



iNNOV8



iNNOV8 RESEARCH CENTER 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH
INNOVATIVE APPROACH**



“iNNOV8 is Iraq's only think tank on the OTT's 100 Think Tanks to Watch list. This recognition will only strengthen our will to further collaborate and cooperate with our partner research centers in the region.”



About iNNOV8

iNNOV8 Research Center, nestled in the mountains of Sulaymaniyah the cultural capital of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, pioneers cutting-edge research and innovation as an independent think tank affiliated with CHANNEL8 Media Corporation.

MISSION AND VISION

The mission centers on relentlessly pursuing innovative spaces for debate to deliver enlightening content with meaningful public impact. The vision establishes a hub for thorough research on contemporary trends, fostering idea growth, vibrant discussions, and public-serving intellectual resources through trend monitoring and novel ideas.

LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

Imad A. Farhadi serves as the founder and leader, guiding operations since the center's establishment in 2023. With 2/3rd of the permanent staff and non-resident fellows being female, iNNOV8 believes in inclusiveness and equal representation. Staff size remains compact for a young organization, with active hiring for research specialists. The center has introduced a non-resident fellows' program, enabling researchers and policy experts worldwide to contribute to its work on a quarterly basis.

FOCUS AREAS

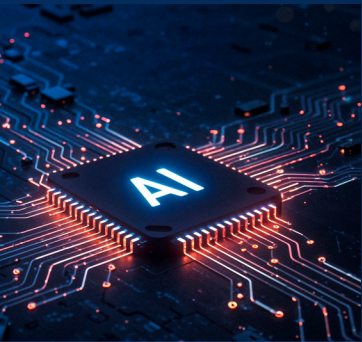
Core areas include security and defense studies, digital technology and AI adoption in developing countries (with a particular focus on the Middle East), energy policy, and climate-related works, such as carbon credits in Iraq, alongside public health and private sector development.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

PARTNER IN THE AI ACTION SUMMIT IN PARIS

and holding a panel discussion on AI in developing regions (global south) for sustainable development and equitable access and distribution.



iNOV8 RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS ARE

available on Policy Commons, a leading global platform for policy research and grey literature. This recognition and inclusion for iNOV8 helps the research center join a vast network of contributors committed to disseminating objective, fact-based research to inform policy and practice globally.



**Policy
Commons**

iNOV8 WAS RECOGNIZED AMONG OTT'S 100 THINK TANKS TO WATCH 2025

a new peer-nominated list by On Think Tanks. This initiative highlights think tanks that have implemented noteworthy practices, innovations, or impactful work—as seen by peers across the sector. This recognition reinforces iNOV8's commitment to: Innovation & future-oriented roles; Knowledge translation & communication; Advocacy & policy influence; Knowledge generation & analysis, and global & collaborative roles. These categories of excellence led to iNOV8's selection.



● EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

iNOV8 delivered a standout year in 2025, advancing its mission as Iraq's premier think tank focused on security, energy, geopolitics, and emerging technologies in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. Key achievements include partnering in the AI Action Summit in Paris, hosting a panel on AI for sustainable development and equitable access in the Global South, and securing publications on Policy Commons, a leading global platform for policy research and grey literature.

This inclusion connects iNOV8 to a vast network disseminating objective, fact-based research for global policy impact. Additionally, iNOV8 earned recognition among the 100 Think Tanks to Watch 2025, a peer-nominated list highlighting innovative practices in knowledge generation, advocacy, and collaboration—detailed here.

These milestones highlight iNOV8's excellence in innovation, policy influence, and global partnerships, with 28 publications, 10 events, and over 50 activities amplifying reach to thousands via website traffic and networks.



● KEY IMPACTS

iNNOV8's 2025 efforts generated measurable policy, networking, and knowledge dissemination impacts, positioning the center as a vital voice in Middle Eastern geopolitics and research innovation



● GLOBAL RECOGNITION AND PEER VALIDATION

Inclusion in the 100 Think Tanks to Watch 2025 affirms iNNOV8's leadership in innovation, knowledge translation, advocacy, and collaboration, enhancing credibility for future partnerships with regional think tanks.



● EXPANDED RESEARCH ACCESSIBILITY

20+ publications hosted on Policy Commons reached policymakers worldwide, fostering fact-based discourse on Iraq's security, energy, and digital challenges.



● HIGH-LEVEL POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Participation in the Paris AI Action Summit and AI panel advanced equitable AI adoption in the Global South, influencing sustainable development agendas.



● PARTICIPATION IN THE US FOREIGN POLICY GROUP

at the British International Studies Association (BISA) in London with two research papers that reached various audiences and sparked ideal interests, especially in US foreign policy in the KRI, Iraq, and the broader Middle East.



● AMPLIFIED REACH AND INFLUENCE

Daily website viewership averaged 2,000 (peaking at 15,000), with networking across 20 organizations and personal event interactions reaching hundreds, driving citations in media and policy circles.



● ACTIVITY-DRIVEN IMPACT

10 events and 50+ activities (panels, diplomatic visits) built coalitions, informed stakeholders on politics, diplomacy, environment, defense, tech, and elections, and elevated CHANNEL8's profile in Sulaymaniyah.



● ELECTION RESEARCH AND REPORTS

iNNOV8 actively contributed to Iraq's Parliamentary Elections 2025 through research, fact-checking numbers, exclusive interviews, and post-election reports and analysis. Following up iNNOV8's first-English election platform in 2024, iNNOV8 focused on economic policies, key changes in election results, and key analysis points, such as protest votes in Iraq's elections.



iNOV8 ACTIVITIES AND WORKS IN NUMBERS

METRIC	2025 TOTAL	NOTES
Events	10+	1 event held and 6 participated
Activities (visits and attendances)	50+	Conferences, roundtables, panels, diplomatic visits, online participations
Publications	30 papers	Analysis, reports, policy and issue briefs, commentaries, expert insights and interviews
Total Reach	Website: average 2000+ viewers daily	ighest web viewership: 15,000+ Personal reach at events: average 20 people per person

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED



iNNOV8 navigated key challenges in 2025, including limited funding for expanded research, restricted access to granular data in sensitive sectors like security and elections, and opportunities to broaden outreach beyond Sulaymaniyah. Strategic adaptations involved leveraging non-resident fellows for global expertise, amplifying digital platforms like Policy Commons for wider dissemination, and forging partnerships, such as with OTT and international partners, to mitigate resource gaps and enhance network expansion.

OUTLOOK FOR 2026

iNNOV8 will prioritize advancing AI and digital technology integration within Middle East policy frameworks, while broadening strategic security studies across the Levant and Mediterranean regions amid evolving dynamics following Syria's regime transition, alongside shifts in Gulf states' positions vis-à-vis Türkiye, Iran and Israel's strategic postures. Other areas of priority include advancing energy transition strategies in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq's oil and gas sectors, and strategic studies in private sector and economic development in the KRI and Iraq. Specific projects focus on climate resilience projects, with a particular interest in Iraq and climate-vulnerable regions in the MENA.

