

PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID) CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: PIDC91

Project Name	Strengthening Tertiary Education in Africa through Africa Centers of Excellence (P126974)
Region	AFRICA
Country	Africa
Sector(s)	Tertiary education (50%), Health (25%), Agricultural extension and research (25%)
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Concept Review Decision	Track II - The review did authorize the preparation to continue

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. Sub-Saharan Africa has an unprecedented opportunity for transformation and sustained growth. GDP growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has accelerated from an average annual rate of 2.0 percent during the 1990s to 5.5 percent in the last decade. Even though growth declined as a consequence of the global financial crisis, it has rebounded in 2010 thanks to prudent macroeconomic policies and financial support from multilateral agencies. This remarkable economic turnaround is the result of increasing macroeconomic stability, of reforms which have whittled away market imperfections and most consequently, of rapidly increasing global demand for the natural resource based commodities exported by sub-Saharan countries. Coming after more than two decades of stagnation, the recent spurt of economic performance is an encouraging development.
2. Despite this strong economic growth, Africa faces significant development challenges. Key among them is an undiversified production structure. Adding value to production and diversifying national economies by stimulating development of new competitive sectors is a significant challenge. Notably, the countries need to capitalize on the commodity boom to ensure domestic economic spillovers in the form of well paid jobs and seek to move into value-addition activities.

Also progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been rapid in some countries (such as Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania). However, a disproportionate number of African countries will fall short of most of the MDGs, especially with regards to the health MDGs such as Maternal Health, where Mortality rate is 500 per 100,000 and child health where 3.8 million children below the age of 5 die annually. Food security and low productivity in agriculture is another considerable challenge, especially in the Sahel region where an estimated 15 million people are at risk for food security. Additionally, weak governance, state fragility, youth employment and climate change are substantial development challenges facing African countries.

3. There are immediate skill shortages in addressing Sub-Sahara Africa's development challenges. African economies face unmet demand for highly skilled technicians, engineers, medical workers, agricultural scientists and researchers, particularly in the growing sectors of extractive industries, energy, water, environment, infrastructure, and in service sectors, such as hospitality, banking, and ICT. For instance, the extractive industries demand specialized civil, electrical and petroleum engineers as well as geologists, and environmental and legal specialists. Positions that are currently filled by expats. Another example of critically needed skills is the lack of health workers with the necessary training to oversee pregnancies and deliveries (Maternal and Child Health – MDG4&5), or treat infectious diseases. Further, agriculture experiences a revival in investments. However, these investments do not deal with the development of human capital - a critical element in the transformation of African agriculture. The lack of crop and animal scientists, as well as veterinarians, and agronomists has become a bottleneck in transforming agriculture in Africa. In sum, a number of development challenges will not be overcome without initiatives to produce the necessary high quality and relevant skilled human capital.

4. In the medium run, sustained economic growth and competitiveness for Africa requires more skilled labor and applied industry related research to increase technology absorption, total factor productivity, and generate new competitive sectors. Unsurprisingly, Africa is at the bottom of almost every knowledge economy indicator. For instance, it contributes with 0.07% of global patents applications, an indication of the continent's technological leadership. The region has the lowest researcher-to-population ratio in the world with less than 100 researchers per million inhabitants compared to about 700 in North Africa, 300 in Latin America, and 1,600 in Central and Eastern Europe. Improving these indicators is not top priority for today's economic growth. Nevertheless, while addressing specific immediate skill shortages, there is a case for investing into a foundation for future knowledge-based economic growth in Africa. Such investment would generate more high quality professionals with higher order skills, entrepreneurial spirit, and a research capacity, especially within life sciences, "hard" sciences, and technology. Part of the driving force of the East-Asian economic miracle was a relatively rapid build up of technical and technological workforce prepared by an ever-improving education and applied research system. These are also capacities which SSA requires for sustaining economic growth. These capacities will also be important for diversifying the African economies by increasing the likelihood of new economic growth sectors with higher value added. Nobody foresaw the creation of a US\$100 billion IT-Business Processing Outsourcing industry capable of sustaining an estimated 12 million middle-income jobs in India, when 4 IITs were established in the 1950s.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. The tertiary education systems of Africa are currently not capable of responding to the immediate skill needs or supported sustained productivity-led growth in the medium term. The reasons are under-development of the tertiary education systems in Africa, no critical mass of

quality faculty and excellence, insufficient sustainable financing, inappropriate governance and leadership, disconnect with the demands of the economy, and inadequate regional integration.

6. Tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa is under-developed and has been a low priority for the past two decades. A strong focus on basic education has gradually led to a depletion of quality faculty and physical facilities within higher education as well as a backlog of reforms. Access to tertiary education remains the lowest in the world; only 5% of the relevant age group attends tertiary education. This is just one-fifth of the world average of about 25 percent. In regards to quality, not a single Sub-Sahara African university features in the rankings of the world's best 500 academic institutions (excluding South Africa). With substantial improvements in basic education and strong economic growth, it is now time to invest in a targeted manner into post-basic education in Africa.

7. In order to be sustainable, increased investments into tertiary education will have to come from households and companies. Public funding is scarce and will not be able to indiscriminately backroll expansion and improved quality of higher education. This limitation has in 33 low-income SSA countries led to a per student expenditure decline from US\$ 6,800 in 1980 to US\$981 in 2010 (or most recent). Further, the majority of higher education students come from households that can contribute in a substantial way to the costs of higher education. Public funding should increasingly be targeted to low-income students or strategic areas of higher education where private investments are not forthcoming. Institutions should supplement public funding with fees, royalties, donations, etc. Furthermore, limited public programs could in a strategic manner incentivize private institutions to provide education in new areas of public policy interest, such as rural areas, S&T disciplines and post-graduate programs.

8. Tertiary institutions in Africa face severe constraints in terms of attaining critical mass of quality faculty. The average percentage of staff with PhD in public tertiary education institutions in Africa is estimated to be less than 20 percent (based on 10 countries in the region). Most departments do not have more than 1 or 2 senior professors. This prevents departments and universities from establishing vibrant research environments. The low salaries of faculty, lack of research funding and equipment as well as limited autonomy provide disincentives for professors to stay in African universities. This is particularly challenging for fragile and post-conflict countries where faculty often have left the country. There is a need to invest in a selective manner in faculty and a specific need to train faculty from fragile countries, preferably using institutions in Africa.

9. Governance and leadership is integral to the development of a tertiary education system that responds to the needs of an economy. Legal frameworks for governance and leadership in many African countries are generally commensurate with the development of good governance by requiring merit-based selection of chief-executive officers (Rectors/Vice-Chancellors), existence of governing bodies, academic autonomy, and reasonable financial autonomy. However, some countries have legal frameworks and governance practices that are not conducive for good governance. In these cases, policy changes are recommendable to ensure an arms-length between the government and the institutions, provide reasonable financial autonomy, and enhance accountability of the institution and the governing body. Further, dynamic and empowered institutional leadership is a critical drive of institutional excellence. In some settings, poor governance framework and leadership have led to disruption of basic functioning, such as students or faculty strikes and months delay of classes or exams. Investments into tertiary education should ensure that the governance framework is conducive to excellence, and take into account leadership quality in the selection of institutions to support.

10. There is a significant gap between labor market demand and programs offered by tertiary education institutions. This has led to high unemployment among graduates, mostly temporary, but still of significant economic and political influence. The gap is a result of several factors: (i) inertia in opening new degrees, including new Science and Technology degrees closely responding to emerging labor market needs; (ii) students have little or no work experience when graduating; (iii) limited employer input into curricula or the teaching-learning process; (iv) lack of focus on general employability skills, such as learning-to-learn, problem-solving, project and team-work, and communication skills; (v) degrading learning equipment and infrastructure for teaching; (vi) overall limited learning of students due to low teacher effectiveness, and the level of preparation of students entering from secondary education, and (vii) preparing and assisting graduates finding a job. These factors are in turn associated with the above sector shortcomings on lack of reforms, financing, and governance. Improving relevance and lowering unemployment is feasible and requires a concerted effort increase interaction between employers and faculty, place students in internships during studies, introduce new education programs and reshape curricula of existing programs, and invest in faculty training and learning resources together with increased measurement and accountability of graduates' employment success.

11. Nurturing fast growth of private higher education is critical to offer more educational possibilities for youth. Over 1000 private non-university institutions have emerged in SSA, and private institutions now cater for 1 in 4 students. Growth of private institution takes place mostly in urban areas and low-cost bachelor programs oriented towards professional jobs. Public policy and funding could be oriented towards stimulating private growth and supporting equitable access, while focusing on public funding on areas of lower private return for institutions, but high social return, such as expensive life-sciences, science and technology disciplines, and post-graduate courses.

12. Building and sustaining capacity and excellence in tertiary education in resource-constrained African economies is particularly difficult. This is particularly challenging for smaller countries. For these African countries, a regional approach may offer part of the solution, particularly in critical, capital-intensive disciplines because: (a) few if any Sub-Saharan country will for the foreseeable future be able to establish sufficient critical mass of quality faculty on their own to attain academic excellence in the full range of specialties necessary to cater to specific skill needs for development. Only by pooling and concentrating talent and knowledge regionally can such centers of excellence attain quality; (b) quality universities are expensive. Few if any African countries will have the persistent means to fund centers of excellence; through regional collaboration and division of labor/investments can groups of African countries financially sustain quality universities; and (c) it would enhance regional cross-country collaboration to achieve economies of scale enhance the knowledge spillovers from research on common sub-regional problems.

Relationship to CAS

13. The proposed tertiary education program is under Pillar 1 of the World Bank Africa Strategy strengthening competitiveness and employment. This pillar includes a focus on investments in "areas of highest growth potential, a healthy and skilled workforce, women's empowerment, and regional integration programs". Consultations for the strategy revealed that education was the area in which the World Bank could make the biggest difference in helping Africa create jobs. People mentioned the urgent need to improve universities, increase academic contact with countries outside Africa, develop technical programs, and provide means to expand

access to higher education, including scholarships.”

14. The program is also aligned with the Regional Integration Assistance Strategy which coordinates interventions for regional public goods. This strategy foresees the proposed operation to facilitate economies of scale in the use of facilities, equipment, and staff in specialized fields of study; share innovations in curricula, pedagogy, and approaches to teaching, learning, and research across countries; and enhance cross-border research networks. The Regional Project will also ensure alignment to Country Assistance Strategies and portfolios.

15. National country strategies across Africa increasingly emphasize tertiary education for development. This is evidenced through the increasing dialogue between Ministry of Higher Education and donor community as well as increasing initiatives on higher education on the continent.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)

16. The Project Development Objective is to strengthen the capacity of selected universities and their partner institutions to deliver high quality training and applied research at the regional level within areas of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Health and Agriculture that are of particular relevance to Africa’s development.

17. The higher order objective is to meet the labor market demands for skills within specific areas where there are skill shortages affecting development outcomes and economic growth. Further, the project will, on a demand basis, invest in well performing universities that can start building a foundation for Africa to increase knowledge and technology absorption, and build knowledge-based competitive advantages.

Key Results (From PCN)

18. The proposed operation will have indicators for each of the program components, with its targets tailored to each aspiring Africa Center of Excellence (ACE). Preliminary key performance indicators are:

- Capacity to training:
 - o No. of graduates from short-term specialized courses
 - o No of students in new specialized Master and PhD programs
- Relevance to development:
 - o Amount of revenue in joint research and consultancy
 - o No. of Students with at least 3 months internship/placements
- Delivered regionally:
 - o Share of non-national students and training of non-national faculty
- High quality of education:
 - o International Accreditation
 - o Research output

19. Intermediate outcome indicators will inter-alia capture equity aspects.

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

20. The project consists of two components; the first is to build capacity in competitively selected institutions to produce in-demand high skilled labor and applied research. The second will facilitate the regional impact through talent and labor mobility and support of M&E and project management activities.

Component 1: Producing in-demand specialized high skilled labor

21. Component 1 will support selected institutions to become Africa Centers of Excellence in STEM, Health and Agricultural Sciences within areas that are pertinent to developing graduates and knowledge solutions to enhance African development.

22. An estimated 5-15 higher education institutions will be selected through an open, transparent and merit-based selection process to become an African Center of Excellence (ACE). The selection process will entail three steps, namely; (a) Preparation of a long-list of potential ACE candidates (higher education institutions) based on criteria of potential for excellence. This draft list will be shared broadly for consultation; (b) call for proposals to those institutions on the long list, and (c) evaluation of proposals by independent African and international experts, and (d) submission of institutional proposals of a short-list of institutions.

23. To identify initial beneficiary institutions, a panel of African sectoral regional organization leaders met with the Bank team in December 2011. There was agreement on a set of criteria, which will still was further refined at another stakeholder consultation meeting in March 2012, as the basis for the identification of an ACE- "long list". Institutions on the long list will have to demonstrate in their EOI that they meet the requirements, mainly referring to quality, financial sustainability, regionality and government commitment. Once selected, the institutions will received support in the form of two sub-components:

24. Sub-component 1: Building training and research capacity. This will be achieved by implementation of an institutional plan designed by the institution and reviewed by external experts. The plan will consist of an institutional specific mix of the following elements: (i) developing and offering new specialized short-term programs for nearly or just graduated professionals to prepare them for a job or for further professional development, possibly through e-learning; (ii) offering faculty development courses for faculty from other institutions; (iii) developing new or strengthening existing education programs, in particular post-graduate programs; (iv) increasing quality and relevance of existing teaching through revision of curricula based upon industry advice; (v) enhancing the research capacity of institutions to produce more applied research within the focus areas of the ACE for innovation and R&D; (vi) developing partnerships and outreach with the private sector and related communities to ensure linkages with relevant regional labor market and communities; (vi) international benchmarking and accreditation; (vii) improving management, governance, and leadership, and (viii) improving equity and reducing gender gaps, increasing admission of talented regional students and faculty.

25. Sub-component 1.1 will finance the following inputs: (i) shorter-term training of faculty and administrators, (ii) upgrading of qualifications of faculty (masters and PhD training); (iii) provision of learning resources and research equipment, (iv) linkages with private sector to ensure relevance of curricula and work-place learning, (v) minor rehabilitation for extension of existing facilities (the

need for construction will be reviewed during the preparation phase; however, no land acquisition will be undertaken), (vi) workshops, operating costs, conferences, and travel, and (vii) consultant services.

26. Sub-component 1.2: Sharing the gains across the region with partner institutions. This sub-component seeks, through networking with other higher education institutions, to raise quality of education in partner institutions and disseminate research findings to impact more beneficiaries. It will support developing of new or strengthening of existing partnerships between each ACE and (i) other higher education institutions located either in the host country or other African countries; (ii) other sector-specific institutions that deliver training or services in the area of expertise of the Center, and (iii) existing research and training networks in Africa the areas of STEM, Health or Agricultural Sciences. Linkages to existing networks will lead to joint research and training programs. Such partnerships will be achieved through clear memorandums of understanding where students and faculty temporarily rotate between each ACE and partner institutions improving their learning and teaching capacity (for example by being exposed to different learning environments, new knowledge and specialized learning resources such as libraries or laboratories) whilst simultaneously contributing towards the capacity development of the institutions they are visiting (contributing towards curricula development, faculty training, and or assisting in research etc). This sub-component will finance the following inputs: (i) travel and workshops, (ii) limited learning resources; (iii) consultant services, and (iv) operational costs.

Component 2: Facilitating regional impact

27. Sub-component 2.1 Talent and faculty Mobility. This sub-component will facilitate talent mobility and labor through scholarships and support to visiting students from partnership institutions (and vice versa) to gain exposure to different learning environments whilst simultaneously building capacity in the visiting institutions.

28. Sub-component 2.2 M&E and project management will aim to provide reasonable timely, sufficient, precise, and reliable information to assess and improve the performance of the selected institutions and the project. Further, there will be a strong focus on implementation support for project management, information sharing, and fiduciary capacity building. It will also finance financial and possibly technical audits.

Implementation Arrangements

29. The Project activities will be implemented by the selected Africa Centers of Excellence. The ACE will establish a team with an ACE coordinator, undertake take and develop fiduciary functions and capacity with project management and coordination support from the Regional Coordination Secretariat and technical assistance from existing staff and selected consultants as necessary.

30. A Regional Coordinating Secretariat will be responsible for funds under Component 2 which will be disbursed against a work plan and procurement plan. The Regional Coordinating Secretariat will be selected from among regional organizations involved in capacity building in Africa and has a long term mandate in higher education. It will be responsible for overseeing implementation of tasks, networking, monitoring and evaluation for the ACEs.

31. The project will operate under the overall guidance and oversight of a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The main task of the PSC will be to provide oversight and guidance on the project and direct ACEs to ensure the achievement of the project objectives. The Program Steering Committee (PSC) will consist of a small number of distinguished Africans representing a cross section of academia, the business world, and policy makers interested in the advancement of STEM, Agriculture and Health in Africa. These implementation arrangements described below are preliminary and will be further refined during the course of Program preparation.

32. The Program will be financed by the World Bank, in collaboration with other development partners. In accordance with existing World Bank guidelines, funds under Component 1 and 2 will mainly be channeled through national governments, and disbursed directly to the aspiring ACEs, based on agreed work plans, for them to implement the program.

IV. Safeguard Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No	TBD
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	x		
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04			x
Forests OP/BP 4.36		x	
Pest Management OP 4.09			x
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11			x
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10			x
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12			x
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x	

V. Tentative financing

Financing Source	Amount
BORROWER/RECIPIENT	20.00
International Development Association (IDA)	200.00
Total	220.00

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World Bank Africa Region
Regional Africa Centers-of-Excellence (ACE) Project

Independent Evaluation Committee Protocol
for the Assessment of ACE Proposal Submissions

The World Bank, Africa Region
Human Development Department
Washington D.C., February 2013

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This document is available at the internet: [WorldBank.org/AFR/HD/ACE/Evaluation Committee](http://WorldBank.org/AFR/HD/ACE/Evaluation%20Committee)
The evaluation protocol was developed by the World Bank Africa ACE Team, Andreas Blom
Team leader

1.INTRODUCTION

2.OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION PROTOCOL

The ACE Evaluation Protocol 2013 is a protocol for the evaluation of proposals submitted by African institutions of higher learning in response to the Call-for-Proposals under the Africa Centers of Excellence Project phase I for West and Central African countries – undertaken by institutions of higher learning, West and Central African Governments and ECOWAS with collaboration and finance from the World Bank. The aim of this Evaluation Protocol is to provide guidelines for the Independent Evaluation Committee’s assessment, recommendations, and reporting regarding the proposals submitted.

The Independent Evaluation Committee will be the primary user of the evaluation protocol. The protocol will also serve as a guiding document for the ACE Program’s Steering Committee to assist in its oversight of the Independent Evaluation Committee, and for the institutions preparing proposals.

The ACE Independent Evaluation Committee will independently and objectively assess ACE proposals and the submitting institution for funding within education and research in engineering, mathematics and science & technology, the agricultural sciences and the health & medical sciences.

The protocol formulates the guidelines regarding the assessment criteria, information requirements and the procedures to be taken into account by the Independent Evaluation Committee. The World Bank’s ACE Project Appraisal Document (PAD) contains the rationale for the project and a summary of the project description. The Independent Evaluation Committee can refer to these documents in their assessments of each individual proposal submitted.

It should also underline that the administrative burden of the assessment of the proposal on the institution/center submitting the ACE proposal(s) (e.g. clarifications, site visits, additional documentation, etc.) should be as light as possible.

3.EVALUATION

In brief, the evaluation of the proposals submitted by the African institutions of higher learning will be done in two rounds:

1. The first round will be a technical assessment by the Independent Evaluation Committee which will have 3-4 Evaluation Panels, one for each major discipline under the project. Each Panel would have sufficient number of members with knowledge and experience in the respective discipline that can review and evaluate the assigned proposals.
2. The second round of the evaluation involves an in-depth on-site and leadership assessment of the institution submitting the proposal. Small teams consisting of at least two internationally reputed university or scientific leaders and a leading faculty/investigator within the field of expertise of the ACE Proposal will visit each of the short-listed institutions. The team will assess leadership and management capacity of the university and the proposed CoE, as well as ascertain the feasibility of the implementation of the proposed institutional project given the existing academic capacity, infrastructure, including learning and research equipment, and management capacity.

Based upon the above, the Evaluation Panels within the Independent Evaluation Committee will submit, together with all appropriate relevant documentation, a ranked recommendations of the proposals to the Steering Committee (SC), which will make the ultimate award granting decisions. In this decision, the SC may deviate from the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee, without, however, changing any evaluation marks of the individual proposals. It may do so based upon an objective and clearly stated rationale to ensure a reasonable geographically, linguistically and disciplinary representation in the final selection.

At least 5 double ACE grants will be given to institutions that submitted two Centre of Excellence proposals. These institutions will receive funding for two centers of excellence, a total of USD 8 million. This seeks to concentrate sufficient funding to a few institutions, generate a critical mass of senior faculty, post-graduate students, and researchers, establish a thriving research environment in several disciplines, and foster policy and leadership development at the institutional level; all factors that are critical to develop excellence.

The full evaluation process and Timeline is provided in the table below:

	Steps	Dates	Organization	Observations
1	Appointment of ACE Steering Committee	Tuesday April 30, 2013	World Bank and ACE Advisory Board	Following World Bank Decision Meeting
2	Issuing of the ACE Call for Proposal	Monday June 3, 2013	SC by way of its Facilitation Unit	Facilitation Unit may be at AAU
3	Final Selection and Appointment of Independent Evaluation Committee	Friday June 15, 2013	SC	
4	Selection and appointment of Grievances & Appeals Committee	Monday December 16, 2013	SC based upon suggestions by the Facilitation Unit with WB no objection	Chair and members to be independent of SC and IEC
5	Deadline for receiving final ACE Proposals	Friday July 15, 2013	Facilitation Unit	
6	Review of Proposals on eligibility and completeness of documentation	The week following the deadline	Facilitation Unit	
7	Submission of eligible and complete proposals to be evaluated by the Independent Evaluation Committee	The week following the deadline	Facilitation Unit	+/- 50 proposals are estimated to be eligible for review
8	Evaluation of long list	The 2 nd week following the deadline	IEC	IEC review by members or IEC

				sub-groups
9	Submission of evaluation results and recommendations (shortlist) to the Steering Committee	End of the 2 nd week	IEC	+/- 20 – 25 proposals (10-15 institutions) are expected to be short-listed for on-site IEC assessment
10	Review of shortlist and final selection of institutions	3 rd week	SC	
11	Assessments and site visits to short-listed institutions	5 th week and 6 th week	IEC	4-5 teams are expected to be visiting institutions
12	Submission of On-site Evaluation reports, final evaluation score, and recommendations for selection list of ACE Centers-of-Excellence to the Steering Committee	7 th week	IEC	Including suggestions for improvement for certain proposals considered worth doing so
14	Review and decision on final Award list	9 th week	SC	10-15 Centers of Excellence (in 7-10 institutions) is expected to be selected
15	Submission of evaluation report to the World Bank for No Objection	9 th week	SC and Facilitation Unit	
16	Announcement of Centers of Excellence conditional selection and publication of evaluation reports to each applying institution	10 th week	SC and Facilitation Unit	Institutional will be conditionally selected subject to incorporation of the evaluation committee's suggestions
17	Deadline for submission of grievances & appeals	12 th week	Special ACE Proposal Grievances & Appeal Committee	
18	Review, final report and recommendations of Special Grievances & Appeals Committee to PSC	15 th week	Special Grievances & Appeals Committee	
19	Submission of improved proposals	15 th week	Institutions	Include a cover letter indicating the improvements

				referring to the requested improvements by the IEC
20	Review of improved proposals	16 th week	IEC and Facilitation Unit	Review by 1 IEC member and the Facilitation Unit

3.1 The Selection and Composition of the Independent Evaluation Committee

An objective, well balanced and educationally recognized composition of the Independent Evaluation Committee is of the utmost importance. As stated above, the members of the Committee should be independent of the ACE proposing institution, well acquainted with the current education and research practice of the discipline(s) and be able to cover the various other areas of the institution's activities (e.g. Masters and PhD training, research in the context of the ACE proposal, provision and maintenance of teaching and research facilities for other academic and non-academic target groups, etc.). Teaching and research management competence is to be represented in the Committee. The Committee should be able to position the education and research area(s) of the institution within the African and international context and should be able to assess the teaching & learning and research dimensions of the ACE proposal according to criteria that fit the field's higher education and research practices. The member would primarily come from the African educational and scientific community, including from the diaspora, joined by global technical experts.

The ACE Steering Committee is responsible for the selection of the chair and further configuration of the Independent Evaluation Committee. The selection procedure for the chair and the members of the Independent Evaluation Committee has to ensure the competence, expertise, impartiality and independence of the Committee as a whole. In order to meet these requirements, the ACE PSC with the advice of the Regional Facilitation Unit will carefully consider the fit between the Independent Evaluation Committee and its members and the required competencies, disciplinary expertise and professional backgrounds necessary for effective assessments of the ACE proposals submitted. The AAU will prepare a draft list of evaluators, potentially with the support of the World Bank team. The Steering Committee may also consult third parties within the African and international academic and scientific community to reflect on the impartiality and independence of the Committee chair and its members. The Steering Committee will officially install the Independent Evaluation Committee. The names of the committee members will be made publicly after the evaluation. The identity of the evaluators for each proposal will not be disclosed. The Committee members are collectively responsible for each evaluation.

An indicative list of required competencies and expertise by scientific discipline is provided in Annex ____, which will serve as a guideline for candidates. This indicative list will be reviewed after receipt of the proposal when the educational and scientific scope of the proposals is known. In addition, the Committee may draw upon other expertise to evaluate the potential of the proposals to address social, economic and/or other development challenges and the degree to which the challenge is shared among several countries. This will allow for an alignment of the composition of the evaluation committee with the required expertise to adequately evaluate the proposal.

The Terms of reference of the Evaluation Committee is provided in Annex ____ [IS SEPARATE ToRs NEEDED for the Evaluation committee – this protocol is in a way their ToRs?]

3.2 Units of evaluation (who will be evaluated)

The proposals will be evaluated at three “units of evaluation” with an emphasis of the unit that will form the core of the proposed Center of Excellence, incision (ii) in the below:

- i. The academic institution as a whole. An institution may be defined as ‘a group of faculty or researchers with an articulated shared mission, operating within one or more education or research programs under the same management’. The assessment of the proposal at the institutional level primarily focuses on strategy and organization. The Boards under whose jurisdiction an institution falls -notably the Governing Boards of universities (university council etc. these will be referred to throughout this protocol as ‘board’) - are ultimately responsible for the proposed Africa Centers of Excellence and its requested and received funding. At the institutional level, the Independent Evaluation Committee will take into account the institution’s strategic plan submitted as part of the ACE proposal. In the on-site and leadership evaluation of the proposal, the Committee will specifically include considerations on the institutions’ accountability to their governing boards and their funding agencies, governments and African society at large with regard to their progress towards academic regional specialization.
- ii. The education and research programs, faculty, and administration that will form the core of the Center of Excellence. Each Center of Excellence will have a director with the day-to-day education and research responsibility for the ACE proposal. Throughout the protocol they will be referred to as ‘center leaders’. At the level of the education and research groups, the criteria are primarily to be applied to the performance of the faculty, students and researchers. The evaluation is to entail an assessment of the proposal's output and activities of the faculty, students and researchers, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, of the relevance of the work, of the outreach and partner inclusiveness in the proposal, and of the proposal's regional 'reach'. Issues of policy and center leadership within the institution/center or program submitting the proposal nonetheless remain important elements of assessment. In addition, principal faculty and research members will be evaluate as part of the evaluation of the proposed education and research program, and
- iii. Partner institutions – national, regional, and international academic institutions and industry partners (industry partners are defined broadly as sector partners, which for example include hospitals for the health sector and farmer associations for agriculture).

Further, the on-site and leadership evaluation will evaluate the government’s ownership and support to the proposed Center of Excellence.

3.3 Prospective and Retrospective evaluation

The primary focus on the evaluation is a prospective evaluation of the likely impact of the funding of the proposal. It is not a retrospective evaluation of past or current performance. However, in the prospective evaluation, past performance and current capacity are important indicators for the likely impact of the proposal. Therefore the assessment of past results, institutional collaboration, and track record of the institution as well as the center's faculty, investigators and leadership is relevant. Both retrospective and prospective characteristics are therefore included in the assessment criteria (see below).

3.4 Scientific disciplines and interdisciplinary aspects

It is of importance that ACE proposed education and research activities are assessed according to the standards of the specific disciplines concerned (e.g. STEM, agricultural sciences, health & medical sciences). The specific character of each scientific field may require emphasis on some aspects of the evaluation protocol, while other aspects may be less relevant to a certain discipline. The proposals in the fields of the natural & life sciences, medicine & health sciences, design & engineering and the agricultural & food sciences may each require different approaches to the evaluation. Within these fields, approaches may also vary among scientific sub-disciplines. While the outline of the evaluation criteria and information requirements in the evaluation protocol are based on the common scientific ground of these disciplines, the Independent Evaluation Committee may wish to take into account the specific characteristics of each of the disciplines figuring in the ACE proposal in terms of its specific teaching & learning and research identity and related facts & figures.

Furthermore, both higher education and research worldwide are increasingly of a multi-, inter-, or trans-disciplinary nature. Academic teaching institutions and research programs with multi-, inter-, or trans-disciplinary education and research may require special attention in the evaluation. It is, for instance, often more difficult for these groups to show their results through traditional indicators based on publications in high impact journals, and therefore the Committee may wish to include member evaluators who have solid experience in assessing such higher education and research.

3.5 Screening for Completeness

The proposals submitted by the African institutions competing for ACE funding will initially be reviewed as to formal submission requirements, including the ACE eligibility criteria, by the regional facilitation unit, following which they will be endorsed by the PSC for assessment by the Independent Evaluation Committee.

4.4. PLANNING THE EVALUATION

Based on the proposal(s) submitted, the Independent Evaluation Panels will assess the three main mandates of the institution concerned vis-a-vis the proposal's education and research programs: (i) the training of Masters and PhD-students, the next generation of academic faculty and researchers; (ii) the production of results relevant to the academic and scientific community, and (iii) the production of results relevant to society.

The evaluation is to emphasize the importance of consistency of the assessments across proposals on academic regional specialization.

The Independent Evaluation Committee may look beyond the proposal concerned and consider evidence that may be available from stakeholder surveys, stakeholder conferences, various forms of impact analyses, case studies, including health protocols, engineering designs, policy reports etc. Since several centers or institutions may present a wide spectrum of output and scientific activities. The Independent Evaluation Committee can also include other forms of qualitative information in their assessment of the ACE proposal(s) concerned, including policy measures intended to raise the output to the best and most relevant level possible.

Table 1 Assessment criteria, sub-criteria and guidance aspects

Criteria for Technical Evaluation	Mark
<i>(1) Potential for Regional Development Impact:</i>	
<p><i>Sub-criteria: Importance of development challenge for the region and the importance of skills and research for overcoming the challenge</i></p> <p>Guidance aspects to evaluate the sub-criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of the development challenge for the region's development, notably the share of the region's population, in particular the poor population, facing the challenge (2) • The importance of skills and knowledge in overcoming the development challenge, and the relevance of the proposed education and research programs for overcoming the development challenge (2) • Inclusion of the relevance educational and sciences departments/disciplines for a comprehensive treatment of the development challenge (1) 	5
<p><i>Innovation of the proposal and ability to attract a regional faculty and student body</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of other institutions offering the proposed programs and research in the region (2) • Potential ability, track-record, and quality of planning to attract a regional student and faculty body (3) 	5
<p><i>Potential regional development impact through collaboration with sector partners – breadth of partnerships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do key sector partners (employers, organizations, and governments) facing the development challenge express their support (letters of support)? (2) • Do the relevant line ministries support the Center of Excellence? (2) • Are the sector partners regional in scope? (1) 	5
<i>Potential regional development impact through collaboration with sector partners – depth of partnerships</i>	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the proposed commitment and collaboration from sector partners substantial? For example, will Sector partners employ the graduates, take interns, send staff for short-term professional development courses, conduct joint research, and use knowledge of the Center? (2) • Does the proposal building upon existing partnership and how robust are these? (1) • The institution's track-record and policy for making the expertise of their faculty and students and research results available to sector partners (knowledge transfer) (1) • The applicability of the education and research results (suitable for application in products, processes and services) (1) 	
<p><i>Potential for raising the quality and relevance of education at national and regional academic partner institutions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the proposed commitment and collaboration from academic partners substantial? (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are joint faculty development programs for regional faculty planned? ○ Joint conferences, joint research, sharing access to specialized research, learning equipment and library resources (giving students and faculty exposure to different learning environment and equipment), student and faculty exchange, joint organization of specific courses (for example at the master and PhD level), and assistance to curriculum development should be included. • Does the proposal build upon existing partnership and how robust are these? (2) <p>Are the academic partnerships regional in scope?</p> <p>Are several of the region's universities with related programs part of the proposal?</p> <p>Are relevant training institutions, at the post-secondary and para-professional level (technician, nursing, agriculture extension-training institutions etc.) part of the proposal (letters of support)?</p> <p>Are relevant research institutions partners to the proposal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The anticipated increase in the quality and relevance of education and research at national and regional academic partner institutions? (1) 	5
(2) Potential for Excellence in learning and its impact	
Identification of critical factors for achieving learning excellence and credible policies and plans to address those, including likelihood of reaching	5

<p>International quality benchmarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation of faculty and staff (2) • Introduction/revision of courses and programs for excellence in the proposed area (1) • Proposed approach to apply modern teaching-learning techniques: provide hands-on learning, foster applied problem solving skills, group work, including use of student-centered and work-based learning (1) • Quality and credibility of plan to achieve international quality benchmarks (1) 	
<p>Resources for Excellence in Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty resources: Excellence of existing faculty and Strengthening faculty and staff knowledge and skills and/or bringing-in top-notch faculty (2) • Learning resources: Status of learning and physical resources for Excellence, including the relevance of proposed investment in learning material and civil works (2) • Excellence, relevance and commitment of proposed international (extra-regional) academic partner (1) 	5
<p>Impact of Excellence in Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to credibly scale-up new/revised courses, including potential use of distance-learning (consider existing volume of students, targets, graduation rates) (2) • Ambitiousness of Plan to scale up of Masters and PhD training under the Center (availability of tutors and demand from quality students) (3) 	5
<i>(3) Potential for Research Excellence</i>	
<p>Scientific merit of the proposed research program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and focus of the research program building upon the existing knowledge in the field (2) • Significance of the potential contribution to the field (1) • Clarity and relevance of the proposed research methods and identification of necessary research resources (1) • Clarity and cost-efficiency of the proposed investment into research resources (1) 	5
<p>Scientific research track record and availability of research resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific publication record of the center director and principal investigators, research productivity, and other qualifications and expertise of the proposed research team. (3) • Other resources available to the researchers, including access to research facilities; financial resources, library and journals, research collaborators, research assistants and post-graduate students, incentives 	5

and attractiveness of doing research in the institution. (2)	
<i>(3) Financial Sustainability of the proposal</i>	
Ability to raise funding for continued investment into faculty and learning resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact of plan and policies to raise revenue (outside of budget-subventions) at the institutional or departmental level, including revenue from tuition fees revenue, consultancies, donation, etc. (2) • Track record on revenue generation. (3) 	5
Co-financiers and Cost efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-financiers of the proposed center of excellence or related programs (letters of support – either in kind or monetary contributions including grants (2) • Cost efficiency - does the proposal build upon existing physical and human resources, and does the proposal take advantage of capacity in academic and sector partners? (2) • Evidence of cost-consciousness (1) 	5
<i>(4) Social responsibility – Inclusion of rural/remote institutions as partner institutions, and involvement of disadvantaged students/faculty, including females</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will rural/remote institutions directly involved in the proposed Center of Excellence (2) • Will females be part of the proposed Center of Excellence either as faculty or students or through partnerships (2) • Will other groups of disadvantaged groups directly involved in the Center (1) 	5
<i>(5) Quality and Consistency of proposal</i> (incl. fit with strategic plan analysis)SWOT-analysis analysis of the position of institution or center and programs; analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats Coherence of the proposal program;	5
Total	70

Prior to the actual ACE Call-for-Proposal, the Independent Evaluation Committee may review these criteria and propose improvements. However, once the call for proposal has been launched, the evaluation criteria cannot be modified.

In applying the above criteria, the evaluation is to pay attention to the Project Development Indicators and the ability of the proposed Center to achieve the expected results.

4.1 Five point scale based on the European Union Standard

For the assessment of the proposal(s), the final assessment should be cast in both qualitative and quantitative terms. In the text, the most important considerations of the Committee should be clarified, while the conclusion should be summarized in a single term according to the European Union Standard. The Committee is to consider the full range of the scale and apply the criteria according to the descriptions given. A description of this scale is given below:

Assessment	Rating	Numeric score
The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.	Excellent	5
The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible	Very Good	4
The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary	Good	3
While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses	Fair	2
The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information	Fails	0

Each evaluator will use this scale to answer each question in the Evaluation Questionnaire. The questionnaire and final evaluation mark for the proposal can be automated with an Excel sheet. This sheet is available in Annex _____. It includes each of the evaluation marks and a summary of the main strengths and weaknesses. Each proposal is expected to be separately reviewed by at least three evaluators. A combined evaluation is then arrived at through discussion among the evaluators and if deemed needed additional guidance from other evaluators can be sought. The PSC will share the combined assessment sheet with the submitting ACE institution.

4.2 On-site proposal and leadership evaluation

For the on-site evaluation of the prospective ACE institutions shortlisted by Steering Committee, small evaluation teams consisting of at least two internationally reputed university leaders and a leading research/investigator within the field of expertise of the ACE proposal concerned will visit each of the short listed institutions for one day. The team will assess the leadership and management capacity of the proposed ACE institution ascertain the feasibility of the implementation of the proposed Africa Center of Excellence given the specific institutional context, autonomy and accountability, management practices, existing academic capacity and

infrastructure, including learning and research equipment, government support and policy. Specifically, the assessment team will evaluate the following criteria:

On-Site and leadership evaluation	Marks
<p>Institutional leadership and vision (based upon interview of the head of the institution, chair of the board, existing institutional strategic document and other relevant material)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability of the institution to react adequately to important changes in authorizing environment (1) • The institution's effective accountability to the governing boards and their funding agencies, governments and African society at large. (2) • Clarity of education and research priorities, faculty and personnel policy, and enabling policies for resource mobilization and budget allocations (1) • Institutional risk related to disruptions in teaching and research, for example from student or faculty strikes (1) 	5
<p>Center leadership and administrative capacity (based upon interview with the proposed center leader and senior faculty involved in the proposal)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the professionalism of management of education (3) • Management of research (2) 	5
<p>Implementation capacity with a focus on the procurement, financial management and environmental management of implementation (based upon desk review of proposal and past financial audits and site visit).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, transparent, and efficient procedures for procurement (2) • Experienced staff in Procurement and financial management (2) • Track record for procurement and timely, unqualified audits (1) 	5
<p>Institutional ownership of proposal as evident from faculty and student awareness and inclusion (based upon proposal, site interviews, and campus visit)</p>	5
<p>Government involvement to support the institutional proposal, alignment with relevant sector strategies, a regional provision of higher education, and quality of government policy making (interview with government officials in ministry/agency for higher education and officials from other relevant line ministries and relevant material)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and support from key government agencies, including relevant sector ministries (such as education, health, agriculture, and mining/oil) (2) 	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability and predictability of government's policy as it concerns risk to the proposed ACE (1) • Government commitment to establishing a regional higher education policy and building regionally shared capacity (1) • Government and stakeholder ability to avoid disruptions to teaching and research (1) 	
Commitment from academic and sector partners to the institutional proposal (based upon interviews with partners and other relevant material)	5
Total	30

In addition, the evaluation team must assess the consistency between the submitted proposal and the reality on the ground in terms of institutional SWOT analysis, infrastructure, academic and research capacity, and government and partner support. The evaluation team must report any material inconsistencies between the written proposal and the reality of the ground, consider implications for the overall credibility of the proposal, and re-consider the affected marks of the technical evaluation of the proposal.

4.3 Preparation of site visit. Each evaluation team receives all relevant material (the ACE proposal, the Evaluation Protocol, the Project document, the specific terms-of-reference for the evaluation, and the visiting program at least two weeks in advance of their site visit. The chair may request, possibly after consulting the other Committee members, additional information from the prospective ACE institution or its Board. The Independent Evaluation Committee will meet in a closed session prior to the site visit to decide on their working procedure for the visit and for writing the short evaluation report. The closed session will include the Executive Secretary of the Committee, representing also the Facilitation Unit supporting the administrative arrangements for the site-visit assessments.

4.4 During the visit, the evaluation Team meets with, at a minimum:

- the would-be Center Leader of the proposed Africa Centers of Excellence
- The senior faculty members making up the core of the center's teaching and research staff
- The head of institution
- The Chairperson of the institution's Executive Board
- Government officials leading higher education policy and relevant officials from other governmental ministries/agencies
- A representative group of leading tenured and non-tenured faculty at the institution
- A small (20-30) but representative number of undergraduate, Masters and PhD students (interviewed in small groups without presence of institutional staff)
- Representatives of the technical and maintenance staff
- Representatives of key partner institutions (key partners are not required to travel to the institution to be available for the visit. The evaluation team can conduct short phone interviews with key partners prior or shortly after the visit).
- Other relevant Civil society representatives engaged with the institution

The final list of meetings and the agenda will be coordinated by the Regional Facilitation Unit, the institution, and the leader of the evaluation team.

4.5 Avoidance of any perceived or real conflict of interest. All costs associated with the site visit must be paid by the regional facilitation unit. The evaluators are prohibited from receiving any gifts or favors from the institution, partners or government. Similarly, the institution, partners and government can in no way offer gifts or favors. The evaluators are required to report any offers of gifts and favors to the regional facilitation unit. Similarly, the institutional team is required to report any requests for gift or favors to the regional facilitation unit. The institution may arrange for standard food and beverage during the visit, and if agreed on beforehand transportation between the hotel and the institution. All meetings between the evaluators and the institutions have to be on the agreed meeting schedule and be in a professional objective and setting and take place during the day.

The Evaluation team may wish to use a checklist for the assessment at the institutional or center level and that of the education and/or research group or program. The members can use these lists individually (that is, before the meetings of the Committee in full) for their provisional judgment, but will have to consider them mainly as starting points for discussions with the other members during the site visit. The use of checklists should not in any way imply that the final score is an average of all scores. The scores are only to be given after careful consideration by the entire team.

5.5. EVALUATION REPORT

To meet the objectives of the independent evaluation, as outlined in section 2 above, the Committee is to write a report that is comprehensive and concise at the same time (max. 15 to 20 pages). Basically, for the evaluation of each ACE proposal, the report should contain an assessment of each institution focusing on the criteria mentioned in section 2 and 3 above. Furthermore, the evaluation report should reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions as they emerge from the assessment, the related documentation and the discussions and observations during the site visit. Consequently, the report should also indicate opportunities for improvement of the proposals selected, possible threats and recommendations for how all of these can be included in the final ACE program of the institution to be funded.

In line with the above, the report should at a minimum assess the regional developmental impact, the academic and scientific partnership dimensions, the various potential excellence aspects such as the highlighted quality and productivity elements, the social and economic relevance indicators, the sustainability perspectives and the feasibility levels of the proposed program at the institution concerned. The report is to include both past performance and future prospects of prospective ACE institutions or programs. The individual academic or scientific group reports may be confined to 1 page per group, including the assessment by means of the 5-point scale. It is important that the reasons for the given qualification are sufficiently explained in the text.

The Committee can in its comments and suggestions for improvement of proposals stress specific technical elements (for instance in design & engineering), or suggest a particular role in the broader scientific infrastructure (for instance a library function), or propose an emphasis on specific social or economic objective (patient care, policy advise).

Proceeding from the above, the assessment report of the proposals by the Independent Evaluation Committee is to contain two parts:

- assessment at the level of the institution or center in terms of the criteria, with a focus on policy and strategy, preferably in a qualitative manner, identifying the main issues of praise and criticism and putting forward recommendations for improvement of the ACE proposal.
- assessment of the education and research groups or programs according to the above-mentioned criteria, with a focus on performance in terms of academic training and scientific achievements and of social and economic relevance. The Independent Evaluation Committee may use qualitative and quantitative indicators and indications.

5.1 Evaluation Report Content guideline

A guideline for the content of the report to be written by the Independent Evaluation Committee:

Introduction – Overview of the ACE Proposals in General and Summary of the Findings

Part 1- Review of each prospective ACE institution overall, containing:

- ❖ a reflection on the regional impact of the institution (importance of the institution's development approach for the region and the innovation content of the proposal – including alignment with regional and national development plans)
- ❖ a reflection on the institution's partnership inclusiveness (the strengths and relevance of collaboration with national and regional sector partners -academic partner institutions, employers, organizations, and governments- that will employ and use the graduates and research knowledge of the academic institution, as well as the regional-breath of this collaboration)
- ❖ a reflection on the institution's potential for excellence in terms of quality (academic reputation, quality of Masters and PhD-training, financial and human resources and research facilities, organization and internal processes, academic and scientific leadership, national and international positioning) and in terms of productivity (graduations, publications, output) and productivity policy
- ❖ a reflection on relevance (in higher education, research, social and economic) and applied relevance (the institution's activities aimed at making education and research results available and suitable for application in products, processes and services,

including activities regarding the availability of results and the interaction with the private sector, as well as direct contributions to commercial, investment or non-profit use of graduates, expertise and research results)

- ❖ a reflection on the institution's sustainability and feasibility (based on comparative positioning and benchmarking, and also the strengths and weaknesses in the SWOT-analysis, including its strategy for future years, competitive strength, robustness and stability; earning capacity).

Part 2- Review of each ACE proposal education and research group or program , containing:

- ❖ a reflection on the regional outlook of the group (importance of the group's development approach for the region and the innovation content of the program – including alignment with regional and national development plans)
- ❖ a reflection on the group's partnership inclusiveness (the strengths and relevance of collaboration with national and regional academic partner institutions, employers, organizations, and governments, that will employ and use the graduates and research knowledge of the group, as well as the regional-breath of this collaboration)
- ❖ a reflection on the potential for excellence in terms of quality (quality and level of innovation of teaching and education, originality of the research, academic significance, program coherence, publication strategy, prominence of the faculty and researchers, of the R & D by the group, of the education and teaching and research infrastructure; the center's leadership of the education and research program; and financial and human resources included) and in terms of the productivity of the education and research groups, the R & D activities and the education & training and research infrastructure (quantification of the academic Masters & Ph.D. graduation rates, published output, R&D results, utilization rates of education & training and research infrastructure, and quantification of use by third parties)
- ❖ a reflection on relevance and applied relevance (of the education & training & learning, of the R&D, and of the education and research infrastructure – both for the academic world and for society)
- ❖ a reflection on sustainability and feasibility, and the group's vision for the future (of the education and research plans, flexibility and anticipation of changes to be expected in the near future).

The guideline above is not exhaustive and the report will need to take into account all the multiple dimensions highlighted in the protocol, as well as in the ACE project's elaborate Project Appraisal Document (PAD), published by the World Bank.

6.6. FINAL SELECTION

The assessment follow-up consists of three elements: (i) the final decision of the ACE Steering Committee regarding the findings and recommendations of the Independent Evaluation Committee, (ii) the publication of the final ACE selection list, and (iii) Handling of grievances.

6.1 Final Position of the ACE Steering Committee

After the Independent Evaluation Committee has presented its final evaluation report to the Steering Committee, the Steering Committee will meet to discuss the Committee's findings and recommendations. In its final selection, the Steering Committee may deviate from the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee, without, however, changing any evaluation marks of the individual proposals. It may do so based upon an objective and clearly stated rationale to ensure a reasonable geographically, linguistically and disciplinary representation in the final selection. The ACE SC will formulate its position regarding the evaluation outcomes in writing in the minutes of the final selection meeting.

6.2 Making the Independent Evaluation results public

The report of the Independent Evaluation Committee and the Minutes of the ACE SC regarding the outcomes of the evaluation together form the evaluation results. The ACE SC will make the selected institutional proposal and the evaluation results of those selected institutions public on the regional facilitation unit's website. Institutions with non-selected proposals will receive information regarding the evaluation report and score, but this information and proposal will not be made public.

6.3 Grievance Committee

With regard to any objections or grievances raised by institutions/centers not included in the final award selection, the ACE C will set up a small Grievance Committee to which the applying institutions can submit grievances. The Grievance Committee will seek clarifications from the institution/center concerned, from the Independent Evaluation Committee, from the Regional Facilitation Unit and other relevant entities and provide a recommendation on behalf of the Steering Committee whether the grievance or appeal should be accommodated and any proposed modified evaluation/selection decision.

7. ANNEXES

1. Guidance on The strength-weakness-opportunity-threat-analysis (SWOT)

Among the main objectives of the ACE Project is the improvement of education and research management at African academic institutions towards higher levels of internationally recognized academic excellence. The assessment of the submitted ACE proposals therefore also entails an analysis of the proposal's strengths and weaknesses. This is to be done through an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats in the environment, a SWOT-analysis. The analysis is to be conducted by the Independent Evaluation Committee at the level of the proposal and its submitting institution or center.

1.1 Positioning and Benchmarking

The SWOT-analysis is first and foremost an instrument for reflection on the current position and future prospects of the anticipated ACE institution and its education and research proposal. An important goal of the SWOT-analysis is therefore to benchmark the proposal's position in the (inter)national and African academic and scientific arena, especially in relation to its main external partners / competitors.

1.2 Undertaking the SWOT-analysis

In a SWOT-analysis, the education and research program proposed for ACE funding is to be analyzed in four dimensions, two internal (strengths and weaknesses) and two external (opportunities and threats). The questions to be assessed in a SWOT-analysis are fairly simple and straightforward, undertaken, for example, through interviews with relevant stakeholders in and outside the organization. There are also more comprehensive methodologies through surveys and other quantitative techniques. The Independent Evaluation Committee is free to choose a method, as long as the analysis is based on evidence that is transparent in the context of the submission of the ACE proposal concerned.

Table 4 *Examples of questions to be answered in SWOT analysis*

Strengths	1	What advantages does the proposal have compared to other education and research groups in its national, African and/or international environment?
	2	What do other people see as the proposal's strong points
	3	What relevant resources does the proposal have access to?
Weaknesses	1	Which aspects of the ACE-proposing institution may be seen as sub-standard?
	2	Which aspects of the proposed activities could be improved?
	3	What kind of activities should the ACE-proposing institution avoid?
Opportunities	1	What are the interesting trends that can be seen in the ACE proposal ?
	2	Where or what are good opportunities facing the ACE-proposing

		center/institution ?
		<p>Opportunities to be considered by the Committee can emerge from such elements as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale • Changes in government policy related to the ACE-proposed field • Changes in social patterns, population profiles, life style changes, etc. • Local Events
Threats	1	What is the ‘competition’ in the ACE-proposed area doing better?
	2	Are there big changes in the requirements for the work in the ACE-proposed field?
	3	Is the ACE proposing institution facing a bad financial situation, and which money streams does this concern ?
	4	Does the ACE institution have significant problems finding, keeping and replacing qualified personnel ?

At the intersections of these four dimensions, four main strategic questions arise, as shown in the following matrix:

Table 5 *SWOT Dimensions*

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Opportunities</i>	Strategic question: which opportunities can be exploited through the strengths of the institute well?	Strategic question: which opportunities may help overcome weaknesses?
<i>Threats</i>	Strategic question: how can the institute/center use its strengths to reduce its vulnerabilities?	Strategic question: to which threats is the institute/center particularly vulnerable and how can the center overcome these ?

Based on this analysis, the assessment can draw conclusions about the ACE proposal’s position in the national, regional and international academic and scientific arena. It also identifies the elements of strategy, organization and/or education and research activities which are to be adjusted in order to meet the external opportunities and threats, reflecting the conclusions of the SWOT-analysis.