Independent Evaluation Committee

Protocol for Proposal Assessment

July 31st, 2015
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This document is available at http://ace2.iucea.org.

This Evaluation Protocol was developed by the World Bank ACE II Team in collaboration with the ACE II Regional Facilitation Unit - Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA).
1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION PROTOCOL

The World Bank Group (WBG) is developing a regional higher education program in Africa to promote regional specialization among participating higher education institutions within areas that address particular common regional development challenges and strengthen the capacities of these institutions to deliver high quality training and applied research. The higher order objective of the program is to meet the demand for skills required for Africa’s development in areas such as agriculture, energy, extractive industries, etc., while strengthening best African universities in education and training in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and other relevant disciplines. In that regard, the WBG Board approved a project for Western and Central Africa (ACE I) in 2014. Under ACE I, nineteen Africa Centers of Excellence (ACEs) were selected from seven participating countries in the region and their implementation is underway. For Eastern and Southern Africa, a similar project – Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (ACE II) - is under preparation. Ten countries in this region – Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe – have expressed the interest of their participation in the ACE II project.

In collaboration with the Governments of the above mentioned countries, the WBG and Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) are jointly launching a Call for Proposals for ACEs for Eastern and Southern Africa. This is part of the preparation for ACE II which is expected to be reviewed by the WBG Board in the spring of 2016. The main objective of the project is to establish and strengthen specialization and collaboration among a network of higher education institutions in the Eastern and Southern Africa region to deliver relevant and quality education and applied research to address key development challenges facing the region. Through broad consultations in the region, the key regional development priorities have been identified for this Project as follows: (i) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); (ii) Agriculture; (iii) Health; and (iv) Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) and Quality of Education, and Applied Statistics.

This protocol is for the evaluation of proposals submitted by higher education institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa in response to the above mentioned Call for Proposals. The purpose of this evaluation protocol is to provide guidelines for the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) to assess the submitted proposals and provide selection recommendations to the ACE II Regional Steering Committee (RSC). This document will also guide institutions which are interested in preparing proposals for consideration to host ACEs.

The IEC will independently and objectively assess ACE proposals and the submitting institutions for funding within education and research in areas that address regional development priorities in four cluster areas: STEM\(^1\); agriculture; health; and STI\(^2\) and quality of education, and applied statistics (see Annex I for a detailed list of priorities in each of the four areas). The IEC will strive to achieve a balance among these priorities and pay special attention to energy, extractives, 

\(^1\) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

\(^2\) Science, Technology and Innovation
manufacturing and railway engineering, which are needed to drive the emerging economic activities in the region.

This protocol provides guidelines regarding the assessment criteria, information requirements and the procedures to be taken into account by the IEC. The IEC should refer to ACE II project documents in their assessments of each submitted proposal. The IEC should also keep in mind that the administrative burden of the assessment on the institution that submitted proposal(s) (e.g. clarifications, site visits, additional documentation, etc.) needs to be as light as possible.

2. EVALUATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The proposals submitted by higher education institutions from the ACE II participating countries in Eastern and Southern Africa will go through an initial screening conducted by the ACE II Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) in accordance with the basic eligibility criteria in Annex II. For those eligible proposals, their evaluation will be carried out in two stages:

1. The **first stage** will be a technical assessment by the IEC which will have four Evaluation Panels – one for each of the four regional priority cluster areas under the project. Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated by three experts who have knowledge and experience in the respective disciplines.

2. The **second stage** of the evaluation involves an in-depth, on-site assessment of the institutions whose proposals have been short-listed from the first stage. Teams of experts will be formed and these will visit each of the short-listed institutions. Each of these teams will consist of at least two internationally-reputed university or scientific leaders and a leading investigator within the field of expertise required by the proposal. The teams will assess leadership and management capacity of the institution and its proposed ACE, and ascertain the feasibility of implementing the proposed program, given the existing capacity of staff, facilities and infrastructure for teaching, learning, research and administration.

Based upon the above, the Evaluation Panels within the IEC will submit ranked recommendations to the RSC, together with appropriate and relevant documentation. On the basis of the recommendations, without changing any evaluation marks of the individual proposals, the RSC may make adjustments to ensure that key regional development priorities are addressed along with reasonable geographic, linguistic and disciplinary representations. The RSC makes the final selection decision.

Each institution can have up to two ACEs, each of which may receive funding of around six million US dollars over the project duration. This is to concentrate sufficient funding to a few institutions, to generate a critical mass of senior faculty, postgraduate students, and researchers, to establish a thriving education and research environment in priority disciplines, and to foster policy and leadership development at the institutional level. All these factors are critical to developing excellence in higher education.

The full evaluation process and timeline is provided in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deadline for receiving final ACE Proposals</td>
<td>Friday, Oct 2, 2015</td>
<td>RFU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Review of Proposals on eligibility and completeness of documentation and produce the long-list for evaluation</td>
<td>Oct 5-9, 2015</td>
<td>RFU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Review and endorse electronically the long-list</td>
<td>Oct 10-11, 2015</td>
<td>RSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Evaluation of eligible proposals and produce a shortlist</td>
<td>Oct 12-16, 2015</td>
<td>IEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IEC review by members or IEC sub-groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assessments and site visits to short-listed institutions</td>
<td>Nov 2-27, 2015</td>
<td>IEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-6 teams are expected to be visiting institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Submission of on-site Evaluation reports, final evaluation score, and selection recommendations for ACEs to the RSC</td>
<td>Dec 1, 2015</td>
<td>IEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including suggestions for improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Review and decision on final selection</td>
<td>Dec 4-5, 2015</td>
<td>RSC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Submission of evaluation report to the World Bank Group for No Objection</td>
<td>Dec 7, 2015</td>
<td>RSC &amp; RFU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Announcement of Centers of Excellence conditional selection and publication of evaluation reports to each applying institution</td>
<td>Dec 14, 2015</td>
<td>RSC &amp; RFU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institution will be conditionally selected subject to incorporation of the IEC’s suggestions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Submission of grievance &amp; appeals</td>
<td>Dec 14-22, 2015</td>
<td>Grievance &amp; Appeals Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See Section 6.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Review, final report and recommendations of a Grievance &amp; Appeals Committee to RSC</td>
<td>Jan 12-25, 2016</td>
<td>Grievance &amp; Appeals Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Submission of improved proposals</td>
<td>Feb 22, 2016</td>
<td>Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including a cover letter that indicates the improvements referring to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. EVALUATION

3.1 The selection and composition of the Independent Evaluation Committee

For the success of the project, an objective, well balanced, and academically-recognized composition of the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) is of the utmost importance to quality, potentials, and impact of the ACEs selected and funded under ACE II. Therefore, the members of the IEC should be independent of the proposal-submitting institutions and of the ACE II participating countries in order to maintain the integrity of the project (i.e., objectivity, avoiding conflict of interest). They should be well acquainted with the current education and research practice of the discipline(s) under the regional development priorities, and be able to cover various other activity areas of the institution (e.g. Masters and PhD training, research in the context of the ACE proposal, provision and maintenance of teaching and research facilities). Teaching and research management competence should be represented in the IEC as well. The IEC 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 IEC should primarily come from the African higher education and scientific community including diaspora, joined by global technical experts. They will be identified and appointed by the RFU in consultation with the World Bank according to the required expertise and experience. In addition, the Committee may draw upon other expertise to evaluate the potential of the proposals to address social, economic and development priorities and the degree to which the priorities are shared among several countries. This will allow for an alignment of the composition of the IEC with the required expertise to adequately evaluate the proposals.

3.2 Units of evaluation (who will be evaluated)

The proposals will be evaluated in three “tiers or units”, which are:

i. The academic institution as a whole. An institution may be defined as ‘a group of faculty or researchers with an articulated and 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., which will be referred to throughout this protocol as ‘board’) - are ultimately responsible for the proposed ACE and its requested and received funding. At the institutional level, the IEC 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 IEC will specifically include consideration of the institutions’
accountability to their governing boards and their funding agencies, as well as to governments and society at large with regard to their progress towards regional specialization.

ii. The education and research programs, faculty, and administration that will form the core of the ACE. Each ACE will have a director with the day-to-day education and research responsibility for the ACE proposed activities. Throughout this document they will be referred to as ‘center leaders’. At the level of education and research groups, the criteria should primarily be applied to the performance of the faculty, students and researchers. The evaluation will 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'. Nonetheless, issues of policy and center leadership within the institution submitting the proposal remain important elements of assessment. In addition, principal faculty and research members will be evaluated as part of the evaluation of the education and research program under the proposed ACE.

iii. Partner institutions. These include 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).

Furthermore, the on-site and leadership evaluation will evaluate the government’s ownership and support to the proposed ACE.

3.3 Prospective and retrospective evaluation

The primary focus of the evaluation is a prospective evaluation of the likely impact from funding 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. Therefore, both retrospective and prospective characteristics are included in the assessment criteria (see below).

3.4 Scientific disciplines and interdisciplinary aspects

It is important that proposed education and research activities are assessed according to the standards of the specific disciplines concerned (e.g. STEM, agricultural sciences, health and 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 and life sciences, medicine and health sciences, design and engineering, and agricultural and 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 is based on the common scientific ground of these disciplines, the IEC may wish to take into account the specific characteristics of each of the disciplines in an ACE proposal in terms of its specific teaching, learning, research identity, and related facts and figures.
Furthermore, worldwide both higher education and research are increasingly of a multi-, inter-, or trans-disciplinary nature. Academic institutions and research programs with multi-, inter-, or trans-disciplinary education as well as interactions linking academia and industry will require special attention in the evaluation. It is often more difficult for such programs to show their results through traditional indicators, such as publications in high impact journals. Therefore, the IEC may wish to include members who have solid experience in assessing such programs.

3.5 Screening for completeness

The proposals submitted will initially be screened by the RFU for eligibility. Only proposals passed through this screening will be forwarded to the RSC for endorsement. The endorsed proposals will then be evaluated by the IEC.

4. PLANNING THE EVALUATION

The IEC will assess the RSC-endorsed proposals in the three main mandates of each institution: (i) training (short courses, Masters and PhD programs for the next generation of scientists, engineers, technicians, faculty and researchers); (ii) research (results relevant to the academic and scientific community as well as to the industry), and (iii) outreach (results relevant to society). The evaluation will emphasize the importance of academic and regional specialization.

The IEC may look beyond what is contained in a specific proposal by considering evidence from other available sources including stakeholder surveys, conferences, various forms of impact analysis, case studies, policy reports, etc.

Table 2: Assessment Criteria, Sub-Criteria and Guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for Technical Evaluation</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(1) Potential for Regional Development Impact:</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-criteria: Importance of development challenge for the region and the importance of skills and research for overcoming the challenge</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alignment and importance of the targeted development challenge for the regional and national development, notably the share of the region’s population, in particular the poor population, facing the challenge (2 marks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 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 mark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusion and clarity of the relevant educational and sciences departments/disciplines for a comprehensive treatment of the development challenge (1 mark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation of the proposal and ability to attract a regional faculty and student body</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The existence of other institutions offering the proposed programs and research in the region (2 marks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Potential ability, track-record, and quality of planning to attract a | 5
regional student and faculty body (3 marks)

**Potential regional development impact through collaboration with sector partners – breadth of partnerships**

- Do key sector partners (employers, organizations, and governments) facing the development challenge express their support (letters of support)? *(2 marks)*
- Do the relevant line ministries support the Center of Excellence? *(2 marks)*
  Are the sector partners regional in scope? *(1 mark)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential regional development impact through collaboration with sector partners – depth of partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of research to industry and society: 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? <em>(2 marks)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the proposal building upon existing partnership and how robust are these? <em>(1 mark)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institution’s track-record and policy for making the expertise of their faculty and students and their research results available to sector partners (knowledge transfer) <em>(1 mark)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential impact of innovation emerging from research: applicability of the education and research results (suitable for application in products, processes and services) <em>(1 mark)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential for raising the quality and relevance of education at national and regional academic partner institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are the proposed commitments and collaborations from academic partners substantial? <em>(2 marks)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
  - Joint faculty development programs |
  - Joint conferences, research, sharing access to specialized research, learning equipment and library resources, student and faculty exchange etc. |
  - Joint specific courses/programs and assistance to curriculum development |
| Does the proposal build upon existing partnerships and how robust are these partnerships? For example, are these academic partnerships involving universities in the region? *(2 marks)* |
| The anticipated increase in the quality and relevance of education and research at national and regional academic partner institutions? *(1 mark)* |
### (2) Potential for Excellence in learning and its impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of critical factors for achieving learning excellence and credible policies and plans to address those, including likelihood of reaching international quality benchmarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Motivation of faculty and staff (2 marks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction/revision of courses and programs for excellence in the proposed area (1 mark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Proposed approach to apply modern teaching-learning techniques: provide hands-on learning, develop team-based teaching and team-based learning, foster applied problem solving skills, group work, including use of student-centered and work-based learning (1 mark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quality and credibility of plan to achieve international quality benchmarks (1 mark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources for Excellence in Teaching and Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Faculty resources: Excellence of existing faculty and strengthening faculty and staff knowledge and skills and/or bringing-in top-notch faculty and use of ICT (2 marks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning resources: Status of learning and physical resources for excellence, including the relevance of proposed investments in teaching and learning methodologies, materials and civil works (2 marks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellence, relevance and commitment of proposed international (extra-regional) academic partner(s) (1 mark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of Excellence in Learning:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to credibly scale-up new/revised courses, including potential use of distance-learning (consider existing volume of students, targets, graduation rates) (2 marks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ambitiousness of plan to scale up Masters and PhD training under the center (availability of tutors and demand from quality students) (3 marks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(3) Potential for Research Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific merit of the proposed research program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity and focus of the research program, building upon existing knowledge in the field (2 marks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significance of the potential contribution to the field (1 mark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity and relevance of the proposed research methods and identification of necessary research resources (1 mark)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarity and cost-efficiency of the proposed investment into research resources (1 mark)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific research track record and availability of research resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Scientific publication record of the center director and principal investigators, research productivity, and other qualifications and expertise of the proposed research team. (3 marks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other resources available to the researchers, including access to research facilities; modern research methodologies and team-based research approaches; financial resources, library and journals, research collaborators, research assistants and post-graduate students, incentives (5 marks)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and attractiveness of doing research in the institution and use of ICT. (2 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(4) Financial Sustainability of the proposal</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to raise funding for continued investment into faculty and learning resources</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Potential impact of plan and policies to raise revenue (outside of budget-support) at the institutional or departmental level, including revenue from tuition fees revenue, consultancies, donation, etc. (3 marks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Track-record on revenue generation. (2 marks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Co-financiers and Cost efficiency

| Co-financiers of the proposed center of excellence or related programs (letters of support – either in-kind or monetary contributions, including grants (2) | 5 |
| 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 marks) | |
| Evidence of cost-consciousness (1 mark) | |

| (5) Gender equity and Social responsibility – Inclusion of rural/remote institutions as partner institutions, and involvement of disadvantaged students/faculty, | 5 |
| - Will gender equity be part of the proposed ACE either as faculty or students? (2 marks) | |
| - Will rural/remote institutions be involved in the proposed ACE? (2 marks) | |
| - Will other disadvantaged groups be directly engaged in ACE? (1 mark) | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(6) Quality and Consistency of the proposal (incl. fit with strategic plan analysis) SWOT-analysis (Annex 3) of the position of the institution or center and programs; analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats; coherence of the proposed program. (5 marks)</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In applying the above criteria, the evaluation should pay attention to the ACE II Project Development Objective, and to the ability and capacity of the proposed ACE to achieve the expected results.

4.1 Five point scale

The final assessment of the proposals should be in both qualitative and quantitative terms. In the text, the most important considerations of the IEC should be clarified, while the conclusion should be summarized in a single term according to a five point scale: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. The IEC is to consider the full range of the scale and apply the criteria according to the descriptions given below:
Table 3: Five-Point Scale for Overall Project Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Numeric score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proposal fails to adequately address the criteria under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An evaluator will use this scale to answer each question in the Evaluation Questionnaire which will be provided by the RFU. The questionnaire and final evaluation mark for the proposal can be automated with an Excel sheet. 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 experts (two evaluation panel members and one external evaluator). A combined evaluation is then arrived at through discussion among the evaluators and, if deemed necessary, additional advice from other evaluators can be sought. Each submitting institution will receive feedback from the evaluation.

4.2 On-site proposal and leadership evaluation

For the on-site evaluation of the prospective ACE host institutions shortlisted by the IEC, 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 institution’s leadership and capacity and ascertain the feasibility of the implementation of the proposed ACE, 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:

Table 4: Assessment criteria for on-site visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-Site and leadership evaluation</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional leadership and vision (based on an interview with the head of the institution, chair of the board, existing institutional strategic document and other relevant materials)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The ability of the institution to react adequately to important changes in the authorizing environment (1 mark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The institution’s effective accountability to the governing boards and their funding agencies, governments and African society at large. (2 marks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Clarity of education and research priorities, faculty and personnel policy, and enabling policies for resource mobilization and budget allocations \((1\text{ mark})\)
- Institutional risk related to disruptions in teaching and research, for example from student or faculty strikes \((1\text{ mark})\)

Center leadership and administrative capacity (based upon interviews with the proposed center leader and senior faculty involved in the proposal)
- Assessment of the professionalism of management of education \((2\text{ marks})\)
- Management of research \((2\text{ marks})\)
- Assessment of existing partnerships both academic and industrial (private sector) \((1\text{ mark})\)

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).
- Clear, transparent, and efficient procedures for procurement \((2\text{ marks})\)
- Experienced staff in Procurement and financial management \((2\text{ marks})\)
- Track record of timely, unqualified audits \((1\text{ mark})\)

Institutional ownership of proposal as evident from faculty and student awareness and inclusion (based upon proposal, site interviews, and campus visit)

Government involvement to support the institutional proposal, alignment with relevant sector strategies, a regional provision of higher education, and quality of government policy making (interviews with government officials in ministry/agency for higher education and officials from other relevant line ministries and relevant material)
- Awareness and support from key government agencies, including relevant sector ministries (such as education, health, agriculture, industry or mining/oil) \((2\text{ marks})\)
- Stability and predictability of government’s policy as it concerns risk to the proposed ACE \((1\text{ mark})\)
- Government commitment to establishing a regional higher education policy and building regionally shared capacity \((1\text{ mark})\)
- Government and stakeholder ability to avoid disruptions to teaching and research \((1\text{ mark})\)

Commitment from academic and sector partners to the institutional proposal (based upon interviews with partners and other relevant material).

| 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

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3 “SWOT analysis” is an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a project or an organization. Please see Annex for details.
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 on-site evaluation team receives all relevant materials (the ACE proposal, the Evaluation Protocol, the project document, the specific terms of reference for the evaluation, and the visiting program) 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 on-site evaluation teams will receive guidelines for their site visits, working procedures, and writing the evaluation report.

4.4 During the visit

The evaluation team meets with, at a minimum:

- The would-be Center Leader of the proposed ACE
- The senior faculty members making up the core of the proposed ACE’s staff
- The head of the 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 RFU, 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 RFU. The evaluators are prohibited from receiving any gifts or favors from the institution, partners or government. Similarly, the institution, partners and government must in no way offer any gifts or favors. The evaluators are required to report any offers of gifts and favors to the RFU. Similarly, the institutional team is required to report any requests for gift or favors from any evaluator to the RFU. The institution may arrange for standard food and beverages during the visit, and, if agreed on beforehand, transportation between the hotel and the institution. All meetings between the evaluators and the institutions must be on the agreed meeting schedule and be in a professional, objective, 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. Each team member 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 other members of the team 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. EVALUATION REPORT

To meet the objectives of the independent evaluation, as outlined in section 2 above, the committee will score and provide a short report explaining the scoring results for each criterion (maximum 5 pages). Basically, for the evaluation of each ACE proposal, the short report should contain the score for each criterion and sub criteria and a short explanation next to the score on the rationale of how the evaluation arrived at the final mark. Furthermore, the evaluation report should reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal 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 selected proposals, possible threats and recommendations for how all of these can be included in the final ACE proposal of the institution.

In line with the above, the report should assess the institution’s 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. The report will include both past performance and future prospects of prospective ACE host institutions. The individual evaluation team reports may be confined to 1 page per group, including the 5-point scale assessment. It is important that the reasons for the given score are sufficiently explained in the text.

In its feedback, the IEC should provide specific suggestions for proposal improvement.

Proceeding from the above, the assessment report of each proposal by the IEC will contain two parts:

- Scoring assessment at the level of the institution or proposed ACE in terms of the criteria highlighted above identifying the main issues of praise and criticism and putting forward recommendations for improvement of the ACE proposal.

- Scoring 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 IEC may use qualitative and quantitative indicators.

5.1 Evaluation Report content guidelines

Introduction – Overview of the ACE proposals in general and summary of the findings

Part 1- Review of each potential ACE host institution, containing:
- reflections 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);

- reflections 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);

- reflections on the institution’s potential for excellence in terms of quality (academic reputation, quality of Master 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;

- reflections 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);

- reflections 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’s education and research, containing reflections on:

- the regional outlook (importance of its development approach for the region and the innovation content of the program – including alignment with regional and national development plans);

- 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, as well as the regional-breath of this collaboration);

- the potential for excellence in quality (quality and level of innovation of teaching and learning, originality of the research, academic significance, program coherence, publication strategy, prominence of the faculty and researchers, of the R&D, of the education and teaching and research infrastructure; the leadership of its education and research programs; and financial and human resources) in its productivity, the R&D activities, education and training, and research infrastructure (quantification of the academic Master & PhD graduation rates, published output, R&D results, utilization rates of education & training and research infrastructure, and quantification of use by third parties);
its relevance and applied relevance (of the training and learning, of the R&D, and of the education and research infrastructure – both for the academic world and for society); and

its sustainability, feasibility, and vision for the future (of the education and research plans, flexibility and anticipation of changes to be expected in the near future).

The guidelines above are not exhaustive and the report will need to take into account all the multiple dimensions highlighted in this protocol and other ACE II Project Documents.

6. FINAL SELECTION

The assessment follow-up consists of three elements: (i) the final decision of the RSC regarding the findings and recommendations of the IEC, (ii) the publication of the final ACE selection list, and (iii) the handling of grievances and appeals.

6.1 Final decision of the RSC

After the IEC has presented its final evaluation report to the RSC, the RSC will meet to discuss the findings and recommendations. Based on the recommendations, without changing any evaluation marks of the individual proposals, the RSC may make adjustments to ensure that key regional development priorities are addressed along with reasonable geographic, linguistic and disciplinary representations. The RSC will then formulate its position regarding the evaluation outcomes in writing in the minutes of the final selection meeting.

6.2 Announcing the selection results to the public

The report of the IEC and the Minutes of the RSC regarding the outcomes of the evaluation together form the evaluation results. The RSC will publish the selected proposals and the evaluation results on the ACE II website (http://ace2.iucea.org). Institutions not selected will receive information regarding the evaluation, but this information and its proposal will not be made public.

6.3 Grievance and Appeals Committee

With regard to any objections or grievances raised by institutions not included in the final award selection, the RSC will set up a Grievance and Appeals Committee of 3-5 people to which the applying institutions can submit grievances. The Grievance and Appeals Committee will seek clarifications from the institution concerned, the IEC, the RFU and other relevant entities, and provide a recommendation on behalf of the RSC whether the grievance or appeal should be accommodated and whether any evaluation/selection decision should be modified.
Annex 1: Regional Priorities

STEM:

- Energy – wind/hydro-power, geothermal and solar-energy, energy generation/transmission etc.
- Value addition / Extractives – oil and gas sector, mining
- Urban design and construction/Infrastructure, transportation and logistics
- Disaster/risk analysis and management, hydrology and water purification
- ICT – soft/hardware, applications, services, and teaching/learning,
- Product design, manufacturing,
- Railway engineering
- Marine and ocean engineering
- *Unspecified (room for innovation)*

Agriculture:

- Agribusiness (crop and livestock sciences, agricultural engineering, agro/food processing and packaging: value chain)
- Climate and environmental smart agriculture
- Agricultural land management
- Water resource management, hydrology and irrigation
- Marine and ocean sciences
- *Unspecified (room for innovation)*

Health:

- Pharm-bio technology – drug discovery, science-driven traditional medicine, and development
- Bio-medical engineering – implant development, hospital infrastructure, and tissue-engineering
- Bio-physics / bio-chemistry – diagnostic tools
- Molecular biology – infectious diseases, vaccine development
- Emergency medicine and trauma (with a focus on traffic injuries and deaths) and nutrition
- *Unspecified (room for innovation)*

STI and Quality of Education, and Applied Statistics:

- Quality of Education – including innovations in STEM teaching/learning/curriculum development, assessment and management tools, e-learning and education tools, and creative design thinking
- Applied statistics – big data, bioinformatics, data mining, reliability modeling, research design, evidence-based policy analysis
Annex 2: ACE II Proposal Eligibility criteria

Institutions submitting proposals must:

1. Be from the participating countries
2. Offer PhD degrees
3. Have programs in at least one disciplinary area related to one of the regional development priorities indicated below:
   - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
   - Agriculture
   - Health
   - Science, Technology, Innovation (STI) and Quality of Education, and Applied Statistics

Among the main objectives of ACE II is the improvement of education and research management at academic institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa 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 will be done through an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in the environment of the proposed ACE. The analysis will be conducted by the Independent Evaluation Committee at the level of the proposal and its submitting institution or center.

3.1 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 international, national and African academic and scientific arena, especially in relation to its main external partners/competitors.

3.2 Undertaking the SWOT-analysis

In a SWOT-analysis, the education and research program proposed for ACE funding will 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, and undertaken through, e.g., interviews with relevant stakeholders in and outside the organization. There are also more comprehensive methodologies through surveys and other quantitative techniques. The IEC 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>What advantages does the proposal have compared to other education and research groups in its national, African and/or international environment?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>What do other people see as the proposal’s strong points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>What relevant resources does the proposal have access to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Which aspects of the ACE-proposing institution may be seen as sub-standard?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Which aspects of the proposed activities could be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>What kind of activities should the ACE-proposing institution avoid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>What are the interesting trends that can be seen in the ACE proposal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Where or what are good opportunities facing the ACE-proposing center/institution?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|           | 3 | Opportunities to be considered by the Committee can emerge from such elements as:  
|           |   | • Changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale  
|           |   | • Changes in government policy related to the ACE-proposed field |

Table 5: Examples of Questions to be Answered in SWOT Analysis
• Changes in social patterns, population profiles, life style changes, etc.
• Local Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>What is the ‘competition’ in the ACE-proposed area doing better?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Are there big changes in the requirements for the work in the ACE-proposed field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Is the ACE proposing institution facing a bad financial situation, and which money streams does this concern?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Does the ACE institution have significant problems finding, keeping and replacing qualified personnel?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Table 6: SWOT Dimensions**

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

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.