

AFRICA HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

19th October 2020

Virtual Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Prof. Mohammed Salifu (Ghana), Chair
2. Prof. Ramané Kaboré (Burkina Faso)
3. Prof. Aboubacar Marcos (Benin)
4. Prof. Fulgence Nindjin (Côte d'Ivoire)
5. Dr. Fahmi Ahmed (Djibouti)
6. Mr. Modak Secka (The Gambia)
7. Prof. Mamadou Saliou Diallo (Guinea)
8. Prof. Kouami Kokou (Togo)
9. Prof. Coumba Touré Kane (Senegal)
10. Dr. Emmanuel Barry (UEMOA)
11. Dr. Didier Acouetey (Private Sector)
12. Prof. Kouami Kokou (Togo)

MEMBERS ABSENT

With Apologies

13. Prof. Abubakar A. Rasheed (Nigeria)

FOCAL POINTS

1. Prof. Amadou Abdoul Sow (Senegal)
2. Dr. Dègla Hyacinthe HESSOU (Benin)
3. Pr. Ibrahim Bouzou (Niger)
4. Dr. Joshua Atah (Nigeria)
5. Mr. Edmund Aalangdong (Ghana)
6. Mr. N'Goh Bakayoko (Côte d'Ivoire)

IN ATTENDANCE

World Bank, AFD, AAU & Others

1. Ms. Meskerem Lily Mulatu Education Practice Manager, World Bank
2. Mrs. Himdat Bayusuf (First ACE Impact Task Team Leader and Second ACE Impact Co-Team Leader, Education Specialist, World Bank)

3. Dr. Ekua Bentil (Second ACE Impact Task Team Leader and First ACE Impact Co-Team Leader, World Bank)
4. Dr. Graham Harrison (Senior Science & Technology Specialist, World Bank)
5. Ms. Maud Kouadio IV (Consultant, World Bank, Washington)
6. Ms. Rim Wazni (Consultant, World Bank, Senegal)
7. Dr. Quentin Delpech (Task Team Leader – Lead Expert Higher Education, AFD)
8. Mr Matthieu Discour (AFD Regional Representative for Guinea Gulf)
9. Prof. Etienne Ehilé (Secretary-General, AAU)
10. Dr. Sylvia Chindime Mkandawire (Program Manager, ACE Impact, AAU)
11. Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini (Director, ICT & Knowledge Management, AAU)
12. Mr. Maxwell Amo-Hoyte (Director of Finance, AAU)
13. Mrs. Adeline Addy (M&E Specialist, AAU)
14. Mr. Schenineda Kwaku Ankomah (M&E Analyst, AAU)
15. Mr. Abednego Corlety (Procurement/ IT Specialist, AAU)
16. Ms. Millicent Afriyie Kyei (Communications Officer, AAU)
17. Mrs. Gabrielle Hansen (Logistics Officer, AAU)
18. Mr. Frank Adjei – Senior (Accountant, AAU)

INTRODUCTION

Overview

1. The Fourth ACE Impact Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting was held virtually via Zoom on the 19th of October 2020. The objectives of the meeting were to: (i) provide and discuss comprehensive updates on implementation progress for the First and Second Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence for Development Impact (First and Second ACE Impact) Projects; (ii) discuss the status of the ACE Impact project components financed by the French Development Agency (*Agence Française de développement* –AFD); (iii) discuss and endorse updates to the Regional Operations Manuals to reflect COVID-19 project implementation adjustments; (iv) review the RFU work plan and budget for the 2020/2021 Financial Year; and (iv) coordinate a round table discussion to receive updates on any project related activities.

Opening

2. The meeting commenced at 10:30 GMT with welcome remarks by **Prof. Mohammed Salifu, PSC Chair and Executive Secretary of the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), Ghana**. He welcomed the PSC members and all other attendees to the fourth ACE Impact PSC meeting. He commended the World Bank and the Association of African Universities (AAU) for successfully organizing the virtual meeting to ensure uninterrupted project supervision. Reflecting on the COVID pandemic constraints, Prof. Salifu encouraged centers to explore and adopt new strategies to ensure project continuity and realization of project objectives. **Prof Etienne Ehilé, Secretary-General of the AAU**, also welcomed the PSC members, especially acknowledging their support

since the inception of the ACE Impact projects. He noted the project stakeholders' immense efforts, including the RFU, World Bank, AFD, Experts, and centres. Especially, he noted their strong commitment, flexibility, and innovativeness in contributing to the fight against the pandemic. He highlighted key project achievements that included improved access to quality programs and education, strategic regional specialization and collaboration, and contribution of the ACEs to the development impact of higher education. Prof. Ehilé also encouraged the ACE Impact participants of the meeting to explore diverse and potential mechanisms for replicating the ACE model to inspire change and strengthen African Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) on the continent. **Mr. Matthieu Discour (AFD Regional Representative for Guinea Gulf)** reaffirmed the AFD's commitment and interest in the ACE Impact Projects. He noted that the AFD is pleased to be part of the ACE Impact Project because it aligns with the AFD's Africa Strategy under which education is a priority. Mr. Discour also mentioned that AFD has a keen interest in the PARTNER project, focusing on the thematic areas of Water, Mining, Digital ICT, and Health.

3. In conclusion, he wished the PSC fruitful deliberations. Ms. Meskerem Lily Mulatu, Education Practice Manager, World Bank, officially opened the PSC meeting. In her remarks, she thanked the Secretary-General of the AAU and all PSC Members for organizing the meeting and also for their continued support and engagement in the project implementation. She further appreciated all participating centers for their contribution towards managing COVID pandemic at community, country, and regional levels. She noted the centres' efforts, which included productions of personal productive equipment, building mathematical models on the spread of the disease to being among the first, fastest centers worldwide to publish genome sequencing of the virus. And most notably, developing a candidate vaccine that is now ready for human trials. She was pleased to note some notable results so far registered by both phases of the ACE Impact. She finally urged all stakeholders to continue supporting the centers and their teams as they move forward. The WB will always count stakeholder's guidance and partnership to demonstrate that universities in Africa can and should be the engines of development.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The meeting's Agenda was confirmed and approved by all members (See [Annex 1](#)).

ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

5. The Chair led the review of the Minutes of the last PSC Meeting that was held in Abuja, Nigeria, on February 24, 2020. He noted that the number of members present as stated in the attendance list did not match what was highlighted in the minutes' introduction. The minutes were subsequently approved subject to the necessary revisions related to the attendance list.

KEY ACTIONS ON PREVIOUS PSC DECISIONS

6. **Key Actions and PSC Decisions:** The RFU reported that the 3rd PSC meeting's key actions had been satisfactorily executed and completed. Details of the individual actions taken, and the timelines are provided in [Annex 2](#). Generally, the actions were related to finalization of the AAU's agreement with the AFD/ IRD on the PARTNER project; update of the Operations Manual with

[Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence for Development Impact \(ACE Impact\)](#)

information on partner projects; finalization of the MEL¹ Digital platform; finalization of the verification of student enrolment, research publication and internships results; and incorporation of the schedules for the PARTNER project Bootcamps. The Chair raised concerns about the delay in finalizing the MoU between the AAU and the IRD. The AAU Secretary-General confirmed this will be finalized within two weeks - latest by November 2, 2020.

PROJECT PROGRESS

Status of First and Second ACE Impact Implementation

7. All 1st and 2nd ACE Impact countries have been declared effective except for Nigeria, whose Financial Agreement has been signed and is working towards finalizing other documents to attain project effectiveness. Regarding institutional readiness, all 1st and 2nd ACE Impact countries have achieved both basic and full institutional implementation readiness. Centre d'Excellence Régional sur les Villes Durables en Afrique (CERVIDA – DOUNEDON) in Togo has received conditional approval of its Implementation Plan (IP) on its finalization in collaboration with their assigned subject-matter experts. Reporting on the review of Sexual Harassment Policies which is part of the full institutional readiness results, the reviewer noted that most centers had clear and concise policies aligned to national laws but not regional and international conventions. A few lacked directions on contact and response procedures. Recommendations related to gaps identified in the policies included: the need to run awareness campaigns, create linkages with national and international policies, and establish precise reporting mechanisms with indication of key contact personnel. The RFU will organize a webinar in February 2021 to address these.

Update on RSIF PASET

8. Under the 1st ACE Impact, three countries, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Senegal, have signed subsidiary agreements with *ICIPE*. Workplans have been submitted, and funds have been disbursed to support their activities. For 2nd ACE Impact, two countries, Benin and Nigeria, are participating, but they are yet to sign their subsidiary agreements with *icipe* and meet all requirements. Also, two cohorts of PhD students have been enrolled under the project, and screening for a third cohort is underway.

COVID Response

9. In response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic at the ACE Institutions, the RFU and the World Bank surveyed to identify what was needed to ensure project continuity and success. Challenges identified during the survey included: lack of digital infrastructure; lack of access to e-platforms; limited time to plan; low commitment of staff and students to implementation of online teaching and learning innovations, inadequate IT skills, and funding challenges. Consequently, five Taskforces on *Connectivity, Capacity building, Funding options, Content/Platforms, and Communication* were set up to develop action plans to provide the needed

¹ Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

assistance to the centres. Briefing notes were shared detailing the expected activities of each Taskforce. Consequently, six (6) webinars on online teaching and learning have been completed, and a Communication Strategy developed to enhance the visibility of centres' COVID-related interventions. Interventions have included scientific and technological innovations and transformative research projects undertaken in collaboration with renowned regional and international universities. Two videos documentaries on centres' responses to the pandemic have been produced, three articles published in the University World News, six editions of the project Newsletters issued, and a COVID page on the ACE Impact website has been developed to enhance the visibility of centres' activities.

Project Performance Update

10. The RFU M&E Specialist (Adeline Addy) provided updates on project performance over the reporting period. A total of 8,457 students have been enrolled in PhD, Masters and professional short course programmes; 1,015 internships have been undertaken; 13 programmes have achieved national accreditation and 1 self-evaluation (towards international institutional accreditation) undertaken; 1,289 research publications have been produced; and a total of USD 18,864,202 generated from external sources. Additional details on reported results achieved and progress towards project targets are provided in [Annex 3](#).

Partnerships

11. **AFD PARTNER Project:** The AFD and the AAU are collaborating to implement the PARTNER Project, which focuses on building capacity in Research Management. The activities will involve co-production of Thematic Network scientific events and trainings and possibly training in specific areas for AAU staff. An implementation Plan has been developed and agreed upon.

12. **Pilot IBM and ACE Impact Digital Skills Partnership:** The partnership is to build a self-sustaining ecosystem, fostering academia and industry partnerships that build universities' capabilities to facilitate digital skills training at all levels. ACE Impact Faculty members have been trained in advanced digital skills with the hope that they would incorporate these emerging fields into their curricula. This partnership will also provide internship opportunities at IBM's research labs in Kenya and South Africa.

13. **FUNMOOCS/Coursera:** The partnership aims to provide platforms to bring to the ACE Impact centers and their universities free/subsidized digital content.

14. **Asian Development Bank:** Global Hi-Tech Knowledge Agriculture University Network, where discussions had been initiated to link this network to the ACE Impact Agriculture Network. The team from Asian Development Bank was also invited to attend the Regional Workshop for further discussions on partnership opportunities.

15. **Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL):** Initiative to build capacity in digital education (technology and pedagogy); support in training by working with content developers and IT technicians to help ACE Impact centers develop their own online content not only relevant to their institutions but to African universities as a whole.

Update on MEL Digital System

16. The RFU presented the progress made in the development of the MEL digital platform. The platform was developed to facilitate the reports submission process; simplify data collection, and facilitate faster and efficient data analysis. Construction of the system is far advanced, and so far, ACEs have submitted reports for two reporting periods on the online platform; and key details of the ACEs such as contacts, work plans, and programmes have been captured. Training sessions have been held with the Centers and a manual has been developed to guide centers on using the system. The system's key features include a Report Calendar, which shows all the reports and their current status, and an FAQ section for quick response to queries. Key next steps in the development of the system include:

- Finalizing translation - Oct 23
- Completing the report submission process - Nov 30
- Finalising Report generation - Nov 30

However, the system will be subject to continuous review to improve the interface and functionality in response to changing needs of the users.

Update on Disbursement

17. The World Bank team (Rim Wazni) presented progress made in terms of disbursement and funds utilization. Percentage of disbursement for the 1st ACE Impact countries were recorded as follows: Djibouti- 12%, Burkina 18%, Guinea 16%, Senegal 19%, and 21% for Ghana. The 2nd ACE Impact countries had not received funds by the time of the regional workshop. However, progress had been made for Benin, Cote d ivoire, the Gambia, Togo, and Niger and their funds were underway. Nigeria was not yet effective hence no verification letter could have been issued. The potential disbursement rate after processing of verified results for the 2nd ACE Impact countries are as follows, Benin 16%, Niger 14% , Nigeria 13%, Cote d'Ivoire 10%, Togo 10% and the Gambia 13%. In relation to the proportion of funds earned, for 1st ACE Impact centres, CoE_KEEP recorded the highest (52%) while CEFORGRIS recorded the lowest at 0%. Under the 2nd ACE Impact, ACEGID recorded the highest expected disbursement at 35%, while OAU-OAK Park had the lowest expected disbursement rate at 0.25%. For both projects, all centers have achieved the first DLI on institutional readiness. Disbursement for DLIs such as *Accreditation*, *Infrastructure*, *Entrepreneurship* and *Fiduciary Management* was recorded at 0% - a situation that calls for improvement.

Update on Project Operations Manual

18. The presentation from the World Bank team (Maud Kouadio-IV), highlighted adjustments made in the Project Operations Manual (POM) to reflect COVID-19 related implications. Specifically, updates included clarifications on some DLIs and their respective verification processes; updates on implementation arrangements to include disbursement/funds flow information; partnership arrangements; and contact details of various stakeholders. The adjustments in the POM will help improve implementation support, ensure alignment with expected activities for the upcoming years, and provide clear deliverables and detailed work arrangements. Specific amendments are highlighted below:

- i) Online short course training are encouraged. As a result, the verification criteria have been updated to include links to the recording of each day's session; online survey administered to participants, and guidelines on various meeting applications.
- ii) Acknowledging the impact of COVID on the enrolment of regional students, in particular, virtual students will be eligible for disbursement but counted at 50%, and the regional requirement of 30% has been waived for January – December 2020 enrolments. Other considerations on results verification include reducing Student enrolment time eligibility from 6 to 4 months
- iii) Updates to the project implementation arrangements have also been incorporated in the Manual, notably at Nigeria's level where a Project Management Unit has been set up. The functioning of this Unit and its responsibilities, as well as Funds disbursement processes within the framework of the ACE Impact project, have been described in the POM.
- iv) Specifics on the WB-AFD co-financing arrangements have also been included.
- v) Update on the project staffing recruitment processes to include WB technical reviews for project-funded staff recruited by the centres. This is in addition to the existing arrangement of reviewing the terms of reference of the positions

Challenges and Lessons Learned during the period

The RFU noted some challenges and lessons learned during the period, including:

- i) Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operations of the ACE host- institutions e.g., low student recruitment, difficulty in finding internship placements, and staff mobility restrictions.
- ii) Effective communication patterns among the ACE stakeholders create strong linkages and quality information flow, hence exemplary project implementation.
- iii) Special skills in online teaching are critical. There is a need for deliberate, regular efforts to support ACEs to retool faculty in deficient areas. This would strategically build robust resilience in the event of similar disruptive future pandemics. The project realized the importance of up-to-date technology to facilitate business transactions in Higher Education Institution (HEIs). It is important to regularly review and update technology at HEIs as this would reduce disruptions.

- iv) Consultations, feedback, and learning on the implementation process will continue to be fundamental to the project's success.

Feedback on the RFU Update

19. Gambia (**Mr. Secka**) noted that its emerging center (STEE) has commercialized the production of its COVID protection equipment in relation to revenue generation. Therefore, the needed documents will be shared with the RFU to reflect earnings under the Revenue Generation DLR.

20. Guinea (**Prof. Mamadou Saliou Diallo**) noted its challenge in rolling out virtual classes for its students during the pandemic. The PSC member requested tailored capacity-building webinars on online teaching and learning to help centers.

21. Djibouti (**Dr. Fahmi Ahmed**) expressed its difficulty in attracting regional students and appealed to the World Bank to review its decision that the university's international students cannot be counted as regional students.

22. The meeting noted that for *Colleges of Engineering and Emerging Centres*, there are no strict requirements on the enrolment of regional students (compared to ACEs that have to recruit a set number of regional students to be disbursed for national students). However, should they have regional students, the appropriate unit cost will be applied. Also, undergraduate enrollment results will be highlighted in the performance reports for information purposes only but will not be captured in the project development objectives.

23. Senegal (**Prof. Coumba Touré Kane**) also noted the challenges posed by COVID, especially on students' mobility and centers' ability to recruit and admit regional students.

24. Responding to concerns raised by Nigeria on the hosting of the MEL Digital platform, the RFU (Ms. Nodumo) assured the PSC that the system would be migrated from the developer's servers to the AAU's own server with a cloud back-up by the end of October 2020.

Decisions/Resolutions

- All Project Operations Manual (PMO) adjustments/recommendations are approved but subject to review at the next steering committee meeting. Further amendments may be made depending on the COVID situation.

AFD SUPPORT

Status per country on AFD financing, requirements, and processes, Dr. Quentin Delpech

25. Dr. Quentin Delpech gave updates on the AFD financing to the ACE Impact Centers in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria. Côte d'Ivoire is scheduled to receive a credit of €18 million while Nigeria and Benin will receive credits of €35.6 million and €10 million, respectively.

26. The PARTNER project agreement for €6 million is expected to cover 4 years. The Project aims to strengthen research networking between the centres on specific topics. Four thematic networks (Sustainable mines, Sustainable water management, Digital Sciences and Health) would be funded under the PARTNER project, and the IRD would support the AAU in its implementation. Specifically, the IRD would oversee scientific support, operational tasks, project monitoring, evaluation, and learning. It was also reported that the IRD/AFD proposed bootcamp was postponed due to COVID restrictions. A new date will be announced after the full re-opening of all universities involved.

27. Nigeria (**Dr. Joshua Atah**) noted that most of its centres are being co-financed by the World Bank and the AFD and observed that this could present some funds flow challenges if the former declares the project effective and the latter is yet to do so. The AFD (**Dr. Delpech**) assured Nigeria that both financiers would hold discussions to reassess the situation and find agreeable solutions. The World Bank also referred Nigeria to the 18 months remedy in the financing agreement between Nigeria and the World Bank

Decision/Resolution

- IRD/AFD to communicate the date for Network Bootcamp.

UPDATE ON RFU ACTIVITIES

RFU Annual Workplan

28. The RFU Project Manager (**Dr. Mkandawire**) presented the work plan of activities for the period July 2020 – June 2021 with an overall budget of USD 3.5 million. Activities planned for the period included coordination and organization of PSC meetings and regional workshops as well as support for individual country review meetings; support for the monitoring and evaluation needs of the ACEs; regular maintenance of an online M&E platform for reporting and data management; Enhancement of Communication, Publicity and Information dissemination; Capacity Building for the ACE Impact Centres and Support for Networking and Partnerships. The PSC commended the RFU for a clear and comprehensive but concise workplan.

29. The PSC members noted that the annual work plan had been given a *No objection* by the World Bank except for salaries of the RFU Staff (see section on Budget below). It was agreed that AAU finalise the discussions with the World Bank on salary arrangements and report the same to the Committee.

30. In response to questions on whether the budget presented covers costs related to proposed virtual meetings, the Project Manager (**Dr. Mkandawire**) explained that the budget catered for both virtual (for the current October 2020 meeting) and face-to-face meetings (April 2021 meeting – to be confirmed). A detailed breakdown of the costs had been shared with the PSC members prior to the meeting.

RFU Financial Report and budget

31. The AAU Director of Finance (**Mr. Amo-Hoyte**) presented the summary Financial Statement for the period July 2019 - June 2020, reporting total cash received of US\$ 2,330,752, a total expenditure of US\$2,173,136, and a cash balance of US\$45,523.

32. The total budget was US\$ 2,831,818, total expenses were US\$ 2,173,136, and the balance for pending expenditure items was at US\$ 658,682. The expenditure items were noted to include coordination and organization of PSC meetings and regional workshops; support for M&E needs of the ACEs; communication/ publicity support; capacity building for the centres and project implementation support including staff salaries, office equipment, and financial audit charges, among others.

33. The PSC commented that all the project documents to be discussed at the meeting had been submitted at least a week in advance, respecting the PSC guidelines on document submission. However, the financial documents were only submitted one day before the PSC meeting, not meeting the project standards. The PSC made clear that moving forward, all documentation, in particular the financial documents, should be submitted on time as the other project documents.

34. The PSC approved the budget, except for the line item on staff salaries, given that this is yet to be approved by the World Bank.

35. Responding to the Chair's query on the delays in the recruitment of the RFU Safeguards Specialist and in completing communication activities, the Project Manager explained that with regards to the recruitment, interviews had been conducted and a report shared with the World Bank. The successful candidate will be assuming office soon. On the delay of communication activities, it was explained that they are currently being concluded.

Decision/Resolution

- The PSC approved the RFU Financial Report and Workplan, except that the line item of staff salaries is still pending, subject to the RFU providing the World Bank with requested information on staff salaries and WB providing its no objection on this.
- The World Bank and RFU are to revert to the PSC members on agreeable solutions concerning staff salaries by the end of October 2020
- The Project Accountant should be personally responsible for reporting on project finances to the Committee in subsequent PSC meetings and other project meetings.
- The RFU should submit the RFU financial documents at least 5 business days prior to the PSC meeting.

COUNTRY ROUND TABLE

36. **Djibouti:** Djibouti commended the World Bank and AAU for their constant support to the centres in Djibouti. He noted that the COVID had been a key challenge to project implementation. However, the University has resumed with measures to ensure the safety of the staff and students.

37. **The Gambia:** The Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI) hosting an emerging center of Science & Technology (STEE) is yet to finalize its MoU with the College of Engineering of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana, although there are already 7 Gambian PHD students currently at the college being trained to join the GTTI faculty team. The centre is also yet to finalize its agreement with De Montfort University (DMU), UK, to assist with establishing a Quality Assurance Unit. Also, an Advisory Board of local and international experts has been set up, and the National Steering Committee was established and has already held its first meeting. The centre intends to commence its Engineering Programme in November and hire consultant to transform the GTTI into a fully-fledged university.

38. **Ghana:** Significant progress was made on results achieved and disbursement despite COVID-19 challenges. To manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, an assessment of implications for income and project implementation was conducted and mitigation measures were adopted by universities in Ghana, which included prioritization of virtual teaching and supervision; assessment of potential loss of revenue, and estimation of unbudgeted expenditure influenced by the COVID pandemic.

39. **Guinea:** The key challenge has been the mobilization of the teams for the centres to collectively respond to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, efforts are being made to find solutions. Procedures to harmonize finances and rules to forge ahead have been instituted. Now that the first disbursement has been received, centres have started preparing the necessary documents to receive subsequent disbursements.

40. **Nigeria:** Priority is being given to all activities that would lead to the attainment of project effectiveness. It was noted that the country also has another World Bank project at the national level SPESSE¹ and project teams from both ACE Impact and SPESSE are jointly working for peer-learning. As disbursement for ACE Impact has not been initiated, funds from the SPESSE project are being used to support ACE Impact activities in Nigeria. The centres have participated in the numerous virtual capacity building initiatives organized by the AAU and World Bank and have benefited significantly.

41. **Togo:** The AAU and World Bank were commended for the technical support and capacity-building initiatives for the benefit of the centres. The University of Lomé has set up a Scientific Committee to support the achievement of project objectives. Also, discussions are on-going for the 2 new centres (Centre d'Excellence Régional pour la Maîtrise de l'Electricité (CERME) and

¹ Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement Project (SPESSE)

Centre d'Excellence Régional sur les Villes Durables en Afrique [CERVIDA - DOUNEDON] to join the relevant thematic networks.

42. **UEMOA:** The Centres were commended for their contributions towards the management of the COVID pandemic. UEMOA emphasized its commitment to assisting the centres where necessary.

43. Discussions emphasized the impact of the COVID pandemic on achieving project objectives and delivering on project goals. Members of the PSC commended the World Bank and the RFU for their flexibility on verification and other timelines to enable centres to achieve the various DLRs.

44. PSC Members reiterated that PSC documents must be sent to the members well in advance of the actual meeting.

Decision/Resolution

- RFU to send PSC meeting documents in advance to the PSC members.

CLOSING

Next Steps

45. Key next steps for the entire ACE Impact projects (the First and Second ACE Impact together) were outlined as follows:

Activity	Timeline	Responsible
Ongoing disbursement for First and Second ACE Impact countries	November-March 2021	AAU/WB/ Centres
Timely Planning and Organizing of expert Site Visits and virtual support to the Centres	November-March 2021	AAU/WB
Capacity Building Activities for Centre e.g. Webinars	June 2021	AAU/WB/ Centres
Graduate Tracer study	November-June 2021	AAU/WB/ Centres
Student Innovation Competitions	February-March 2021	AAU/WB/ Centres
Support ACE Impact thematic networks and Partnerships	March 2021	AAU/ Centres

Closing Remarks

46. Closing the meeting, Prof. Salifu thanked all the members for their active participation, making the meeting productive. He commended the RFU and World Bank teams for flexibility of arrangements to ensure timely delivery of project objectives despite the COVID-19 constraints. Concluding, he observed that a decision was still to be made about modalities for hosting the next PSC meeting.

47. Prof. Salifu moved for the adjournment of the meeting at 17:20 GMT and was seconded by Dr. Fahmi Ahmed (Representative for Djibouti).

Annex 1 - 4TH PSC MEETING AGENDA

Fourth ACE IMPACT Project Steering Committee Meeting Virtual Platform

19th October 2020 (10:00 – 15:30 GMT)

PROGRAMME

10:00-10:15

OPENING

Welcome Adress

- PSC Chair
- AAU, Prof. Etienne Ehile (Secretary General)
- AFD, Matthieu Discour Regional Representative for Guinea Gulf
- World Bank, Ms Meskerem Lily Mulata Education Practice Manager

10:15-11:45

OVERALL ACE IMPACT UPDATES

Review and Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting /Discussion on Key Action Points

Status of First & Second ACE Impact Implementation

- Effectiveness, implementation support and progress
- Status update on RSIF Component
- Covid-19 impact/response
- Development Impact highlights by the Centers
- Partnerships

Key Progress Results and Operational updates

- PDO and Results achievements
- Status on Disbursements
- Operational and POM updates
- Next verification timeline

- Chair
- Dr Sylvia Mkandawire, ACE Impact Project Manager
- Graham Harisson, ACE Impact core team member, WB
- Mrs. Adeline Addy, ACE Impact M&E Officer
- Maud Kouadio IV and Rim Wazni, ACE Impact core team members, WB

11:45-12:00

AFD SUPPORT

Country Status on AFD financing, requirements and processes
AFD support for regional activities

- Dr Marion Aubourg, Deputy Director for Education

12:00-13:00

BREAK

13:00-13:30

UPDATE ON RFU ACTIVITIES

AAU Workplan

AAU Financial Report and Budget

- Dr Sylvia Mkandawire, Project Manager, ACE Impact
- Mr. Frank Adjei, Project Accountant

13:30-14:00

UPDATES ON M&E DIGITIZED SYSTEM

Presentation of the MEL platform

Summary of training sessions with centers

- Mrs. Nodumo Dhlamini, Director ICT Comm & KM

Next steps

14:00-15:00

TOUR DE LA TABLE

Roundtable on Key Country Feedback and Actions

15:00-15:30

CLOSING

Key next steps, First ACE Impact and Second ACE Impact

Closing Remarks

- Ms. Georgina Maison, System Developer

- PSC Members

- Mrs. Himdat Bayusuf
- Dr. Ekua Bentil
- ACE Impact TTLs
- **PSC Member**

Annex 2

ACTIONS TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING FROM 3RD ACE IMPACT PSC MEETING

Decision/ Resolution	Action Taken	Status
1. AAU to share Minutes of the 3 rd ACE Impact PSC meeting well in advance.	The Minutes of the PSC Meeting held on April 24, 2019, was shared with the Committee members prior to their individual Roundtable Country meetings, which began on August 13, 2020.	Completed
2. AFD and AAU to finalize Agreements on pending implementation arrangements.	There have been series of meetings to discuss the MoU, MoU under discussion and yet to be finalized. AAU Secretary-General gave a timeline of two weeks.	In Progress
3. AAU to incorporate all details of the partner project in the implementation arrangements of the Operations Manual	This is subject to the finalization of the MoU between the AAU and AFD.	In Progress
4. AAU to finalize all aspects of DLI 1 and verify student enrollment, research publication, and internships.	The World Bank made disbursements on DLI 1. Verification letters and disbursement letters on verification of student enrolment, research publication, and internships have been shared with centers.	Completed
5. Completion of the MEL digital platform.	Key aspects of the platform have been completed and launched. Centers have commenced submission of reports using the MEL system.	Completed
6. AAU to facilitate experts' supervision mission to centers.	The COVID pandemic's outbreak necessitated that the RFU focused on centers lagging behind- about 17 centers with over 26 virtual missions were organized.	Completed
7. AFD to recruit coordinators for the thematic areas under the PARTNER project.	Coordinators for the various thematic areas of Sustainable Mining, Water, Digital Science & Technology, and Health have been recruited.	Completed

Decision/ Resolution	Action Taken	Status
8. AFD to schedule network bootcamps before July 2020	The proposed bootcamp was postponed due to COVID restrictions. New date will be announced after full re-opening of all universities involved.	TBC
9. AAU to review role of ECOWAs and UEOMOA in facilitating student mobility	A concept Note detailing activities of the ECOWAS and UEOMOA has been shared and currently under review by all parties involved.	In Progress

Annex 3

PROJECT-WIDE PDO & OTHER RESULTS*¹

January 2019 – August 2020

Disbursement-linked Results (DLRs)	Jan 2019 – Nov 2019 <i>(Verified)</i>	Dec 2019 – Aug 2020 <i>(To be verified)</i>	Cumulative Results	Project Targets	Progress to Targets
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES INDICATORS					
Student Enrollment**	5,096	3,361	8,457	31,685	→ 27%
Regional Students	1,478	412	1,890	9,500	→ 20%
Female Students	1,413	1,139	2,552	10,707	→ 24%
Programme Accreditation	5	8	13	82	→ 16%
Institutional Accreditation***	0	0	0	7	↓ 0%
Internships	706	309	1,015	5,986	→ 17%
INTERMEDIATE RESULTS INDICATORS					
Research Publications	581	708	1,289	2,794	↑ 46%
External Revenue	1,909,842	16,954,360	18,864,202	66,849,580	→ 28%
Bachelor Students	548	493	1,041	n/a	n/a

1ST ACE IMPACT PDO & OTHER RESULTS*

January 2019 – August 2020

¹ Report includes achievements of all Centres, Emerging Centres and Colleges of Engineering; Student enrolment information excludes Bachelor Students; and the Djibouti Emerging Centre on Transport and Logistics (CELT) has undertaken *Self-evaluation* towards international institutional accreditation

Disbursement-linked Results	Burkina Faso	Djibouti	Ghana	Guinea	Senegal	Cumulative Results	Project Targets	Progress to Targets
Project Development Objectives Indicators								
Student Enrollment**	1,397	136	797	147	1,216	3,684	10,500	↑ 35%
Regional Students	807	1	142	4	183	1,137	3,000	↑ 38%
Female Students	380	37	222	36	348	1,023	3,500	↑ 29%
Programme Accreditation	0	0	9	4	0	13	30	↑ 43%
Institutional Accreditation***	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	↓ 0%
Intermediate Results Indicators								
Internships	148	38	59	30	171	446	2,000	→ 22%
External Revenue	50,000	0	1,453,080	130,000	0	1,633,080	25,000,000	↓ 7%

2ND ACE IMPACT PDO & OTHER RESULTS
January 2019 – August 2020

Disbursement-linked Results	Benin	Cote d'Ivoire	Gambia	Niger	Nigeria	Togo	Cumulative Results	Project Targets	Progress to Targets
Project Development Objectives Indicators									
Student Enrollment**	494	780	n/a	34	3,420	45	4,773	21,185	→ 23%
Regional Students	165	267	n/a	0	475	10	917	6,500	→ 14%
Female Students	112	186	n/a	2	1,470	7	1,777	7,207	→ 25%
Programme Accreditation	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	52	↓ 0%
Institutional Accreditation***	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	4	↓ 0%
Internships	37	173	n/a	0	426	10	646	3,986	→ 16%
Intermediate Results Indicators									
Research Publications	83	44	n/a	17	547	25	716	1,794	↑ 40%
External Revenue	706,940	723,530	n/a	12,327	11,558,295	0	13,001,093	41,849,580	↑ 31%