



Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (P126974)

AFRICA | Western Africa | Education Global Practice |
IBRD/IDA | Specific Investment Loan | FY 2014 | Seq No: 5 | ARCHIVED on 23-Jun-2016 | ISR24180 |

Implementing Agencies: National University Commission, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Association of African Universities, Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Ministry of Higher Education, Cameroon, National Commission for Tertiary Education, NCTE, Ghana, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Key Dates

Key Project Dates

Bank Approval Date:15-Apr-2014

Effectiveness Date:16-May-2014

Planned Mid Term Review Date:01-Jun-2016

Actual Mid-Term Review Date:17-Nov-2014

Original Closing Date:31-Dec-2018

Revised Closing Date:31-Dec-2019

Project Development Objectives

Project Development Objective (from Project Appraisal Document)

The Project Development Objective is to support the Recipients to promote regional specialization among participating universities in areas that address regional challenges by strengthening the capacities of these universities to deliver quality training and applied research.

Has the Project Development Objective been changed since Board Approval of the Project Objective?

No

Components

Name

Component 1: Strengthening Africa Centers of Excellence:(Cost \$155.80 M)

Component 2: Enhancing Regional Capacity; Evaluation and Collaboration:(Cost \$9.20 M)

Overall Ratings

Name	Previous Rating	Current Rating
Progress towards achievement of PDO	● Satisfactory	● Satisfactory
Overall Implementation Progress (IP)	● Moderately Satisfactory	● Moderately Satisfactory
Overall Risk Rating	● Moderate	● Moderate



Implementation Status and Key Decisions

Status

The project has continued strong implementation with many hard-won gains and individual ACEs showing signs of true excellence in their specific areas of strength. These include publication in high-impact journals, new partnerships with industry, movement of teachers and students across international borders[LSM1] through exchange and study programs, external revenue generation, and new student intake. Perhaps most importantly, most ACEs benefit from smart, dynamic students as well as strong and coherent teams. Efforts to accelerate progress towards international evaluation and accreditation is also paying off.

Status

The project has continued strong implementation with many hard-won gains and individual ACEs showing signs of true excellence in their specific areas of strength. These include publication in high-impact journals, new partnerships with industry, movement of teachers and students across international borders[LSM1] through exchange and study programs, external revenue generation, and new student intake. Perhaps most importantly, most ACEs benefit from smart, dynamic students as well as strong and coherent teams. Efforts to accelerate progress towards international evaluation and accreditation is also paying off.

Progress to date on each of the PDO-level indicators is as follows: (i and ii) 5,258 students are enrolled in new specialized short-term courses, Master and PhD programs of which 1,711 students are regional students; (iii) 1,020 students have undergone an internship/placement of at least one month; (iv) the ACEs generated external revenue in the amount of US\$15.8 million; and (v) the number of internationally accredited programs is one (2iE in Burkina Faso). These figures were provided by the ACEs themselves. Verification of the figures for disbursement purposes (as they are DLIs) is taking place with the third-party verification (TPV) agency having completing the verification of 5 pilot ACEs [LSM1] and the remaining 14 expected to be completed by September. This is likely to lead to downward adjustments to these figures. That being said, progress on the indicators has improved since the last supervision mission in November 2015 with achievement observed on all the PDO-level indicators and being on track for year 1 targets. Therefore, progress towards achievement of the PDO continues to be rated Satisfactory.

Operational progress

A key challenge was the disbursement delay and shortage of dollars for Nigerian ACEs due to the country's exchange rate and the single treasury account[LSM1]. The project finally resolved this challenge in June 2016 and now all centers have received advances including the 10 centers in Nigeria. The operationalization of the results-based financing is also settling in with verification on-going and better shared understanding of the definition of the results. The M&E framework has been strengthened through the regular process of presenting the performance on key indicators in a timely and reliable manner as this then leads to joint identification of strengths and weaknesses and, in turn, informs decision making in key areas. Government supervision and facilitation is taking shape in most countries, and regional supervision through the Association of African Universities (AAU), the academic experts and the World Bank is more regular and effective. ACEs' understanding of fiduciary rules and reporting for the project is improving. Further, university-ACE integration is improving.

Challenges

The ACEs need to accelerate the use of funds, notably in the purchase of major equipment and funding of civil works activities. Further, the (expected) longer term challenges closely linked to the project's objective remain: promoting stronger link between education and research on one side with Industry and development needs on the other side; recruiting regional students; raising learning outcomes of graduates and overall quality of programs to international levels; and generating adequate revenue. Also, around half of the ACEs needs to increase funds utilization[LSM1] of the funds that have been disbursed to them so far. This relates to the continued need to improve operational aspect of the project, notably information sharing, M&E reporting and usage, communication, financial management, and procurement at all levels (the Bank, regional facilitation, government, university and at the ACE level).[LSM2] If these challenges significantly improve in the next six months, and the first education results-based disbursements are released as expected as a result of achievements on DLIs, then it is anticipated that the implementation progress rating will be upgraded to Satisfactory

The full functioning of the RFU has room for improvement. The main functions of the RFU include overall facilitation and aggregated monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Thus far, the RFU has implemented a number of activities with strong support from the Bank task team. However, there have been several challenges in the RFU's performance on some of its tasks including delays in responses to ACEs and the hiring of the consultants for the verification of results, cost-effectiveness as well as team-cohesion. Budget reporting, cost-effectiveness and timely replies are improving. The Bank task team continues to proactively review these challenges with the AAU. Following several discussion between the Bank team and AAU and most recently the steering committee meeting in Accra, revisions to the AAU staffing terms of reference (TORs) are currently being undertaken with the RFU staffing structure keeping to the AAU governance structure.

In terms of fiduciary and safeguards, the project is rated moderately satisfactory. The project's first set of annual results (timely procurement and financial audits as well as internal audit review among others) are due on June 30, 2016. The ACEs are fully aware of the expected results, but a number of steps are required. One IFR is overdue (Benin) and needs to be submitted urgently, and 3 are due by end December 2016. Procurement is progressing in the ACEs and there is good communication between the Bank team and the teams, where inquiries regarding procedures are being answered. The team plans at least one in-depth financial review in FY17. Each ACE has been asked to ensure the World Bank's approval of any construction and five centers have been in contact with the Bank on safeguards review, and more are coming. No safeguard issues are expected related to campus construction

Progress to date on each of the PDO-level indicators is as follows: (i and ii) 5,258 students are enrolled in new specialized short-term courses, Master and PhD programs of which 1,711 students are regional students; (iii) 1,020 students have undergone an internship/placement of at least one month;



(iv) the ACEs generated external revenue in the amount of US\$15.8 million; and (v) the number of internationally accredited programs is one (2iE in Burkina Faso). These figures were provided by the ACEs themselves. Verification of the figures for disbursement purposes (as they are DLIs) is taking place with the third-party verification (TPV) agency having completed the verification of 5 pilot ACEs [LSM1] and the remaining 14 expected to be completed by September. This is likely to lead to downward adjustments to these figures. That being said, progress on the indicators has improved since the last supervision mission in November 2015 with achievement observed on all the PDO-level indicators and being on track for year 1 targets. Therefore, progress towards achievement of the PDO continues to be rated Satisfactory.

Operational progress

A key challenge was the disbursement delay and shortage of dollars for Nigerian ACEs due to the country's exchange rate and the single treasury account [LSM1]. The project finally resolved this challenge in June 2016 and now all centers have received advances including the 10 centers in Nigeria. The operationalization of the results-based financing is also settling in with verification on-going and better shared understanding of the definition of the results. The M&E framework has been strengthened through the regular process of presenting the performance on key indicators in a timely and reliable manner as this then leads to joint identification of strengths and weaknesses and, in turn, informs decision making in key areas. Government supervision and facilitation is taking shape in most countries, and regional supervision through the Association of African Universities (AAU), the academic experts and the World Bank is more regular and effective. ACEs' understanding of fiduciary rules and reporting for the project is improving. Further, university-ACE integration is improving.

Challenges

The ACEs need to accelerate the use of funds, notably in the purchase of major equipment and funding of civil works activities. Further, the (expected) longer term challenges closely linked to the project's objective remain: promoting stronger link between education and research on one side with Industry and development needs on the other side; recruiting regional students; raising learning outcomes of graduates and overall quality of programs to international levels; and generating adequate revenue. Also, around half of the ACEs needs to increase funds utilization [LSM1] of the funds that have been disbursed to them so far. This relates to the continued need to improve operational aspect of the project, notably information sharing, M&E reporting and usage, communication, financial management, and procurement at all levels (the Bank, regional facilitation, government, university and at the ACE level). [LSM2] If these challenges significantly improve in the next six months, and the first education results-based disbursements are released as expected as a result of achievements on DLIs, then it is anticipated that the implementation progress rating will be upgraded to Satisfactory. In terms of fiduciary and safeguards, the project is rated moderately satisfactory. The project's first set of annual results (timely procurement and financial audits as well as internal audit review among others) are due on June 30, 2016. The ACEs are fully aware of the expected results, but a number of steps are required. One IFR is overdue (Benin) and needs to be submitted urgently, and 3 are due by end December 2016. Procurement is progressing in the ACEs and there is good communication between the Bank team and the teams, where inquiries regarding procedures are being answered. The team plans at least one in-depth financial review in FY17. Each ACE has been asked to ensure the World Bank's approval of any construction and five centers have been in contact with the Bank on safeguards review, and more are coming. No safeguard issues are expected related to campus construction.

The main functions of the RFU include overall facilitation and aggregated monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Thus far, the RFU has implemented a number of activities with support from the Bank task team. Budget reporting, cost-effectiveness and timely replies are improving.

Fiduciary and safeguards wise, the project is rated moderately satisfactory. The projects first set of annual results (timely procurement and financial audits as well as internal audit review among others) come due in June 30, 2016. The ACEs are fully aware of the expected results, but a number of steps are required. The team plans at least one in-depth financial review in FY17. Safeguard-wise, each ACE has been asked to ensure WB approval of any construction and five centers are in contact on safeguards review, and more are coming. No safeguard issues are expected due to on-campus construction.



Risks

Systematic Operations Risk-rating Tool

Risk Category	Rating at Approval	Previous Rating	Current Rating
Political and Governance	--	● Substantial	● Substantial
Macroeconomic	--	● Moderate	● Moderate
Sector Strategies and Policies	--	● Moderate	● Moderate
Technical Design of Project or Program	--	● Moderate	● Moderate
Institutional Capacity for Implementation and Sustainability	--	● Substantial	● Substantial
Fiduciary	--	● Moderate	● Moderate
Environment and Social	--	● Low	● Low
Stakeholders	--	● Moderate	● Moderate
Other	--	● Low	● Low
Overall	--	● Moderate	● Moderate

Results

Project Development Objective Indicators

▶ No of students enrolled in new specialized Master, PhD, post-grad, post-doc and/or short-term courses/ programs (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	1580.00	5409.00	5258.00	17375.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▲ Number of regional students enrolled in new specialized short-term courses, Master and PhD programs (Number, Custom Breakdown)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	987.00	2410.00	1655.00	9432.00
Date	30-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018



► No. of internationally (regionally/sub-regionally) accredited education programs. (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	3.00	1.00	1.00	18.00
Date	30-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

► Number of Students with at least 1 month internship in a private sector company or a local institutions relevant to their field/sector. (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	1037.00	2005.00	1020.00	6928.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

► Amount of externally generated revenue by the ACEs. (Amount(USD), Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	976877.00	2379494.00	15846102.00	9551250.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

Overall Comments

Following clarifications on the definitions on what counts for each DLI, a number of the ACEs have revised downwards the indicators to reflect the actual numbers. It should be noted that the results are currently under-going independent verification. The project team is working closely with each ACE to ensure the results presented include all the necessary information to allow for effective verification.

Intermediate Results Indicators

► No of faculty trained by the ACEs (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	100.00	631.00	707.00	1200.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2014



▲ Number of regional faculty trained by the ACEs (Number, Custom Breakdown)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	27.00	85.00	94.00	415.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▷ Number of female faculty regionally trained by the ACEs (Number, Custom Breakdown)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	7.00	27.00	20.00	131.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▲ Number of national faculty trained by the ACEs (Number, Custom Breakdown)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	73.00	546.00	613.00	685.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▷ Number of national female faculty trained by the ACEs (Number, Custom Breakdown)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	14.00	122.00	151.00	195.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018



► No of newly established or revised curricula (meeting labor market skills), as approved by the appropriate institutional organ. (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	106.00	102.00	66.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	16-Jun-2016	31-Mar-2018

► Increase of internationally recognized research publications in disciplines supported by the ACE-Programme (Percentage, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	1098.00	1566.00	655.00	1335.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	16-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

► No of partnership agreements between ACEs and engaged partner institutions (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	48.00	225.00	216.00	208.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	16-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

► ACE project implementation team meetings with openly disclosed minutes (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	210.00	325.00	136.00
Date	15-Nov-2015	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018



▶ Annual disclosed unqualified external financial audit with the ACE annual budget (planned and executed). (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	1.00	7.00	37.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▶ RFU holding regular meetings with at least 15 ACEs participating (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	4.00	5.00	8.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	13-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▶ Level of satisfaction of ACE and ACE Steering Committee on quality of support provided by the Regional Facilitation Unit (AAU). (Percentage, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	73.00	79.40	80.00	75.00
Date	20-May-2014	16-Dec-2015	17-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▶ No of ACE-Institutions reporting on at least 85% of their indicators, submitting the RF to the AAU in time. (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	9.00	11.00	14.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	17-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018



▶ Annual program report prepared and submitted to WB (Text, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	N/A	done (exceeded) Four semi-annual activity program reports have been delivered by AAU	done (exceeded) Four semi-annual activity program reports have been delivered by AAU	Done
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	17-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▶ Direct project beneficiaries (Number, Core)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	2717.00	7077.00	9107.00	18765.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	16-Dec-2015	17-Jun-2016	31-Dec-2018

▲ Female beneficiaries (Percentage, Core Supplement)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	332.00	1401.00	1528.00	4464.00

Overall Comments

Data on Financial Performance**Disbursements (by loan)**

Project	Loan/Credit/TF	Status	Currency	Original	Revised	Cancelled	Disbursed	Undisbursed	Disbursed
P126974	IDA-54120	Effective	USD	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.94	0.91	47%
P126974	IDA-54150	Effective	USD	70.00	70.00	0.00	16.57	47.36	24%
P126974	IDA-54190	Effective	USD	16.00	16.00	0.00	3.08	11.53	19%

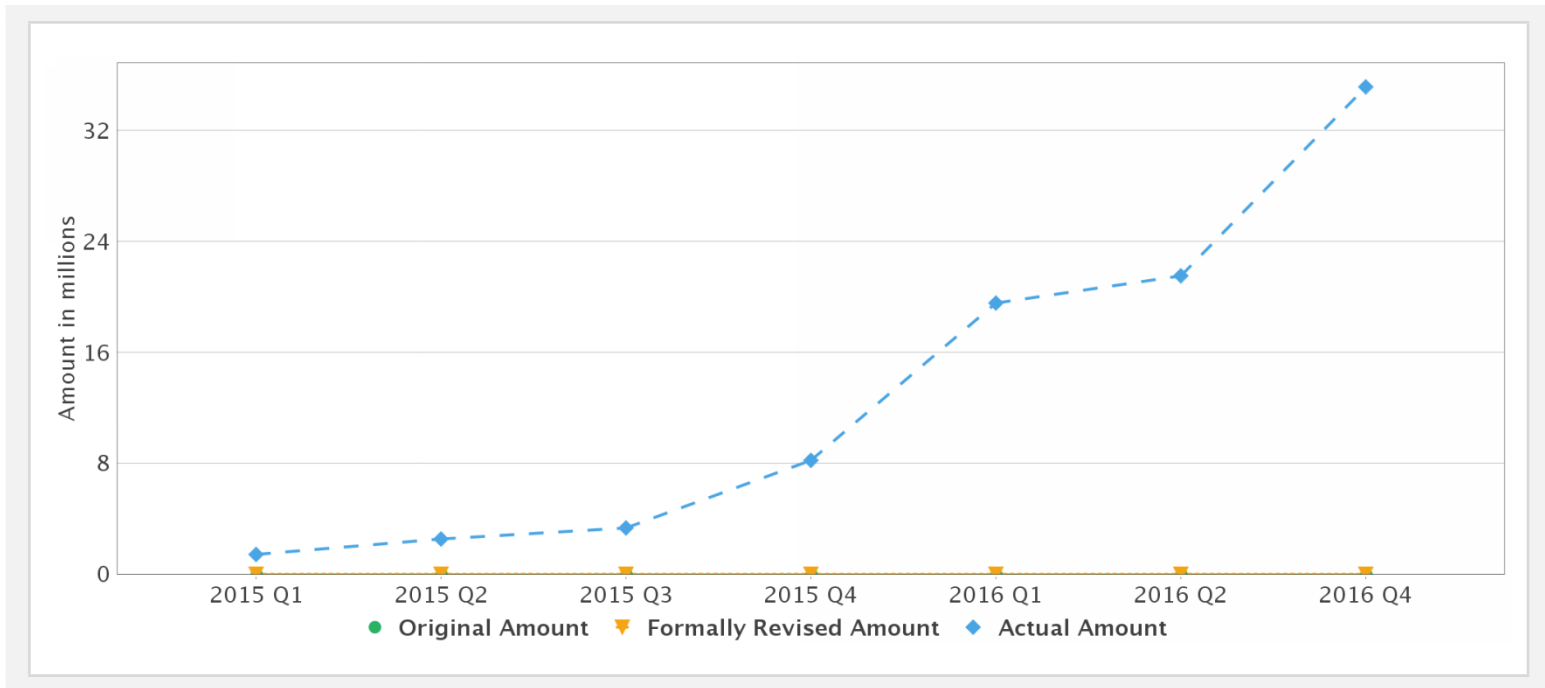


P126974	IDA-54200	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	1.56	5.74		19%
P126974	IDA-54210	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	1.58	5.93		20%
P126974	IDA-54220	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	1.58	5.66		20%
P126974	IDA-54230	Effective	USD	24.00	24.00	0.00	5.29	16.79		22%
P126974	IDA-54240	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	1.55	5.74		19%
P126974	IDA-57330	Not Effective	USD	15.00	15.00	0.00	0.00	14.65		0%
P126974	IDA-H9300	Effective	USD	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.46	0.53		46%
P126974	IDA-H9320	Effective	USD	5.00	5.00	0.00	2.55	2.17		51%

Key Dates (by loan)

Project	Loan/Credit/TF	Status	Approval Date	Signing Date	Effectiveness Date	Orig. Closing Date	Rev. Closing Date
P126974	IDA-54120	Effective	15-Apr-2014	05-Jun-2014	02-Sep-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54150	Effective	15-Apr-2014	25-Feb-2015	22-May-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54190	Effective	15-Apr-2014	10-Jul-2014	18-Dec-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54200	Effective	15-Apr-2014	16-May-2014	16-May-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54210	Effective	15-Apr-2014	20-May-2014	20-May-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54220	Effective	15-Apr-2014	14-Aug-2014	02-Apr-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54230	Effective	15-Apr-2014	10-Apr-2015	23-Jul-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54240	Effective	15-Apr-2014	15-Jul-2014	07-Jan-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-57330	Not Effective	29-Sep-2015	20-Oct-2015	--	31-Dec-2019	31-Dec-2019
P126974	IDA-H9300	Effective	15-Apr-2014	05-Jun-2014	02-Sep-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-H9320	Effective	15-Apr-2014	27-Jun-2014	18-Aug-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018

Cumulative Disbursements



Restructuring History

There has been no restructuring to date.

Related Project(s)

P153111-Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project Add. Fin.