

For Immediate Release

## PRESS RELEASE

# Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) Convene to Review the Project at Mid-term and Strengthen Project Implementation and Effectiveness



## 6th ACE Impact Regional Workshop to hold virtually from **November 8th- 11th, 2021**

Accra, Ghana (**November 1, 2021**) – The 6th biannual Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) Regional Workshop will be held from November 8th – 11th, 2021. The meeting will bring together the fifty-three (53) Centres of Excellence, government representatives from participating countries, Vice Chancellors, representatives from the higher education sector, the private sector, policy think tanks, and partners such as the World Bank, the French Development Agency and the Association of African Universities as well as other key stakeholders.

Since its inception in 2019, the ACE Impact has recorded remarkable successes in enhancing quality post-graduate education in higher education institutions within the sub-region including Djibouti. With the project having reached its mid-term, this workshop will present the unique opportunity for the discussion of critical issues which emerged during the Mid-Term Review process.

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The workshop will focus on the exchange of views concerning the project's key achievements and overall status, as well as engaging valuable feedback and practical solutions towards project advancement and development in the next half of implementation.

Centres will be given the opportunity to share experiences and to network to foster collaborations for project sustainability. This opportunity ensures the project's overarching goal- to improve the quality, quantity, and development impact of postgraduate education in Africa through regional specialization and collaboration, is being achieved.

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**Generally, key focus areas of the workshop will include:**

- i) Progress update and key priority areas.
- ii) Mid-Term Review (MTR) – offer an opportunity to project stakeholders to jointly revisit efficacy and effectiveness of project design and implementation approach and resolve operational bottlenecks.
- iii) Highlights on monitoring and evaluation related activities - Verification of Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs), updates on Development Impact, and Entrepreneurship and Innovation.
- iv) Update on Networking initiatives – Inter-ACE Thematic Networks; Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET); Centers of Competence in Digital Education Initiative (C-CoDE)- an initiative to promote the sustainable integration of digital education in the teaching processes.
- v) Parallel sessions on monitoring and evaluation, financial management and disbursement, procurement, and safeguards.

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Prior to the workshop, there will be a closed-door Ministerial meeting on November 8, 2021. Ministers of Education of the 10 participating countries, together with project partners, will convene to provide guidance on successful project implementation and sustainability.

The Opening Session will be held on Tuesday November 9, 2021 at 10:00am.

The ACE Impact project remains dedicated to building the capacities of all 53 centres to deliver quality education and produce the solutions to the continent's development needs.

All ACE Impact key stakeholders are invited to actively participate in this workshop.

**For more information on the ACE Impact Project, visit <https://ace.aau.org>**

**Note to Editors**

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**Background information:**

The Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACE) Project is a World Bank initiative in collaboration with governments of participating countries to support Higher Education institutions in specializing in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Agriculture, and Health. It is the first World Bank project aimed at the capacity building of higher education institutions in Africa. The first phase (ACE I) was launched in 2014 with 22 Centres of Excellence in Nine (9) West and Central African countries; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. The Project aims to promote regional specialization among participating universities in areas that address specific common regional development challenges. It also aims to strengthen the capacities of these universities to deliver high quality training and applied research as well as meet the demand for skills required for Africa's development. The second phase (ACE II) was launched in East and Southern Africa with 24 centers across Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Based on the initial successes, the World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD) in collaboration with the African governments, launched the ACE Impact Project in 2018 to strengthen post-graduate training and applied research in existing fields and support new fields that are essential for Africa's economic growth. There are 43 ACEs (25 new ones and 18 from ACE I); 5 Emerging Centers; 1 "top up" center in Social Risk Management; and 5 Colleges and Schools of Engineering. The new areas include sustainable cities; sustainable power and energy; social sciences and education; transport; population health and policy; herbal medicine development and regulatory sciences; public health; applied informatics and communication; and pastoral production.

## INFORMATION ABOUT ORGANISERS



**About the Association of African Universities (AAU):** The Association of African Universities is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization created by African Universities to promote cooperation among them on the one hand, and between them and the international academic community on the other. Created in 1967, the AAU is the voice of higher education in Africa. AAU aims to improve the quality of African higher education, and to strengthen its contribution to Africa's development by supporting the core functions of higher education institutions and facilitating critical reflection and consensus building on issues affecting higher education in Africa. The AAU is the Regional Facilitation Unit of the Africa Centres of Excellence project.



**WORLD BANK GROUP**

**About the World Bank Group:** The World Bank Group is a multilateral development institution that works to reduce poverty. Its subsidiary IDA (International Development Association) finances the Africa Centres of Excellence series of projects. Established in 1960, IDA helps the world's poorest countries by providing grants and low to zero-interest loans for projects and programs that boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve poor people's lives. IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the world's 75 poorest countries, 39 of which are in Africa. Resources from IDA bring positive change to the 1.5 billion people who live in IDA countries. Since 1960, IDA has supported development work in 113 countries. Annual commitments have averaged about \$18 billion over the last three years, with about 54 percent going to Africa.



**About the French Development Agency:** For more than 75 years, the French Development Agency (AFD) has been fighting global poverty by supporting policies and investments that benefit the poorest populations. Strengthening the social link between individuals, groups and territories are now at the heart of its actions in education, health, employment, urban planning, climate or biodiversity. For AFD, balanced development requires a real reduction in inequalities.



**PRESS RELEASE**

