

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONDITIONALLY SELECTED
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA HIGHER EDUCATION
CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE**

14th December 2015

1.0 Introduction

In collaboration with the Governments of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the World Bank is preparing a proposed investment project – Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II). The main objective of ACE II is to establish and strengthen specialization and collaboration among a network of higher education institutions that will be designated as African Centers of Excellence (ACE) s in the Eastern and Southern Africa region to deliver relevant and quality education and applied research to address key development challenges facing the region. The key regional development priorities identified for this Project are in four cluster areas: (i) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); (ii) Agriculture; (iii) Health; and (iv) Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) - Quality of Education and Applied Statistics.

The Regional Steering Committee (RSC), comprised of representatives from participating countries, academia, regional bodies and private sector, will provide overall guidance to the project. For day to day implementation and facilitation of the project, the RSC selected the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) as the Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) for the project. The selection of the ACEs has been done through a competitive and transparent process, managed by IUCEA and overseen by the RSC. An Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) to carry out the evaluation of eligible submitted proposals was constituted. Terms of reference for the IEC were developed and approved by the RSC. The RSC was mandated to make the ACE selection based on recommendations from the IEC. The information hereafter provides a clear description of the selection process and criteria.

2.0 Call for Proposals

In collaboration with the Governments of the nine participating countries, the World Bank Group and IUCEA jointly issued a Call for Proposals on 31st July 2015. By the deadline for submission on 2nd October 2015, IUCEA received a total of 108 official submissions from the nine participating countries: Ethiopia (20), Kenya (20), Malawi (4), Mozambique (5), Rwanda (6), Tanzania (18), Uganda (19), Zambia (3), and Zimbabwe (13). The distribution of the submitted proposals by priority areas is as follows: Agriculture - 33; Health - 27; STEM - 34; STI-Education - 9 and STI-Applied Statistics - 5.

After receipt of proposals, IUCEA carried out an eligibility screening based on the eligibility criteria provided for in the Protocol for Proposal Assessment that stipulates that institutions submitting proposals must:

- (i) be from the participating countries;
- (ii) offer PhD program(s); and

- (iii) have programs in at least one disciplinary area related to one of the regional development priorities indicated above.

Based on the above-mentioned criteria, 92 of the 108 officially submitted proposals were found to have met the set criteria. The distribution of eligible proposals by priority areas is as follows: Agriculture - 30; Health - 22; STEM - 27; STI-Education - 8 and STI-Applied Statistics - 5.

These 92 eligible proposals were endorsed by members of the RSC before they were subjected to evaluation by the IEC.

3.0 Evaluation of Proposals

3.1 Selection and Composition of Independent Evaluation Committees (IECs)

The selection and composition of the IEC took cognizance of the criteria provided for by ACE II Protocol for Proposal Assessment. The members of IECs were identified by IUCEA in consultation with the World Bank according to the required expertise and experience in the disciplines under the key priority areas. The following were the key criteria that guided the selection of members of the IEC, that they should be:

- (i) From the African higher education and scientific community, including diaspora, joined by global technical experts;
- (ii) Independent of the proposal-submitting institutions and of the ACE II participating countries in order to maintain the objectivity and integrity of the project and avoid conflicts of interest;
- (iii) Well acquainted with the current and future education and research practice and development of the discipline(s) under the regional development priorities, and related activity areas, e.g. Masters and PhD training, research in the context of the ACE proposal, provision and maintenance of teaching and research facilities;
- (iv) Conversant and competent in the teaching and research management processes;
- (v) Able to position the education and research area(s) of the institution within the African and international context, and be able to assess the teaching, learning and education and research practices.

The adopted criteria ensured the alignment of the composition of the IEC with the required expertise to adequately evaluate the proposals to address social, economic and development priorities and the degree to which the priorities are shared among several countries. In total 60 independent evaluators were identified and participated in the evaluation exercise.

3.2 Technical, On-Site and Leadership Evaluation of Eligible Proposals

The evaluation process had two parts: a technical evaluation of all the proposals (70 percent of final score) and an onsite evaluation of proposals that were shortlisted from the technical evaluation (30 percent of final score). The entire evaluation process was guided by the criteria set forth in the ACE II Protocol for Proposal Assessment.

3.2.1 Technical Evaluation

The first phase of the evaluation process that is the technical evaluation was conducted in such a way that each proposal was evaluated by a team of three independent evaluators. This resulted in a total of 40 proposals in the following areas: Agriculture - 11; Health - 11; STEM - 13; STI-Education - 3 and STI-Applied Statistics - 2.

3.2.2 On-Site and Leadership Evaluation Visits

The on-site and leadership evaluation of the 40 shortlisted ACE proposal submitting institutions was carried out by small teams of independent expert evaluators. All the teams had a core of 3 members from the IEC with the following mix of attributes:

- (i) Experience in University leadership/management at top position like Vice Chancellor/Rector, Principal or Director of a school or Faculty, Head of Department;
- (ii) Expertise in the area of specialization of the proposal to be evaluated;
- (iii) A mix of African or diaspora and international experts;
- (iv) Declaration of no conflict of interest with institutions to be visited.

Each team was accompanied by at least one staff member from IUCEA, and in some cases, by a representative from the World Bank country office as an observer. The visit included interaction with the top university leaders, leaders of the proposed ACE, postgraduate students and visit of relevant facilities, as well as interview with senior ministry officials responsible for higher education to gauge the government commitment to support the proposed ACEs.

4.0 Conditional Selection of ACEs

Based on the results of the above described evaluations, the RSC met and discussed the conditional selection of ACEs on 4th -5th December, 2015. The following criteria were used to guide the conditional selection of the ACEs:

- (i) Merit of the proposal
- (ii) Ensuring the balance among the regional development priority areas: Agriculture and Health – 6 each, STEM – 8, STI – Education – 1 and STI – Statistics – 1; and each priority area should have at least one ACE;
- (iii) Four regional top development priorities were given greater weight – energy, extractives, manufacturing and railways;
- (iv) Available International Development Association (IDA) financing for each country¹;

¹ According to the IDA ceiling, the distribution and maximum number of ACEs per participating country is as follows: Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, 4 each; Kenya and Rwanda, 3 each; Malawi and Zambia, 2 each; and Zimbabwe, 0. However, Zimbabwe is in the process of negotiating with the World Bank for possible IDA financing.

- (v) For geographic balance, each country has at least one ACE and each university could host not more than 2 ACEs;²

Based on the above approach, a total of 23 ACE proposals were *conditionally* selected by the RSC, subject to the approval of the World Bank. This includes Zimbabwe which currently has no access to IDA, but is in the process of raising funding for the project. The RSC also decided to include 8 proposals on the basis of merit as *fundable* ACEs; which could potentially be funded by individual countries/donors.

The final approval of these conditionally selected ACEs will be based on the outcome of the appraisal conducted by the WB and the final approval of the World Bank Group Board.

Below is the list of the 23 conditionally selected ACE proposals funded by ACE II (table 1) and the list of additional 8 proposals that could be considered for funding by their respective governments.

² Exceptions are Ethiopia and Rwanda where colleges within the university system are treated as separate entities.

Table 1: Conditionally Selected ACE Proposals

	Proposal Title	Cluster	Sub-Priority Area	Institution	Country
1	Sustainable Agriculture and Agribusiness Management	Agriculture	Agribusiness	Egerton University	Kenya
2	Establishment of an East African Centre for Crop Improvement at Makerere University	Agriculture	Agribusiness	Makerere University	Uganda
3	African Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Food Systems (SFS-Centre)	Agriculture	Agribusiness	University of Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
4	African Center of Excellence for Climate Smart Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation (Climate SABC)	Agriculture	Climate & Env. Smart Agriculture	Haramaya University - HU	Ethiopia
5	Africa Centre for Agro-ecology and Livelihood Systems (ACALISE)	Agriculture	Climate & Env. Smart Agriculture	Uganda Martyrs University	Uganda
6	Aquaculture and Fisheries Science (AquaFish) Centre of Excellence	Agriculture	Marine & Ocean Sciences	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources - LUANAR	Malawi
7	African Centre of Excellence for Innovative Rodent Pest Management and Biosensor Technology Development (IRPM&BTD).	Agriculture	Unspecified	Sokoine University	Tanzania
8	Sustainable Use of Insects as Food and Feed	Health	ER, Trauma & Nutrition	Jaramogi Odinga Oginga University of Science and Technology	Kenya
9	Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS) - ACE for Infectious Diseases of Humans and Animals in Southern and East Africa.	Health	Molecular Biology	Sokoine University	Tanzania
10	Centre for Innovative Drug Development and Therapeutic Trials for Africa (CDT-Africa)	Health	Pharma Bio-Tech	Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia
11	Center for Public Health and Herbal Medicine (CEPHEM)	Health	Pharma Bio-Tech	Malawi College of Medicine	Malawi
12	Pharm-Biotechnology and Traditional Medicine Centre (PHARMTRAC)	Health	Pharma Bio-Tech	Mbarara University of Science and Technology	Uganda
13	Center of excellence for Infectious Diseases of Humans and Animals	Health	Pharma Bio-Tech	University of Zambia	Zambia
14	ACE for water management	STEM	Disaster/Risk Analysis & Mgmt	Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia
15	Center of Excellency in Water Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy (WISE)	STEM	Disaster/Risk Analysis & Mgmt	Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology	Tanzania
16	Phytochemicals Textiles and Renewable Energy	STEM	Energy	Moi University	Kenya

17	African Center of Excellence in Energy for Sustainable Development (ACEESD)	STEM	Energy	University of Rwanda	Rwanda
18	African Center of Excellence in Internet of Things (ACEIoT)	STEM	ICT	University of Rwanda	Rwanda
19	African Centre of Excellence for Materials, Product Development and Nano-Technology	STEM	Product Design & Manufacturing	Makerere University	Uganda
20	African Railway Education and Research Institute (ARERI)	STEM	Transportation & Logistics	Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia
21	African Center of Excellence for Sustainable Mining	STEM	Value Addition/Extractives	Copper Belt University	Zambia
22	Collaborating Centre for Research, Evidence Agricultural Advancement, Teaching Excellence and Sustainability (CREATES)	STI-Education	Quality of Education	Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology	Tanzania
23	African Centre of Excellence for Data Sciences (ACE - DS)	STI-Statistics	Applied Statistics	University of Rwanda	Rwanda

Table 2: Additional ACEs fundable by Governments

1	African Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Agricultural Land Use and Management (ACE-SALUM)	Agriculture	Agriculture Land Use Management	Institution	Rwanda
2	Centre of vaccine training and Research Eastern and Southern Africa	Health	Pharma Bio-Tech	University of Nairobi	Kenya
3	Innovation, Research and Training to improve East African Health Systems	Health	Unspecified	Strathmore University	Kenya
4	Centre of Information Technology and Engineering Studies (ITES)	STEM	ICT	Makerere University	Uganda
5	African Center of Excellence in Transport and Logistics (ACETraLogi)	STEM	Transportation & Logistics	University of Rwanda	Rwanda
6	ACE for Biodiversity Education for Sustainable Development	STI-Education	Quality of Education	Addis Ababa University - AAU	Ethiopia
7	African Centre of Excellence in Innovative Teaching and Learning Mathematics and Science (ACEITLMS)	STI-Education	Quality of Education	University of Rwanda	Rwanda
8	African Center of Excellence for Data and Modeling (ACE-DM)	STI-Statistics	Applied Statistics	University of Dar es Salaam	Tanzania