward reporting to Senior Management and Council statutory meetings for review and decision making. Communication, on the other hand, will be coordinated by the office of Planning and Development or Monitoring and Evaluation, who will share regular updates about implementation

of the strategic plan to staff and Executive Director to the external stakeholders. This would require platforms to organize key events to share highlights of NCHE performance with the public.

4.6. Critical Success Factors

In the implementation of the strategic plan, the following critical factors are necessary:

- i. **Financial Resources (Budget).*** On the other hand without sufficient financial resources, NCHE cannot implement their strategic plan successfully
- ii. **Understanding and Strategic thinking culture:*** Clear understanding of the strategic objectives, strategies and activities for implementation of the Strategic Plan by both the Management and the Council members. This will require the existence of strategic thinking and correct image of re-engineering affairs
- iii. **Staff Development:*** Staff development will be a key element in implementing the strategic plan. NCHE will continuously attract the right skills and deploy them appropriately across the Council activities. At the same time, focus will be given to continuous staff training, and development of these critical skills and qualities. Talent Management will be emphasized as an incentive to staff retention.
- iv. **Staff Motivation:*** Successful implementation will also depend on the measures that NCHE will put in place to motivate staff to execute their tasks in line with this strategic plan.
- v. **Information Communication Technology (ICT):*** A robust Information Technology System will enhance NCHE ability to make timely and accurate decisions based on the reliable data processed. This will reduce the down time experienced due to processing.
- vi. **Monitoring and Control:*** Periodic review, performance oversight, measurement, reporting, and taking corrective action will be central for successful implementation of the strategic plan.
- vii. **Staff Recruitment:*** NCHE needs to employ the required number of qualified staff. Currently, NCHE has 48 staff members out of the 100 proposed establishments in the previous structure. This is likely to affect the performance of a number of its functions as stipulated by the Act.

4.7. Risk Management

In the current dynamic business environment, risks are no longer merely hazards to be avoided, but in many cases, opportunities to be embraced. Risk creates opportunity and that opportunity can create value, which can enable the organization to achieve its objectives.

In the next five-year plan, risk identification shall be built into the NCHE processes. The identification and management of risks is fundamental to the realization of NCHE's strategic objectives. Risk management shall therefore be embedded into NCHE's critical activities, functions and processes; but, ultimately, risk understanding and tolerance of risk shall be key considerations in decision-making.

4.7. 1. Risks and Mmitigation measures

Success in achieving the envisaged objectives of the Plan will only be realized if the prevailing and anticipated conditions in the internal and external environment (i.e. assumptions) hold. The plan's success will also be determined by potential unforeseen factors and events which, if they occur, may threaten the degree to which the planned activities can be undertaken (risks). Whereas these factors and events can happen, it is hoped that they will not occur at levels that can fatally undermine the Strategic Plan's implementation.

The critical risk factors for NCHE and mitigating factors are summarized in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Critical Risks and Mitigation Measures

Potential Risks	Mitigation Actions
Rigidity and resistance to change by HEIs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of awareness among HEIs on the mandate of NCHE and the importance of centralized regulation of higher education in the country • Empowerment of HEIs to provide quality higher education • Advocacy and collaboration among
Inadequate funding and competition for scarce resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in fundraising initiatives in addition to the meagre government budget allocation • Promote prudent utilization of available resources in key activities and programmes that create optimal impact.
Slow process of amending the Act, leading to insufficient legal frameworks to regulate the higher education system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Act amendment brief for submission to the Ministry of Education • Engage in consultative meeting with Ministerial leadership
Higher education institutions not complying with statistical data requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop data collection templates and awareness raising among the HEIs
Financial risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls built into processes such as approvals designed to reduce financial risks

4.8. Accountability

The Council recognizes the role of accountability and commitment as valuable aspects for the successful implementation of the strategic plan. The entire Council, from the 18 Council members through to the lower cadre of staff has adequately and actively participated in the formulation of this plan. This reinforces the accountability and commitment that is crucial on their part as drivers and implementers entrusted with responsibility of implementing the plan.

At the Council level, the members will seek accountability and commitment from the Executive Director on the implementation of the plan. The Council members will discuss the report in statutory meetings before reporting to the Minister.

At the management level, the Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the plan. The execution of this vital role by the Management will be coordinated by the Directorate of Research and Documentation which will provide critical information to the ED on the implementation of the plan at the management level in which accountability and responsibility is bestowed.

Chapter Five: Financing the Strategic Plan

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides financial arrangements in terms of revenue and expenditure predictions for NCHE for the years 2020/21 – 2024/25

5.1. Funding Sources

Section 16 of the Universities and Tertiary Institutions Act 2012 (2) provides that NCHE funds shall include: money appropriated to the National Council from time to time, grants, gifts, and donations to the National Council, fees and other monies paid to the Council for rendering services.

5.2.1 Government Funding

5.2.2 Development Partners

Table 5 Revenue Estimates per Financial Year

Revenue Sources per Financial Year	2019/20 ('000)	2020/21 ('000)	2021/22 ('000)	2022/23 ('000)	2023/24 ('000)	2024/25 ('000)
Government subvention	4,400,000	4,400,000	6,400,000	6,400,000	7,400,000	9,400,000
GOU Capital Development	-	3,350,000	1,675,000	15,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Student contribution	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,500,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Other collection fees	2,250,000	2,250,000	2,250,000	2,500,000	3,000,000	3,500,000
Donor/Grant	0	500,000	1,600,000	3,800,000	3,800,000	5,400,000
Total	10,650,000	14,500,000	16,400,000	32,700,000	22,200,000	26,300,000

5.2.3 Expenditure Estimates

The resources required for implementing the strategic objectives are tabulated in the Table below showing the total amount of resources required for each of the strategic objectives, wages and non-wage staff costs, utilities, and their corresponding estimates each financial year.

Table 6 Summary of Expenditure Estimates

Expenses	2019/20 (Base)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Wages	3,497,878,349	4,407,326,720	4,627,693,056	4,859,077,709	5,102,031,594	5,357,133,174
Devel- opment Budget	600,000,000	1,592,673,280	1,500,000,000	15,000,000,000	3,000,000,000	3,000,000,000
SO: One	2,934,761,651	3,000,000,000	3,450,000,000	3,612,057,917	4,197,410,813	4,484,042,937
SO: Two	1,400,000,000	2,000,000,000	2,397,306,944	3,236,364,374	3,398,182,593	5,097,273,890
SO: Three	1,327,360,000	1,500,000,000	1,875,000,000	2,625,000,000	2,756,250,000	3,031,875,000
SO: Four	0	1,000,000,000	1,100,000,000	1,265,000,000	1,328,250,000	1,461,075,000
SO: Five	890,000,000	500,000,000	725,000,000	1,051,250,000	1,208,937,500	1,934,300,000
SO: Six6	0	500,000,000	725,000,000	1,051,250,000	1,208,937,500	732,050,000
Total	10,650,000,000	14,500,000,000	16,400,000,000	32,700,000,000	22,200,000,000	26,300,000,000

Chapter Six: Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1. Introduction

Strategic plans with a strong monitoring and evaluation framework tend to stay on track since the M&E framework facilitates early detection of problems and reduces the likelihood of having time delays during implementation. Good planning combined with effective monitoring and evaluation can play a major role in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of public sector agencies. Good planning helps us focus on the results that matter, while monitoring and evaluation help organizations to learn from past successes and challenges and inform decision making so that current and future initiatives are better able to improve people's access to public services. This section describes how monitoring, evaluation, and reporting will be planned for and conducted by NCHE during implementation of the strategic plan.

6.2. Linking M&E and Annual Performance

The Strategic Plan M&E framework is expected to guide the individual directorates to take up leadership in the implementation process and enhance the envisioned performance. Detailed annual work plans and operational manuals will therefore be developed. The NCHE objectives will be translated into departmental targets, which in turn will be used to formulate programmes and projects as well as individual officers' performance targets. The actual performance of various administrative levels will be monitored continuously and evaluated at the end of the defined period against the agreed targets. It is envisaged that all key stakeholders will support the system by providing all relevant data to enable comprehensive reporting on the state of higher education in Uganda.

6.3. Monitoring

Monitoring will be an ongoing activity by the NCHE staff to track the use of inputs and outputs, and to some degree also track intermediate outcomes. Through monitoring, utilization and use of resources will be tracked by implementing departments, which at times will necessitate revision of work plans. Monitoring of the NCHE strategic plan will be the responsibility of all staff guided by the Research and Documentation Directorate. The department will coordinate collection of data, analyzing and reporting. It will provide technical support and facilitate M&E capacity building.

6.4. Reporting

Monitoring reports at department level and unit level will comprise:

- i. A narrative strategic plan implementation report plus a summary table that will be developed and filled once every six months;

- ii. Contents of the narrative report will include, but not to be limited to:
 - a) The approved plan objectives and their target indicators at the relevant levels;
 - b) Achievements in terms of targets, the deviations in the planned targets and activities;
 - c) Constraints in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and any internal and external factors which have affected implementation;
 - d) Proposed remedial actions and the proposals for solving the problems faced indicating clearly the planned activities to be carried out in the next period (six months and one year depending on the nature of the report).

There will be two six-monthly reports per annum, one covering the period from July to December and the other from January through June. When reporting on implementation of the January through June report, the reporting officers will also be reporting on the achievements and constraints of the whole year. Thus, the report ending December will be composed of the six-month report. In line with Section 19 of the Act, NCHE shall prepare both financial and operational reports and submit them to the Minister of Education and Sports.

6.5. Evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic collection and assessment of information related to the outcome, operation or process of projects or activities leading to the achievement of goals of the Strategic Plan. NCHE will consider hiring external evaluators to evaluate undertakings that are implemented to achieve the aspirations of the plan. The external evaluators will be consultants having the expertise to design and establish evaluation tools that are used to monitor all aspects of the activities outlined for the implementation of the entire strategic plan. As such, there will be two types of evaluation of the Strategic Plan implementation process; once every two and a half years and another one at the end of the five years using external evaluation teams. The mid-term and terminal evaluations will have similar ToRs and will focus on:

- a) Assessing the reasons for success or failure of specific aspects of the Strategic Plan;
- b) Assessing whether the Plan is achieving its objectives and targets;
- c) Assessing the adequacy of resources being mobilized to implement the Strategic Plan.

The evaluation process will also consider the collaboration between the evaluators and stakeholders to strengthen the capacity of NCHE to ensure credibility and transparency in the implementation of activities of the plan. By doing this, individuals in the evaluation process will continue to be empowered for the logical conclusion of the implementation of the activities.

Reference

NCHE (2017) Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2020

Republic of Uganda (2010) National Development Plan II 2010/11 -2014/15

Republic of Uganda (2007) University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001

The World Bank (2018) World Development Indicators, 2018

Uganda National Household Survey, 2016/17

Annex One: Result Matrix

Strategic Objective One: A Promote and Strengthen the management, leadership and governance capacity of the National Council for Higher Education						
Strategic Actions	KPIs	Baseline	Targets	Source	Frequency	Responsible
1. Strengthen the performance management system for council, management and staff	# performance management tools developed	0	1 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE annual report ■ Council assessment & Evaluation reports 	Annual	Chair Council / ED/ DED/ All Directors/ SPO/ SHRO
2. Promote visibility and corporate image of NCHE	# workshop organized by NCHE	1	4 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE annual report ■ Workshop reports ■ Council Minutes 	Annual	ED/DED/ All Directors/ CA&PR
3. Facilitate the development, review and amendment of relevant policies, laws and regulations	# of amendments		1 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE annual report ■ Council Minutes ■ Statutory Instruments/Regulations ■ Approved Policies 	Annual	Council/ ED/ DED/ Legal/ All Directors
4. Build capacity for Council and staff	# capacity building initiatives	2	Conduct 2 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE annual report ■ NCHE website ■ Training Reports 	Annual	ED/DED/ All Directors/HRO
5. Conduct a comprehensive human resource analysis for NCHE	NCHE HR Status	0	1 st Year of the strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE HR analysis report ■ NCHE annual report ■ Approved Organogram 	Annual	ED/DED/ DF&A
6. Ensure a conducive working environment for staff	% of staff turn over	0	< 4% Leave the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE annual report ■ Exit meeting reports 	Annual	ED/DED/ All Directors/ HRO

							▪ Human Resources Policies & Procedures Manual			
7. Strengthen the internal audit function	# of auditors in NCHE % NCHE funding to audit	1	3 in the SP implementation period				▪ NCHE annual report ▪ Risk Register ▪ Internal audit reports	Annual		Audit & Risk Management Committee / ED/IA
Strategic Objective Two: Strengthen the Licensing and Accreditation Function of Higher education Institutions and Programmes										
Strategic Actions	KPIs	Baseline	Targets	Source	Frequency	Responsible				
1. Create awareness in the processes and procedures in licensing and accreditations	# awareness undertakings conducted	#	1 Quarterly	▪ NCHE Annual reports ▪ Council Minutes ▪ Audit Reports	Quarterly	Director QAA/ PHEO/ SHEO/ HEO				
2. Enhance Higher education institutions' competencies in program development for accreditation	# of capacity building for HEIs	#	1 Quarterly	▪ Capacity building reports ▪ NCHE Annual reports ▪ Council Minutes ▪ NCHE website ▪ Minimum Standards/ Capacity Indicator	Quarterly	Director QAA/ PHEO/ SHEO / HEO				
3. Strengthen the processes for licensure, institutional & programme accreditations	Duration for licensing programmes	Quarterly	1 Quarterly	▪ Council Minutes ▪ NCHE Annual reports ▪ NCHE website	Quarterly	ED/ Director QAA/ PHEO/ SHEO/ HEO				

Strategic Objective Three: Advance relevant research, and innovation for higher education						
Strategic Objectives	KPIs	Baseline	Targets	Source	Frequency	Responsible
1. Develop strategic partnerships in research	# of engagements established with partners	03 partners	2 partners annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE annual report 	Annual	Director ICT, R&I / PHEO R&I / SHEO R&I / HEO R&I
2. Build NCHE & staff capacity to manage and coordinate research	# of capacity building initiatives		5 staff annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building reports NCHE annual report Council Minutes 	Annual	Director ICT, R&I / PHE R&I / PHEO D Mgt. & Stats. / HEOs
3. Strengthen data management, documentation and dissemination	# of staff trained in data management at different user levels	0	13 staffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE annual report Council Minutes Training reports 	Annual	Director ICT, R&I / PHEO D Mgt. 7 Stats. / PHEO Lib. & Doc. / HEO Lib & Doc.
4. Develop mechanisms to convene scholars to share their research and findings	# Conferences/ Dissemination workshops	1 Conference / Dissemination Workshop Annually	1 Research conference Annually 1 Dissemination Workshop One Online forum for researchers developed Institutionalize NCHE journal/ conference proceeding structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE Annual Higher Education Conference report NCHE annual report Dissemination report NCHE website 	Annual	Director ICT, R&I / SHEO RI / HEO RI

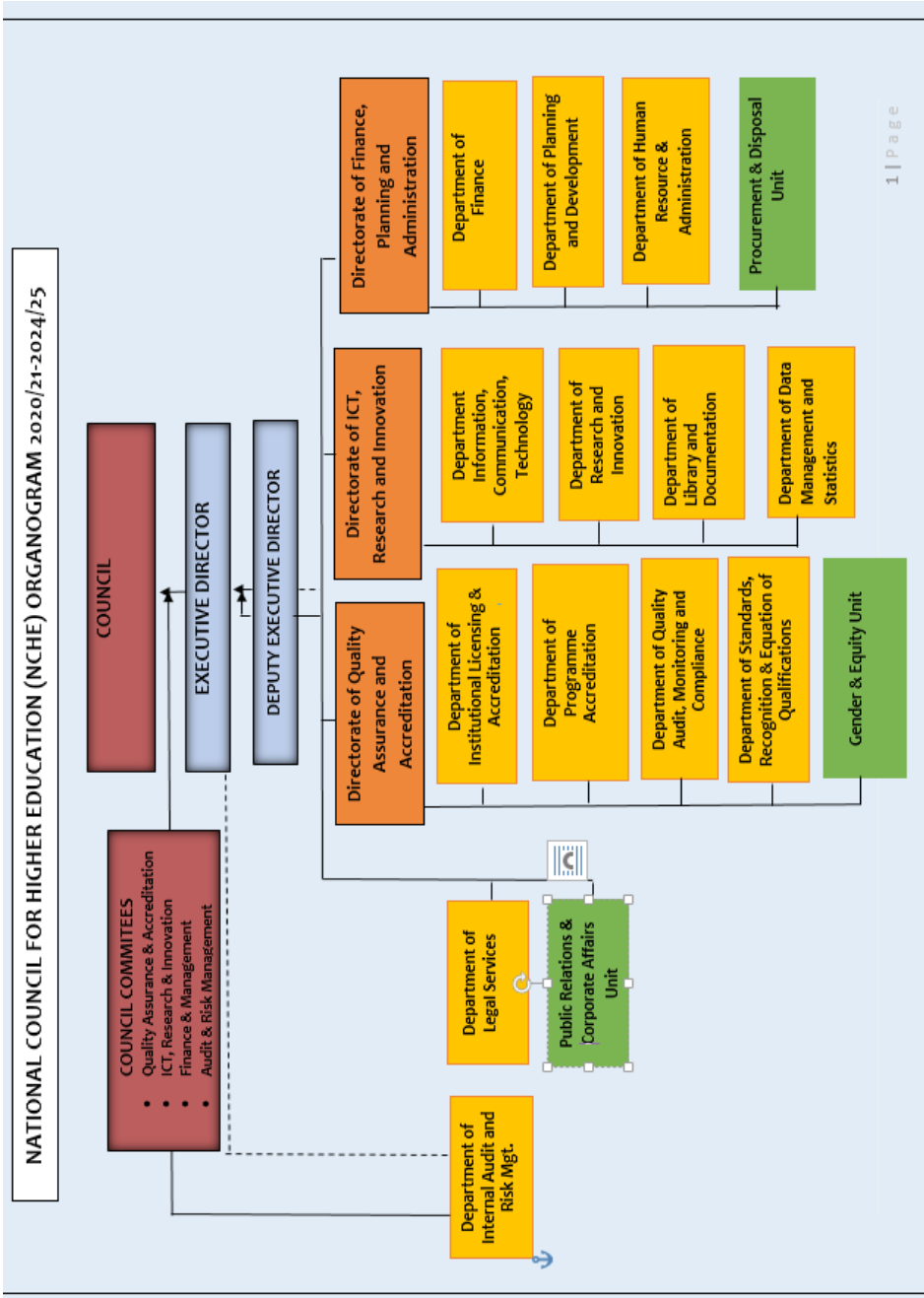
5. Strengthen the research capacity of HEIs	# capacity building initiatives	0	HEI Research capacity baseline Survey Implement capacity building work-plan (3 years) % increase in Research output in universities/ ODA	HEI's assessment reports NCHE annual report NCHE website	Annual	Director ICT,R&I/ SHEO RI /HEO RI
Strategic Objective Four: Strengthen Standards for equating qualifications and regulation of higher education qualifications						
Strategic Objectives	KPIs	Baseline	Targets	Source	Frequency	Responsible
1. Develop, and implement minimum standards and regulations	# of clarification circulars developed # of HEIs assessed	10	3 Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE Minimum Standards reports NCHE Annual reports Council Minutes 	Annual	Director QAA/ PHEO/ SHEOs/ HEOs
2. Review existing standards and regulations to enhance higher education	# of issues suggested for review of standards	1	1 Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE annual reports NCHE Minimum Standards Review report 	Annual	Director QAA/ PHEO/ SHEO/ HEO
3. Strengthen the function of recognition and equating of qualifications	Time taken to complete the equating process	21 Days	7 Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE Annual report Recognition and Equating of Qualification Reports 	Annual	Director QAA/ PHEO/ SHEO/ HEO

4. Strengthen and update recognized and equated qualifications	# of qualifications derived from equating	None	One set quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE Annual report ■ Recognition & Equation reports/file 	Annual	Director QAA / PHEO / SHEO / HEO
Strategic Objective Five: Strengthen Monitoring, Compliance & Audit function of HEIs						
Strategic Objectives	KPIs	Baseline	Targets	Source	Frequency	Responsible
1. Develop a mechanism to promote compliance	% of non-compliant HEIs	>10%	< 10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Compliance assessment reports ■ NCHE Annual report 	Annual	Director QAA / PHEO / SHEO / HEO
2. Build capacity of HEI's for compliance	# of capacity building initiatives	1 per quarter	4 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE Annual report ■ Training reports 	Annual	Director QAA / PHEO / SHEO / HEO
3. Monitor and Audit HEIs for compliance	# audit undertakings	#	4 audits per Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE audit report ■ Audit reports 	Annual	Director QAA / PHEO / SHEO / HEO
4. Strengthen relationship with other Government Agencies	# of engagements	3	2 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE annual reports ■ Engagement reports ■ MOUs 	Quarterly	ED/DED/ All Directors/ CA&PR
5. Ensure quality in access to Higher Education	Quality enhancement initiatives	None	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NCHE annual reports ■ Central Admission reports 	Annual	ED/DED/ All Directors/ All Technical Officers

Strategic Objective Six: Promote use of Information Communication Technology in all sectors of the Council and in HEI's						
Strategic Objectives	KPIs	Baseline	Targets	Source	Frequency	Responsible
1. Enhance the use of IMIS in the licensing and accreditation	# of applications developed	2	6 Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE annual report Council Minutes NCHE website 	Annual	Director ICT R&I, Director FPA / Director QAA/ PHEO ICT/ PHEO/ SHEOs in Inst. & Prog.
2. Upgrade the IT infrastructure, to meet quality standards and increase its capacity to support the administrative activities of NCHE and future expansions.	# of upgrades	1	1 annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE annual report Council Minutes Needs Assessment report ICT Policy 	Annual	Director FPA/ Director ICT, R&I/ PHEO ICT/ SHEO ICT/ HEO ICT/ Network Admin./ Systems Admin.
3. Implement Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity (DR and BC) plan to ensure continuous operation of IT systems.	Existence of guidelines	0	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recovery plan report Business Continuity Plan NCHE Annual reports 	Annual	Director ICT, R&I/ Director FPA/ PHEO ICT/ SHEO ICT/ SPO HEO ICT/ Network Admin./ Systems Admin.

4. Implementation of ODeL capacity indicators	Existence of ODeL capacity indicators to support mainstreaming Online/e-Learning in HEIs	0	1	NCHE Annual report ODeL capacity indicator manual Council Minutes	Annual	Director QAA/ PHEO/ SHEO/ HEO ICT
5. Design and install video conferencing facility	A functional video conferencing facility	None	3 rd year of strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE Annual report 	Mid implementation of strategic plan	Director FPA/ SPO/PO/Estates/ SHEO P/ICT Officer
6. Institutionalization of ICT Guideline Book/Manual for HEIs	Existence of the Guideline Book	0	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCHE Annual report Council Minutes ICT Guideline Book Annual reports from Institution 	Annual	Director ICT, R&I/ Director QAA and All Technical Officers

Annex Two: Detailed NCHE Organogram



EXPLANATORY NOTES OF THE STRUCTURAL REALIGNMENT FOR NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) Strategic Plan (2020/21-2024/25) requires a robust Secretariat in function, structure and establishment. The Strategic Plan provides for an establishment of 124 staff as opposed to 100 staff in the previous Strategic Plan to enable NCHE accomplish its broad mandate of ensuring quality Higher Education. In so doing, the proposed structure has been benchmarked with good practices from the sister agencies in the East African Community Partner States. NCHE has 48% staffing level, far below the Government minimum requirement of 65%. This level of staffing presents challenges in NCHE performance. The Organizational Structure has been realigned and Directorates and Departments renamed as follows.

2.0 OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Office of the Executive Director is headed by Executive Director and deputized by the Deputy Executive Director. This office is responsible for the management and administration of the National Council for Higher Education Secretariat. The office is responsible for the control and accountability of the funds and property of the Council, management of staff and business of the NCHE Secretariat. In addition, the Office directly supervises the Directorates as well as specialized Departments and Units which include Department of Legal Services; and Public Relations and Corporate Affairs Unit.

3.0 DIRECTORATE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION

The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Accreditation remains handles a core business of the NCHE. The purpose of the Directorate is to provide leadership in the implementation and improvement of the quality assurance framework of the NCHE Secretariat. It takes responsibility for the delivery of the desired, relevant, innovative and quality driven interventions in the Higher Deduction Subsector. The Directorate is in charge of all matters pertaining to accreditation and quality assurance in accordance with the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA), 2001 as amended. The Directorate has been strengthened with more Departments which include: Department of Institutional Licensing and Accreditation, Department of Programme Accreditation, Department of Quality Audit, Monitoring and Compliance; Department of Standards, Recognition and Equating Qualifications; and Gender and Equity Unit.

4.0 DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY (ICT), RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

The purpose of this Directorate is to provide a comprehensive approach in the development and implementation of ICT, research and innovation agenda of the NCHE. The Directorate will provide leadership to enable NCHE to integrate ICT systems in its processes to improve service delivery. The Directorate will collect, store, analyze, interpret, disseminate, archives information related to higher education and other matters of higher education in line with the mandate of the NCHE. The Directorate will propose innovative strategies and engage institutions of higher learning on creation and development of Knowledge, solicit funding for research. The Directorate has been strengthened with more Departments which include: Department of Information, Communication and Technology; Department of Research and Innovation; Department of Data Management and Statistics; and Department of Library and Documentation.

5.0 DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

The main role of the Directorate of Finance, Planning and Administration is to administer the finance, planning and Administration functions of the NCHE. The Directorate will establish and maintain an efficient financial system to record, control and report financial resources of the NCHE in accordance with the Public Finance and Management laws and policies. The Directorate will carry out prudent financial management and promote proper human resource management. The Directorate will ensure proper management of procurement and disposal of public assets. The directorate will take responsibility for resource mobilization and monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan, budget and policies of NCHE. The Directorate will provide technical and expert management and administrative support to NCHE to ensure prompt, efficient and effective administration of functions, facilities and logistics services. The Directorate will oversee the planning, development and management of development projects of NCHE in accordance with essential demands. The Directorate has been strengthened with more Departments and Unit which include: Department of Finance; Department of Planning and Development; Department of Human Resource and Administration; and Procurement and Disposal Unit.

6.0 LEADERSHIP OF DIRECTORATES AND DEPARTMENTS

The implementation of the NCHE Structure shall require high caliber of staffing. For efficient and effective leadership, Directors and Heads of Departments in the Directorates of Quality Assurance and Accreditation as well as ICT, Research and Innovation shall be PhD holders in the relevant fields.



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