



For immediate release

PRESS RELEASE

Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) Project ensures sustainable growth and competitiveness by improving the quality, quantity and access of postgraduate education

5th ACE Impact Regional Workshop to hold virtually from May 24th -28th, 2021

Accra, Ghana (May 5th, 2021) - The Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) will be organizing its 5th biannual Regional Workshop from May 24th - 28th, 2021. Fifty-three (53) Centres of Excellence and key stakeholders, including government representatives from participating countries, Vice Chancellors, representatives from the higher education sector, the private sector, policy think tanks, and partners such as the World Bank, the French Development Agency and the Association of African Universities are expected to participate in this meeting.

As an engine for producing quality postgraduate training and applied research to ensure inclusive growth and sustainable development in Africa, the ACE Impact project is convening its stakeholders to review activities and progress made towards achieving its overarching goal - improving the quality, quantity, and development impact of postgraduate education in Africa.

The meeting will also afford the Centers of Excellence the opportunity to share experiences, build networks, and forge partnerships to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the project.

Broadly, the workshop's programme will feature:

1. Overall progress registered in the implementation of ACE Impact and key priority areas.
2. Highlights on the digital education network project, which seeks to exploit the advances in digital technologies for education towards the transformation of teaching practices for the benefit of students.
3. Inter ACE Impact networking initiatives.

4. ACE Impact project's engagement with the Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET), an initiative launched by African governments (with facilitation by the World Bank).
5. Parallel sessions on monitoring and evaluation, financial management, procurement and safeguards, as well as a special session for Vice-Chancellors whose institutions are involved in the project.
6. Learning and research outputs presentations by students undertaking innovative and transformational research at ACE Impact Centers.

The meeting will also focus on the key next steps for each country, institution, and center in implementing the project plans, and provide guidance to the centers to better meet the requirement and targets for disbursement, fiduciary, and safeguards.

The ACE impact project invites all key stakeholders to actively participate in this workshop and support the project, as it remains committed to pursuing its broad target of strengthening postgraduate training and applied research for Africa's economic transformation.

- END -

Note to Editors

For further information, kindly contact Mrs. Felicia Kuagbedzi via email fnkrumah@aau.org

Background information:

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

Based on the initial successes, the World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD) in collaboration with the African governments, launched the ACE Impact Project in 2018 to strengthen post-graduate training and applied research in existing fields and support new fields that are essential for Africa's economic growth. There are 43 ACEs (25 new ones and 18 from ACE I); 5 Emerging Centers; 1 “top up” center in Social Risk Management; and 5 Colleges and

Schools of Engineering. The new areas include sustainable cities; sustainable power and energy; social sciences and education; transport; population health and policy; herbal medicine development and regulatory sciences; public health; applied informatics and communication; and pastoral production.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISERS

- ***About the Association of African Universities (AAU).*** *The Association of African Universities is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization created by African Universities to promote cooperation among them on the one hand, and between them and the international academic community on the other. Created in 1967, the AAU is the voice of higher education in Africa. AAU aims to improve the quality of African higher education, and to strengthen its contribution to Africa's development by supporting the core functions of higher education institutions and facilitating critical reflection and consensus building on issues affecting higher education in Africa. The AAU is the Regional Facilitation Unit of the Africa Centres of Excellence project.*
- ***About the World Bank Group.*** *The World Bank Group is a multilateral development institution that works to reduce poverty. Its subsidiary [IDA](#) (International Development Association) finances the Africa Centres of Excellence series of projects. Established in 1960, IDA helps the world's poorest countries by providing grants and low to zero-interest loans for projects and programs that boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve poor people's lives. IDA is one of the largest sources of assistance for the world's 75 poorest countries, 39 of which are in Africa. Resources from IDA bring positive change to the 1.5 billion people who live in IDA countries. Since 1960, IDA has supported development work in 113 countries. Annual commitments have averaged about \$18 billion over the last three years, with about 54 percent going to Africa.*
- ***About the French Development Agency.*** *For more than 75 years, the French Development Agency (AFD) has been fighting global poverty by supporting policies and investments that benefit the poorest populations. Strengthening the social link between individuals, groups and territories is now at the heart of its actions in education, health, employment, urban planning, climate or biodiversity. For AFD, balanced development requires a real reduction in inequalities.*