



unesco

International Institute for
Higher Education in Latin
America and the Caribbean

Global trends in higher education and data toolkit

UNESCO Global trends report, HEPO and HEMIS-PATT

APNNIC Capacity-building webinar series: Session 4, 26 June 2026



Overview



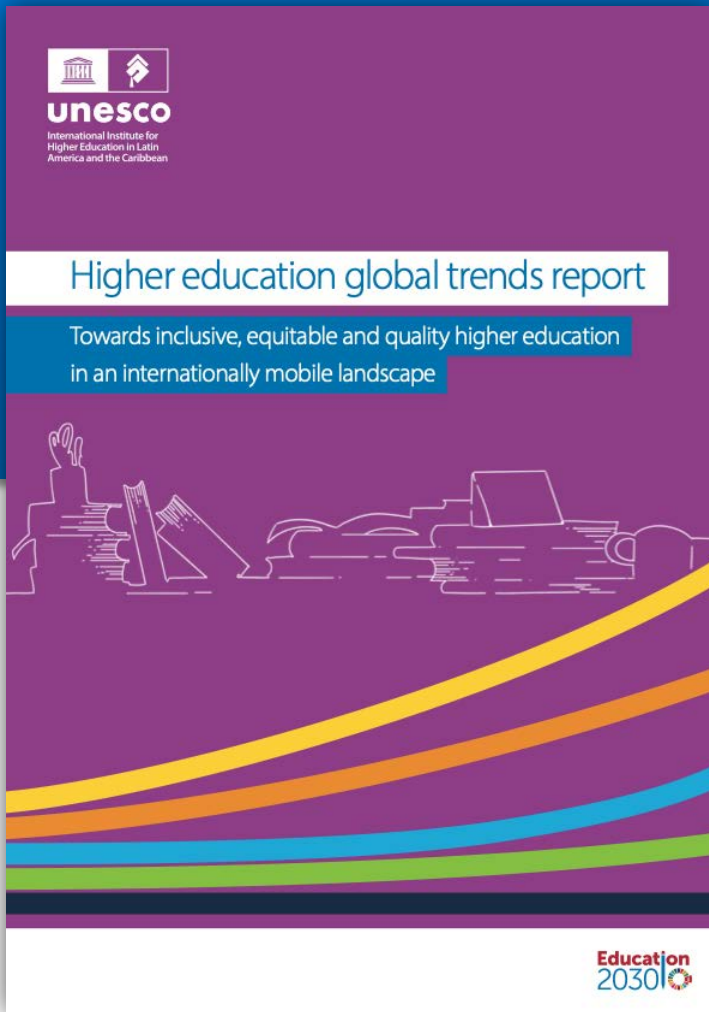
1. Key highlights from the *Higher education global trends report*



2. Overview of the *Higher Education Policy Observatory*



3. UNESCO toolkit for higher education data systems and *HEMIS-PATT*



1. Higher education global trends report

Toward inclusive, equitable and quality higher education in an internationally mobile landscape

May 2026

Landscape

269 million students

43% enrollment ratio

more than double 2000 levels

- *Asia and the Pacific: 151 million students and 45% GER (x3 since 2000)*

31% of countries mandate free public higher education, 68% provide national scholarships

- *Respectively 6% and 77% in Asia and the Pacific*

7.3 million mobile students

More than triple 2000 levels

3% benefitting

- *Asia and the Pacific:*
 - *21% of inbound students*
 - *45% of outbound students*

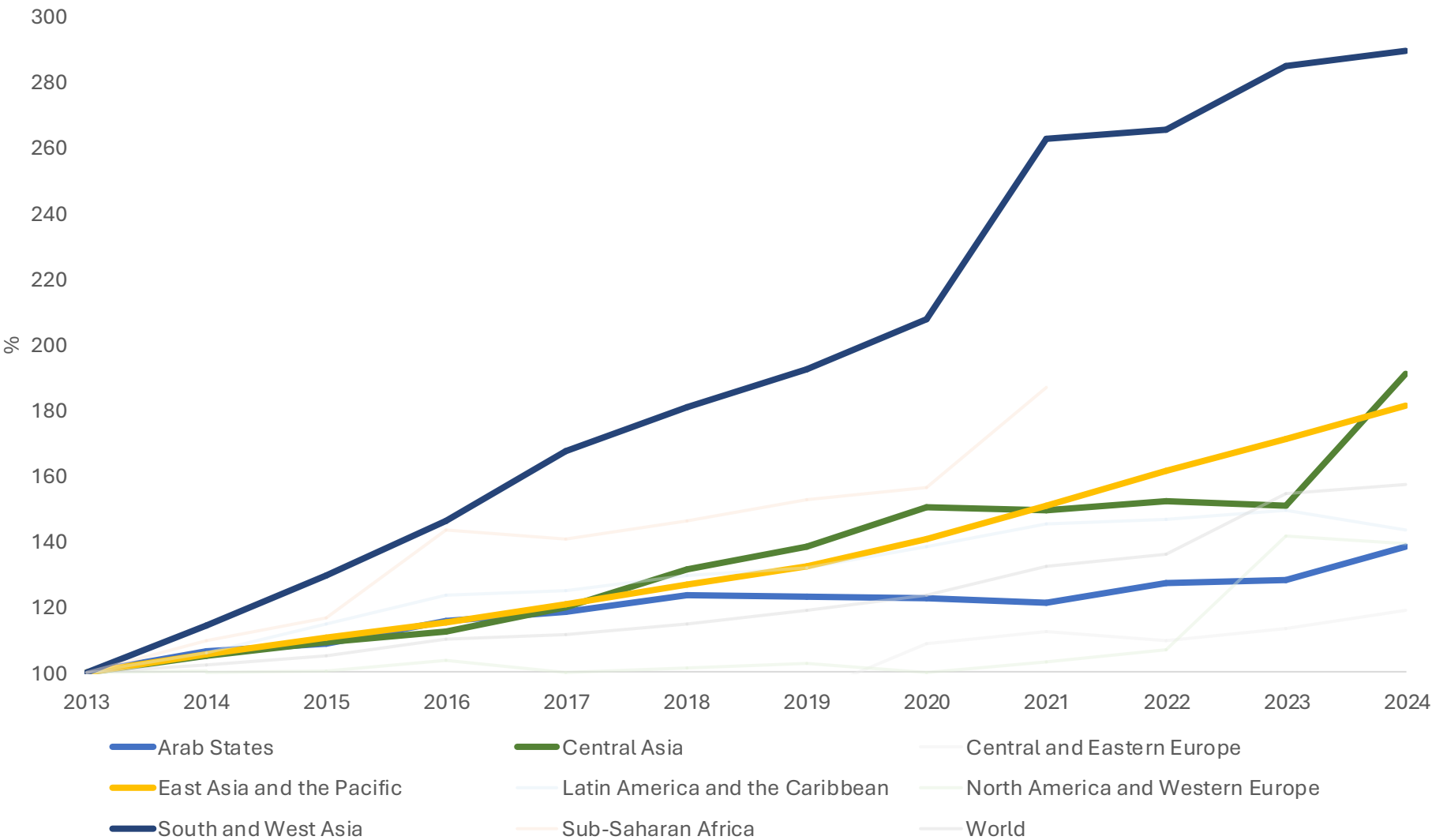
9% of refugees access higher education globally

up from 1% in 2019

[Quick Zoom survey]

- Which region experienced the fastest growth of doctoral students over the last decade?
 - South and West Asia
 - North America and Western Europe
 - Central Asia
 - East Asia and the Pacific

Growth of enrollment in ISCED 8 programmes, by world regions



Key global trends

Digitalization

One third of the global population remains offline

77% of countries prioritize digitalization as an objective in national higher education plans

56 countries had national AI strategies in 2024

60% of faculty report using AI in their professional practice

80% consider that their institution lacked adequate AI guidance

Mobility

Top 3 receiving regions: Western Europe and North America (49%), **East Asia and the Pacific** (19%), Central and Eastern Europe (14%)

Growing intra-regional South-South mobility

Close to **100 countries** have ratified a **UNESCO recognition convention**, **75%** have adopted a **national policy** for that purpose

➤ *Asia and the Pacific:*

- *38% of countries ratified a UNESCO convention*
- *69% of countries adopted a national policy for recognition*

Some key recommendations

- While expanding access to higher education should remain a priority, **progression and completion** should garner closer attention.
- Despite a strong commitment to foster **inclusion** in higher education, further measures are needed to make this a reality for disadvantaged groups.
- **Institutional autonomy** and **academic freedom** underpin higher education, yet their recognition and implementation remains uneven.
- **Digital transformation and AI** offer unprecedented opportunities but also risk exacerbating existing inequalities.
- Ensuring the fair, transparent and nondiscriminatory **recognition of higher education qualifications** is essential to making mobility more equitable.
- Strengthening higher education ultimately depends on more robust **data systems** and international cooperation to inform policy and practice.



unesco

International Institute for
Higher Education in Latin
America and the Caribbean

Higher education global trends report

Towards inclusive, equitable and quality higher education
in an internationally mobile landscape



Education
2030



HEPO

Centralizing global
higher education data

Visualizing key trends
and comparisons

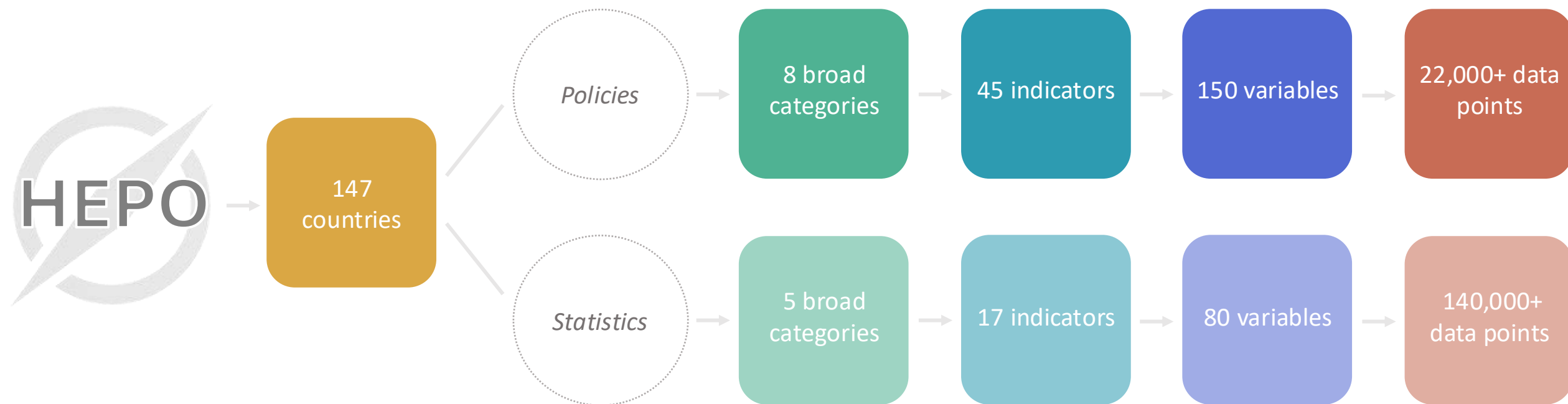
Supporting evidence-
based policies



UNESCO Higher education Policy Observatory

A one-stop-shop for comparative information on
higher education systems globally

2023 (V1) and 2025 (V2)





COUNTRY PROFILES

Exploring single HE systems



COUNTRY COMPARISONS

Comparing up to three countries



GLOBAL OVERVIEWS

Visualizing worldwide trends



Higher Education Policy Observatory

[Home](#)[Country profiles](#)[Country comparison](#)[World overviews](#)[News](#)[About](#)

Welcome to the Higher Education Policy Observatory

Comparative data and information on higher education systems and policies around the world

[Country profiles](#)[Country comparison](#)[World overviews](#)

147

MEMBER STATES MAPPED

1200+

MAPPED POLICIES

18

KEY CATEGORIES ANALYZED

8

GLOBAL REGIONS



International
Higher Education
America and the
Caribbean

Key Statistics

Key Policies



Higher education
system governance



Legislative framework
regulating higher
education



Higher education
quality assurance



Higher education
system planning



Key principles for
access to higher
education



Cost of public higher
education



Admission pathways
to higher education



Recognition of higher
education
qualifications

on Policy Observatory

Home

Country profiles

Country comparison

World overviews

News

About

le's Republic of

Change
Country

Share

Help



GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$):

24569

(In 2023 , Upper middle income countries)



GDP growth (annual %):

5.25%

(In 2023 , positioned 33 in 143 countries)



GER, both sexes (%):

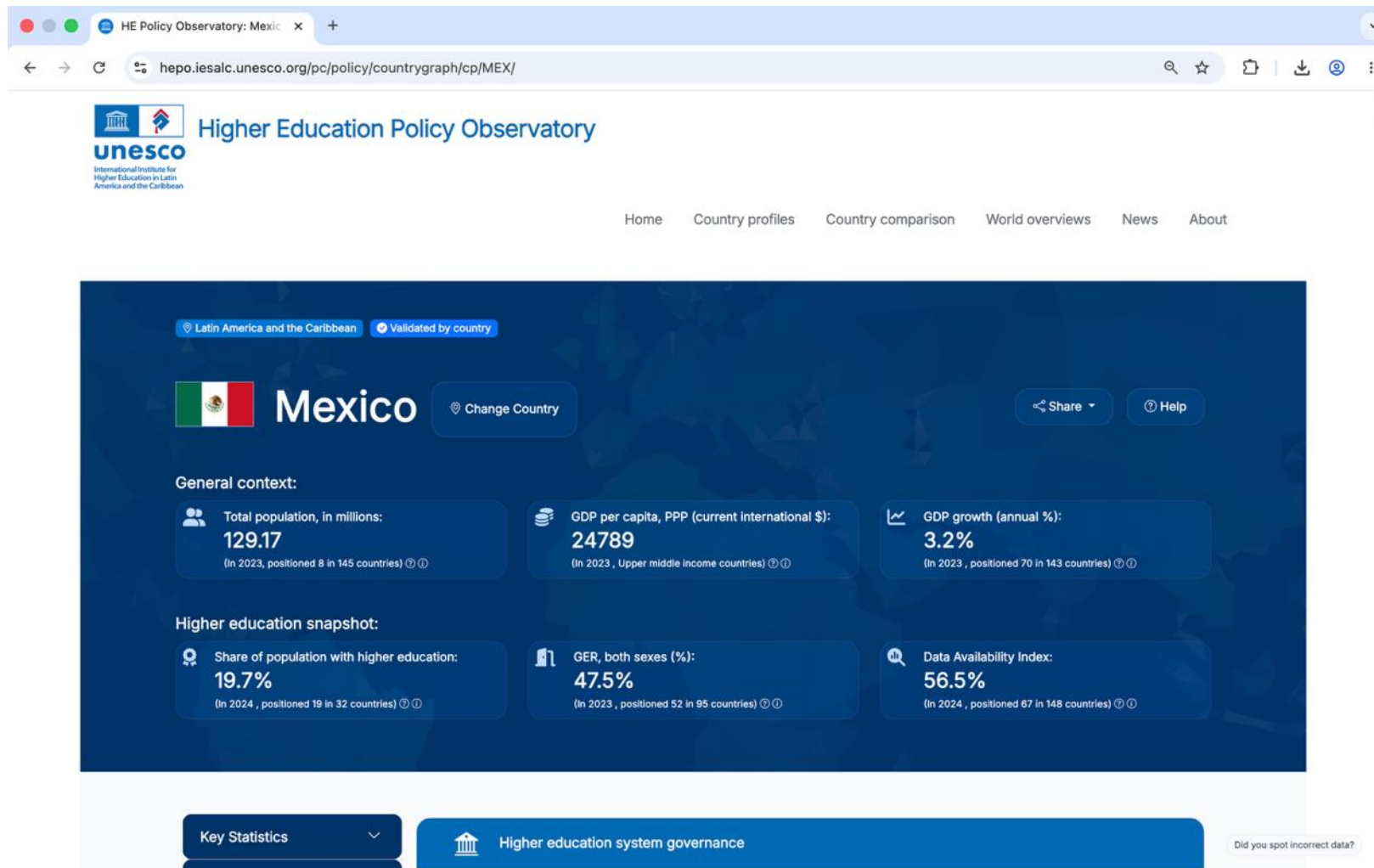
76.9%



Data Availability Index:

46.3%

Statistical indicators visualization



[Latin America and the Caribbean](#)[Validated by country](#)

Mexico

[Change Country](#)[Share](#)[Help](#)

General context:



Total population, in millions:

129.17

(In 2023, positioned 8 in 145 countries) ? ⓘ



GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$):

24789

(In 2023, Upper middle income countries) ? ⓘ



GDP growth (annual %):

3.2%

(In 2023, positioned 70 in 143 countries) ? ⓘ

Higher education snapshot:



Share of population with higher education:

19.7%

(In 2024, positioned 19 in 32 countries) ? ⓘ



GER, both sexes (%):

47.5%

(In 2023, positioned 52 in 95 countries) ? ⓘ



Data Availability Index:

56.5%

(In 2024, positioned 67 in 148 countries) ? ⓘ



https://hepo.iesalc.unesco.org/



Higher Education Policy Observatory

[Home](#)

[Country profiles](#)

[Country comparison](#)

[World overviews](#)

[News](#)

[About](#)

Global policy Country comparison

Here you can compare the higher education policies and system characteristics of up to three countries.

Select Countries to Compare



Key Statistics





Global policy World overviews

Please select an indicator in the list below and its distribution around the world will instantly appear on the map and the charts.

The legend for the graphs mirrors the color scheme of the map, accessible by hovering your mouse over the graphs

Select indicator →

Legal recognition of academic freedom

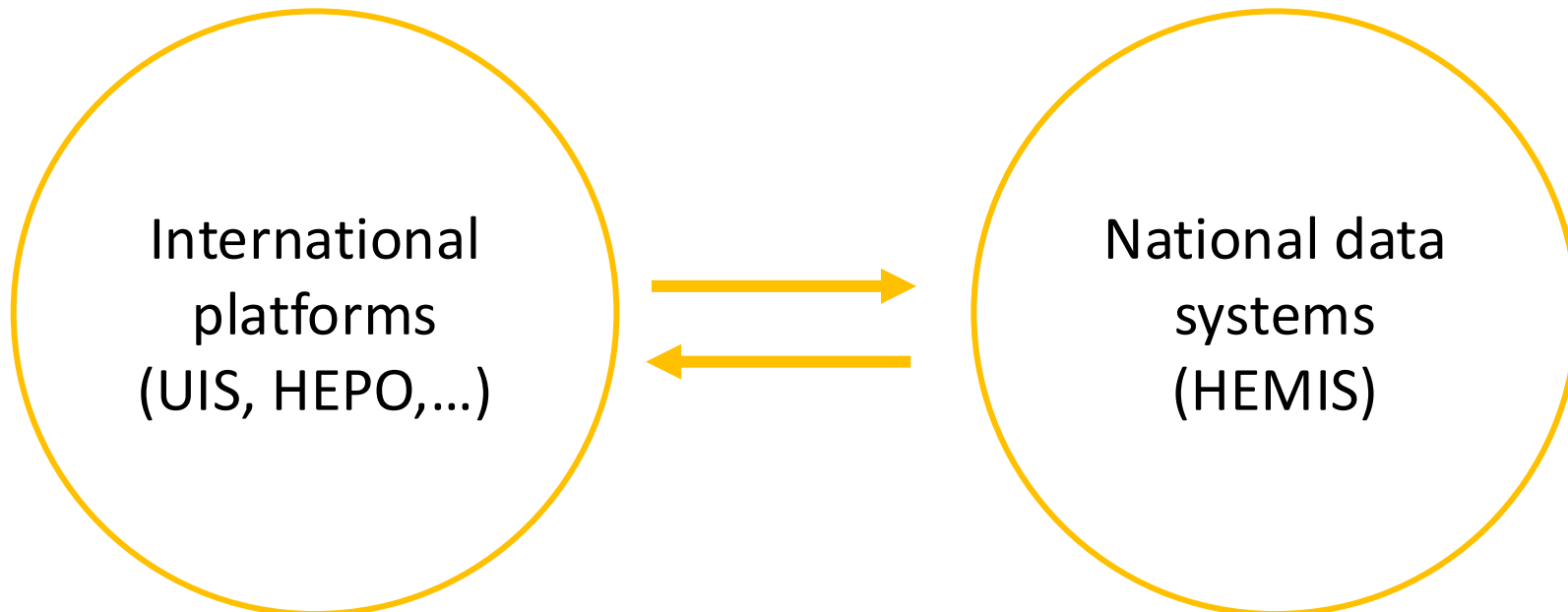
UNESCO toolkit for higher education data systems and HEMIS-PATT

Strengthening national data systems in higher education

Beyond being technical tools, data systems and HEMIS are at the core of governance infrastructure

They help transform data collected by institutions into public decisions that are more informed, more coherent, and more useful for students, staff, institutions, and society.

Different scales of data systems





[Quick Zoom survey]

From your perspective, what key dimensions of higher education data systems need strengthening?

- Data availability
- Data quality and timeliness
- Data use and analysis
- Data sharing and dissemination
- Interoperability between data systems
- Data system financing
- Digital infrastructure and services

UNESCO toolkit around higher education data systems

1. Tailored country /regional reports

- HEPO country-data review
- Consultation with stakeholders (ministry, specialized agencies, sample of HEIs)
- Drawing national system profile, comparison with relevant peers, region and income group
- Identification of key strengths and gaps
- Recommendations for system improvement (policy and data)

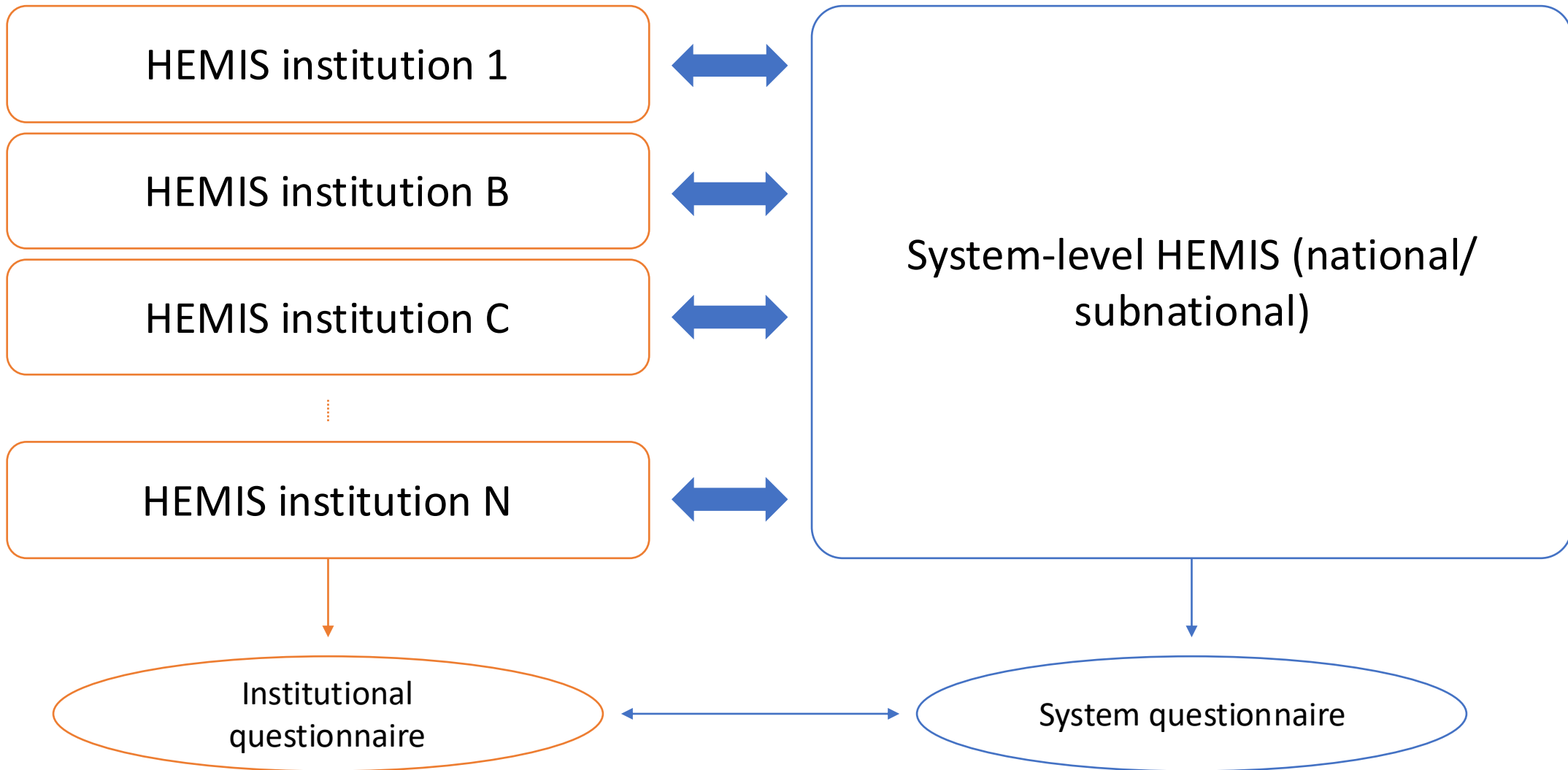
2. Capacity development and training

- a. 1 to 2-hour tailored online demo of how to use HEPO (country-focused)
- b. 2 to 3-days onsite/online workshops :
 - Using HEPO and international data for policy (1 day)
 - National data ecosystem harmonization and strengthening (1 to 2 days)

3. Holistic diagnostic of the data system and development of reform roadmaps using HEMIS-PATT

- In close collaboration with national task team composed of key higher education stakeholders
- Initial system profiling through HEPO
- Data system/HEMIS diagnostic with task team, multiple dimensions
 - Governance of HEMIS
 - Management and institutional processes
 - System technical architecture
 - Data and information products
- Prioritization of strategic improvement areas and reform roadmap

HEMIS-PATT diagnosis



EMIS-PATT higher education module roadmap

→ 2 evaluation frameworks

Institutions

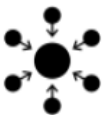
Systems

→ Can be implemented separately or together for a multi-level system diagnosis



Is your institution formally involved in the definition, review, and evolution of system-level HEMIS standards and governance?

For example, through advisory bodies, technical committees, consultations on standards or indicators



Are higher education institutions formally involved in the definition, review, and evolution of the HEMIS standards and governance?

For example, through advisory bodies, technical committees, consultations on standards or indicators

HEMIS-PATT diagnosis

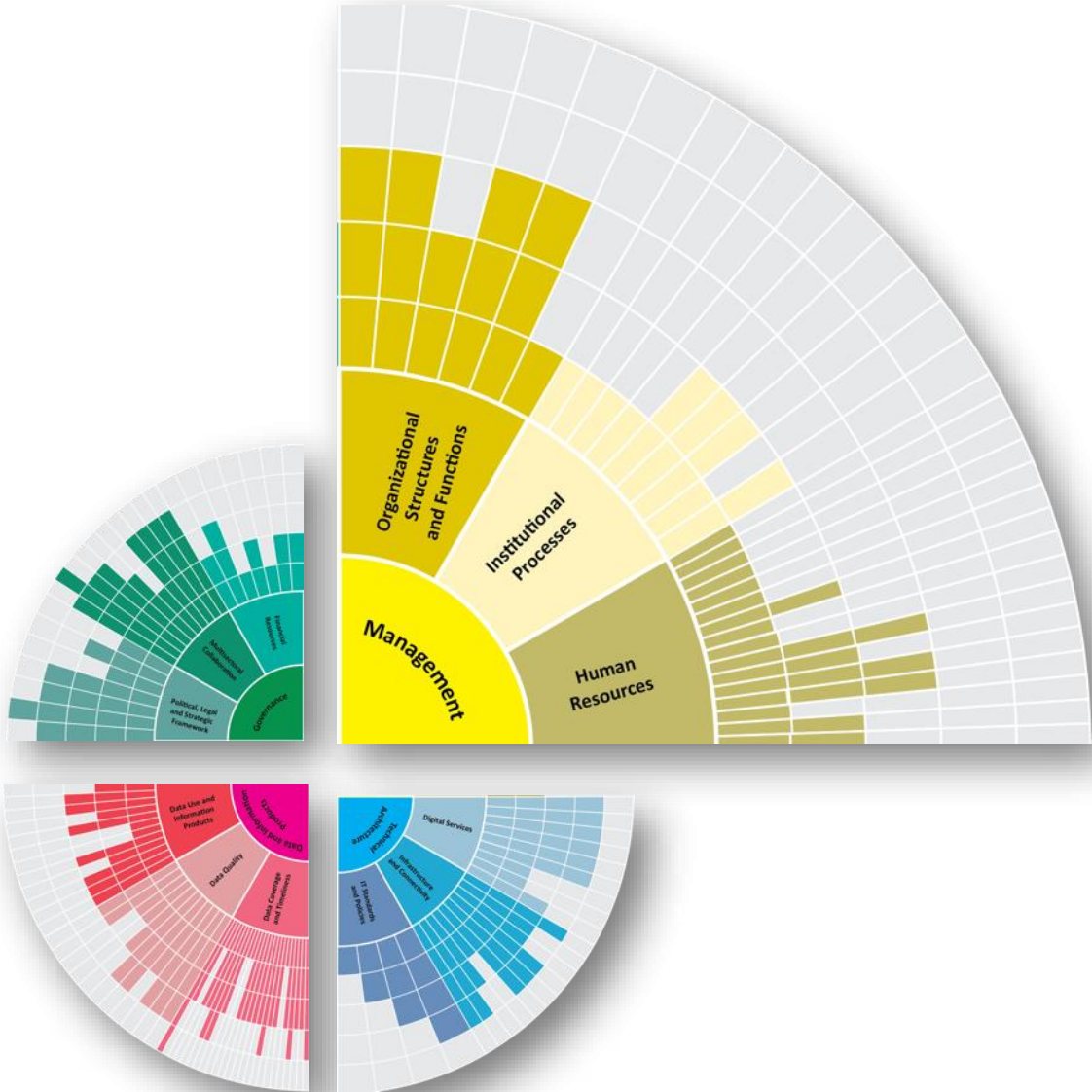
4 dimensions, 12 sub-dimensions



Diagnostic results diagram



Result Analysis



➡ **Scores**

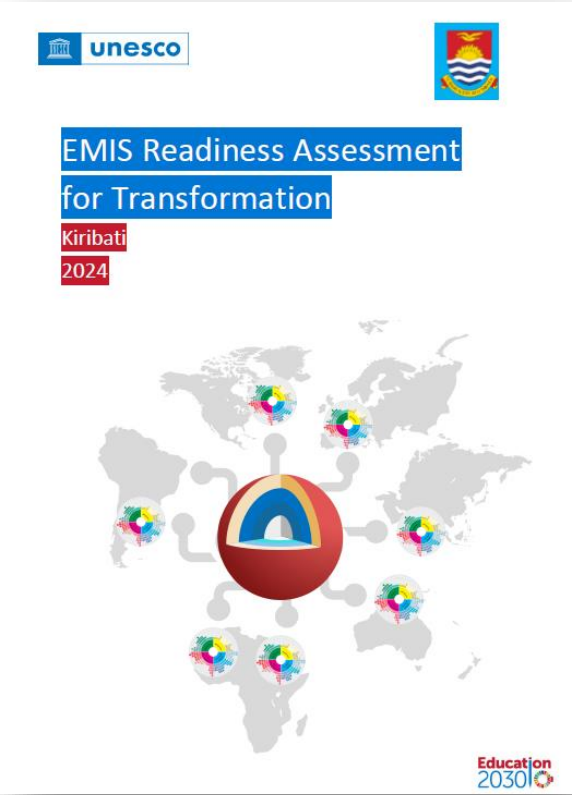
Management	Maturity Score	Maturity Level
Organizational Structure and Functions	3.2	Established
Institutional Processes	1.5	Initial
Human Resources	1.8	Initial
Management Score	2.1	Emergent

➡ **Key findings by sub-dimension**

➡ Identification of **Strategic Improvement Areas** by sub-dimension

Analytical Country Report

(Example from lower-level EMIS diagnostic and reform roadmap)



50-page report



Figure 5 – EMIS Maturity by Assessment Sub-Dimension

Dimensions	Maturity Score	Maturity Level
Governance	3.0	Established
Management	2.1	Emergent
Technical Architecture	2.5	Emergent
Data and Information Products	2.5	Emergent
EMIS Readiness Score	2.5	Emergent

Table 2 - EMIS Overall Maturity Level by Main Assessment Dimensions



Figure 6 – Detailed Maturity Assessment Result

Visual Data Representations

Strategizing EMIS Transformation

Policy Formulation Framework and Prioritization

The RATT framework for policy formulation for EMIS enhancement is constructed around two principal layers to ensure an analytical approach to policy development.

The **first layer** consists of a quantitative evaluation that analyzes two fundamental aspects of each subdimension within the EMIS: alignment and impact. The **alignment** aspect assesses how well subdimensions correlate with their respective dimensions and the overall system's maturity, ensuring that each component operates in congruence with broader system goals. The **impact** aspect examines the potential effect that changes within these subdimensions might have on advancing the system to the next maturity level. This dual assessment allows for the categorization of subdimensions into five distinct priority levels—Top, High, Medium, Lower, and Lowest—based on the degree of alignment and potential for impact on system-wide improvement.

In accordance with the first layer of the policy formulation framework, which evaluates the subdimensions scores based on the established formulas for both dimensions, the following table illustrates the alignment and impact levels for each subdimension.

Prioritization matrix for sub-dimensions [First Layer]

	Strong Alignment	Moderate Alignment	Low Alignment
High Impact	Institutional Processes – 1.5 Human Resources – 1.8 Data quality – 2.1	Data Use and Information Products – 2.4 Digital Services – 2.4	Standards and Policies – 2.5
Medium Impact	Political, Legal and Strategic Framework – 2.6	Multisectoral Collaboration – 3.1 Organizational Structures and Functions – 3.0	Infrastructure and Connectivity – 2.7
Low Impact		Data Coverage and Timeliness – 3.1 Financial Resources – 3.3	

Table 7 - Prioritization matrix for sub-dimensions

Criteria set forth for alignment and impact within the EMIS policy development layer, the subdimensions are categorized into following priority tiers.

Evidence-based Analysis
+ Strategic Recommendations
+ Operational Plan



unesco

International Institute for
Higher Education in Latin
America and the Caribbean

Thank you!

Mathias Bouckaert

m.bouckaert@unesco.org

or, hepo@unesco.org

www.iesalc.unesco.org



[@unesco.iesalc](https://www.facebook.com/unesco.iesalc)



[@unesco_iesalc](https://twitter.com/unesco_iesalc)



[@unesco.iesalc](https://www.instagram.com/unesco.iesalc)



UNESCO IESALC