



Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project (P126974)

AFRICA | Western Africa | Education Global Practice |
IBRD/IDA | Investment Project Financing | FY 2014 | Seq No: 8 | ARCHIVED on 28-Dec-2017 | ISR30637 |

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

Key Dates

Key Project Dates

Bank Approval Date:15-Apr-2014

Effectiveness Date:16-May-2014

Planned Mid Term Review Date:01-Jun-2016

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

Original Closing Date:31-Dec-2018

Revised Closing Date:31-Dec-2019

Project Development Objectives

Project Development Objective (from Project Appraisal Document)

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

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

No

Components

Name

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

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

Overall Ratings

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



Implementation Status and Key Decisions

Key Status

The ACE project is maintaining the strong implementation gains. Project disbursement rate is at 48% with \$12 million worth of verified results expected to be disbursed before the end of the calendar year, bringing the total disbursement rate to 56%. Most of the centers are increasing the speed of implementation of education and applied research activities with over 35 new and relevant Masters programs now developed under the project. Many of the centers have for the first time under the ACE project enlisted regional students in their universities, with at least 2,400 regional students enrolled on Msc and PhD programs under the project. The project is continuing to make progress on international accreditation with the Center for Poultry Science in University of Lome, Togo obtaining international accreditation in two programs in November 2017, bringing the total number of internationally accredited masters and PhD programs to 14, across 5 centers. Additionally, five other centers have also completed international gap assessment within their engineering programs and a further two centers in health are in the process of working towards international accreditation. This focus on meeting international benchmarks is a key feature of the results-based financing approach of the project and is continuing to yield results. The progress on the industry-university linkages is still slow but yielding some results with continued internships for students. Finally, most of the centers have strong ownership at the university level, with some of the centers continuing to make progress on external revenue generation.

The project's main PDO-level indicators are on track to meet project-end targets. As of November 2017, three out of the five PDO-level indicators are on target (those related to student enrollment, international accreditation and revenue generation). Progress to date on each of the PDO-level indicators is as follows: (i and ii) 15,657 students are enrolled in new specialized short-term courses, Master and Ph.D. programs (of which 5,500 are Msc and 1,300 Phd students); (iii) 3,448 students have undergone an internship/placement of at least one month; (iv) the ACEs generated external revenue in the amount of US\$29 million; and (v) the number of internationally accredited programs is now 14 across five centers. The remaining two PDO-level indicators on student internships and regional student enrollment need to be continuously supported if the project is to achieve its end-year targets. With respect to gender parity, the project continues to promote gender parity by increasing females' access to science education/training – under the Project there has been an increase in the number of females enrolled in the sciences, from a baseline of 311 to 3,989 females enrolled in Masters, PhD and short-term courses. Further, progress on the indicators has been observed since the last supervision mission in May 2017 with achievement observed on all the PDO-level indicators. Therefore, progress towards achievement of the PDO continues to be rated Satisfactory.

Operational and fiduciary progress

In terms of operational progress, the third verification exercise of the education and research DLIs results (or DLRs) for all the centers is complete including the first verification exercise of the centers in Cote d'Ivoire. This verification process has undergone consistent improvements and allowed for a better shared understanding of the definition of the results. Subsequently, all centers have received official notification of their Disbursement Linked Results (DLR) achievements with disbursement for this third set of results expected to be completed in the coming month. The M&E framework has improved with detailed disaggregated data allowing for identification of strengths and weaknesses for better guidance and decision making. Government supervision and facilitation including support to solving problems and overall oversight of the project is improving in most countries. Regional supervision through AAU, academic experts, and the World Bank is consistent with strong support to slower implementing centers continuing. The ACEs understanding of fiduciary rules and reporting for the project has also improved significantly resulting in better achievement of the fiduciary DLIs. In terms of financial management, the project has been upgraded from Moderately Satisfactory to Satisfactory. Justification on this improvement is provided in the ratings section. The pending audit completion of 2iE in Burkina Faso is almost complete with report expected to be finalized this month. No previous issues have been reported at 2iE. Procurement continues to be rated Moderately Satisfactory as although the majority of the centers achieved DLR 3.2 (on the functioning of the audit committee), procurement still has a lower achievement rate (14 percent) on the fiduciary DLRs. In terms of safeguards, the country co-TTLs are monitoring the ACEs to ensure compliance of any construction within the centers with the Bank safeguards policy. No safeguard issues related to campus construction are expected.

Key challenges

Funds utilization. Fund utilization has improved under the Project from 15% to 25% (on average), with strong performing centers such as 2iE in Burkina Faso and WAACI in University Ghana with 40%. This funds utilization data is based on the submitted IFRs (January 1 to June 30, 2017). It should be noted that some centers have spent beyond the amount specified in the IFRs (and as a result their fund utilization rates (%) are higher than estimated). Importantly, the funding does not include committed funds for signed civil works, major equipment purchases and scholarships and travel costs. These would substantially increase the funds utilization rate if they were taken into account. Nonetheless, efforts to increase utilization of funds at the ACEs need to be continued. It is expected that the funds utilization rates will increase significantly in 2018 due to the big purchases of equipment and rehabilitation/civil works of the project to improve learning environment of the centers. However, it is important that the centers continue to prioritize the procurement and implementation of these activities, if the project is to ensure full utilization of funds by project closing.

Governance of centers. A key finding of the November supervision meeting was the improvement in the governance of and the clear structures involved in the project management of the centers. In particular, in Nigeria where there has been a considerable improvement in the commitment and engagement of the university Vice Chancellors towards the centers. For instance, in some centers, the university has established a specific budget line



item for 2018 in the university structures that would support the center activities. Nonetheless, there are still a small number of centers that continue to face project management challenges. In particular, CETIC-Yaounde in Cameroon and CEA-SAMEF in Senegal. Additionally, recent changes to the project team at Université d'Abomey – Calavi in Benin by the Ministry of Higher Education resulted in some misunderstanding that has now been clarified. However there continues to be a bottleneck in implementation of project activities at the centers. The Bank team is working closely with the project team and Ministry to address this change and ensure that project implementation is not affected.

University-Industry Linkages and Attracting Regional Students. The university-industry linkages that the centers currently have need to be improved. The two DLIs related to industry: (i) students undertaking internship; and (ii) revenue generation – are still behind their end-year project targets. The project needs to continue to strengthen the capacity of the centers in setting up industry advisory boards, providing industry guest-lecture opportunities and providing a platform for the ACE centers to link with relevant industry partners. The Education ACE Bank team has brought on board a secondee from the National Science Foundation to support the project in this aspect. Another key challenge is attracting regional students. Significant improvements in regional student enrollment have been observed under the Project with over 4,000 regional students enrolled under the Project to date (2,000 at the Msc and PhD level). Nonetheless this is still slightly under the project target of 30%. The project will continue to provide support to the centers, specifically providing technical guidance on mechanisms to attract regional students as well as in the development of guidelines on student support and services to students.

Verification process. The procedures and processes for submission and compliance on each DLR is well understood with centers providing good feedback on ways to improve the processes. Despite an accelerated verification process for 2017, there continues to be the need to support the AAU verification process to ensure it is completed timely and in a process understood by the centers. During the November meeting, improvements on the verification process for DLRs were discussed and agreed upon including those related to improving the reporting on and timeliness of DLR 2.1-2.4. The AAU and Bank team have shared in advance the timelines and data needs for the next verification planned for early 2018. This continues to be a high priority for the AAU and Bank team.

Funds flow. ACEs reported a largely smooth flow of funds and Cote d'Ivoire ACEs have reported improvements in the flow of funds as they have all received transfers from the centrally managed Designated Account (DA) into their respective accounts. The Bank has now started to replenish the advances provided to the centers and an agreed process on paying down the advances was discussed and agreed upon during the November 2017 meetings. In particular, for every disbursement for results that is provided, 20% of the earnings from these results will be used towards payment of the advances in each center. The education team will work closely with the loans team to ensure each center advance account is documented to ensure funds flow smoothly in the project

Cost effectiveness of the Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU). Efforts are necessary to ensure that the regional facilitation unit budget continues to be managed effectively in the remaining years of the project, given the high burn rate thus far. All project expenditures have been used towards important activities such as verification of results, technical assistance to support the implementation of the ACEs and aggregated M&E and communications. However, in order to have a budget neutral extension, the AAU was advised during the project steering committee meeting to present a more efficient budget with prioritization of key tasks.

Proposed Restructuring

While the ACE project continues to make progress as described above, a minor restructuring in the next 6 months has been agreed which would include a project extension and a moderate reallocation of funds from weak performing centers to stronger performing centers. This restructuring will be important in ensuring that the Project will be able to achieve its PDO during the life of the Project. Key elements of the restructuring include:

1. Project Extension. This extension would be requested to make up for the delay in the effectiveness of the project due to parliamentary approval delays and funds flow challenges in the project. Each country would submit an official request to extend the project closing date for at least another 12 months from December 31, 2018 to December 31, 2019.
2. Fund reallocation and reduction. Given some of the fund utilization and governance shortcomings in a few of the centers, detailed discussions with each country on the proposed reallocation have been undertaken with an agreed way forward. The agreed reallocation of funds would aim to allow for full and effective utilization of project funds by the time of project closure. The parameters being used to decide which centers will have their funds reallocated is based on (i) fund utilization rate (ii) proportion of results achieved and (iii) qualitative feedback following site supervision visits. This reallocation is planned for three countries (i) Nigeria (ii) Senegal and (iii) Cameroon. It is expected that any fund reallocation or reduction would be based on the agreed performance-based contract (PBC) that each center has signed with their respective governments where the contract allows for a funding reduction in the event of an implementation deficit of the center. The decision on reallocation in Nigeria and Senegal has been agreed with the key next step being a final assessment on the amount of the funding reduction. In Cameroon, the decision to reallocate the funds has been communicated to Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Higher Education following the October 2017 supervision mission in Cameroon with a final decision to be made in January 2018 based on the supervision mission recommendations. The decision on the reallocations has been discussed and agreed with each country representatives as well as the Project Steering Committee. Each reallocation will take place within countries. In Nigeria, it is expected that approximately 5 million SDR would be relocated from University of Benin and University of Abeokuta (the two slow performing ACEs in Nigeria to the higher performing ACEs in Nigeria). In Senegal, the reallocation is expected to be approximately SDR 2 million in which the funds would be reduced



from CEA-SAMEF and reallocated to CEA-METIC (better performing center in Senegal). Finally, the final decision on proposed fund reduction in Cameroon will be made following the agreed deadline with Ministry of Finance for January 2018. The timeline for the proposed reallocation would be in coordination with the request for project extension to ensure coordinated efforts on processing steps.

3. **Strengthened M&E framework and DLIs.** The restructuring would provide an opportunity to strengthen the M&E framework to better reflect the project implementation as well as include a beneficiary survey. The restructuring would also include an update to Schedule 4 of the financing agreement for Nigeria, where the current framework needs to better reflect the allocation per center. Finally, the restructuring would also be used to make minor improvements to the DLR thresholds based on the project performance thus far.

Risks

Systematic Operations Risk-rating Tool

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

Results

Project Development Objective Indicators

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	1,580.00	11,889.00	15,657.00	17,375.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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



	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	987.00	4,050.00	4,988.00	9,432.00
Date	30-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	3.00	11.00	14.00	18.00
Date	30-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	1,037.00	2,427.00	3,210.00	6,928.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	976,877.00	23,672,835.00	29,170,077.00	9,551,250.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

Overall Comments

Intermediate Results Indicators



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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	100.00	1,973.00	2,697.00	1,200.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2014

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	27.00	311.00	382.00	415.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	7.00	78.00	80.00	131.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	73.00	1,662.00	2,315.00	685.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018



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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	14.00	450.00	581.00	195.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	144.00	176.00	66.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Mar-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	1,098.00	1,545.00	1,915.00	1,335.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	48.00	288.00	313.00	208.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018



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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	570.00	727.00	136.00
Date	15-Nov-2015	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	35.00	41.00	37.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	7.00	8.00	8.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	73.00	77.00	81.18	75.00
Date	20-May-2014	14-Dec-2016	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018



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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	0.00	18.00	21.00	14.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

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

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	N/A	done (exceeded) Four semi-annual activity program reports have been delivered by AAU	done (exceeded) Four semi-annual activity program reports have been delivered by AAU	Done
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

► Direct project beneficiaries (Number, Custom)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	2,717.00	13,862.00	18,354.00	18,765.00
Date	01-Nov-2013	01-Jun-2017	04-Dec-2017	31-Dec-2018

Comments

▲ Female beneficiaries (Percentage, Custom Supplement)

	Baseline	Actual (Previous)	Actual (Current)	End Target
Value	332.00	3,466.00	4,652.00	4,464.00

Overall Comments



Direct project beneficiaries include the total students + the regional and national faculty trained

The female beneficiaries include the total female students + the total faculty female both for national and regional.

For the indicator on project satisfaction, data was provided from the May 2017 Lagos workshop evaluation survey.

Data on Financial Performance

Disbursements (by loan)

Project	Loan/Credit/TF	Status	Currency	Original	Revised	Cancelled	Disbursed	Undisbursed	Disbursed
P126974	IDA-54120	Effective	USD	2.00	2.00	0.00	1.71	0.14	86%
P126974	IDA-54150	Effective	USD	70.00	70.00	0.00	31.53	32.05	45%
P126974	IDA-54190	Effective	USD	16.00	16.00	0.00	6.46	8.15	40%
P126974	IDA-54200	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	3.94	3.34	49%
P126974	IDA-54210	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	2.38	5.03	30%
P126974	IDA-54220	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	1.58	5.70	20%
P126974	IDA-54230	Effective	USD	24.00	24.00	0.00	15.65	6.12	65%
P126974	IDA-54240	Effective	USD	8.00	8.00	0.00	2.44	4.86	30%
P126974	IDA-57330	Effective	USD	15.00	15.00	0.00	2.84	12.60	19%
P126974	IDA-H9300	Effective	USD	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.90	0.09	90%
P126974	IDA-H9320	Effective	USD	5.00	5.00	0.00	3.91	0.83	78%

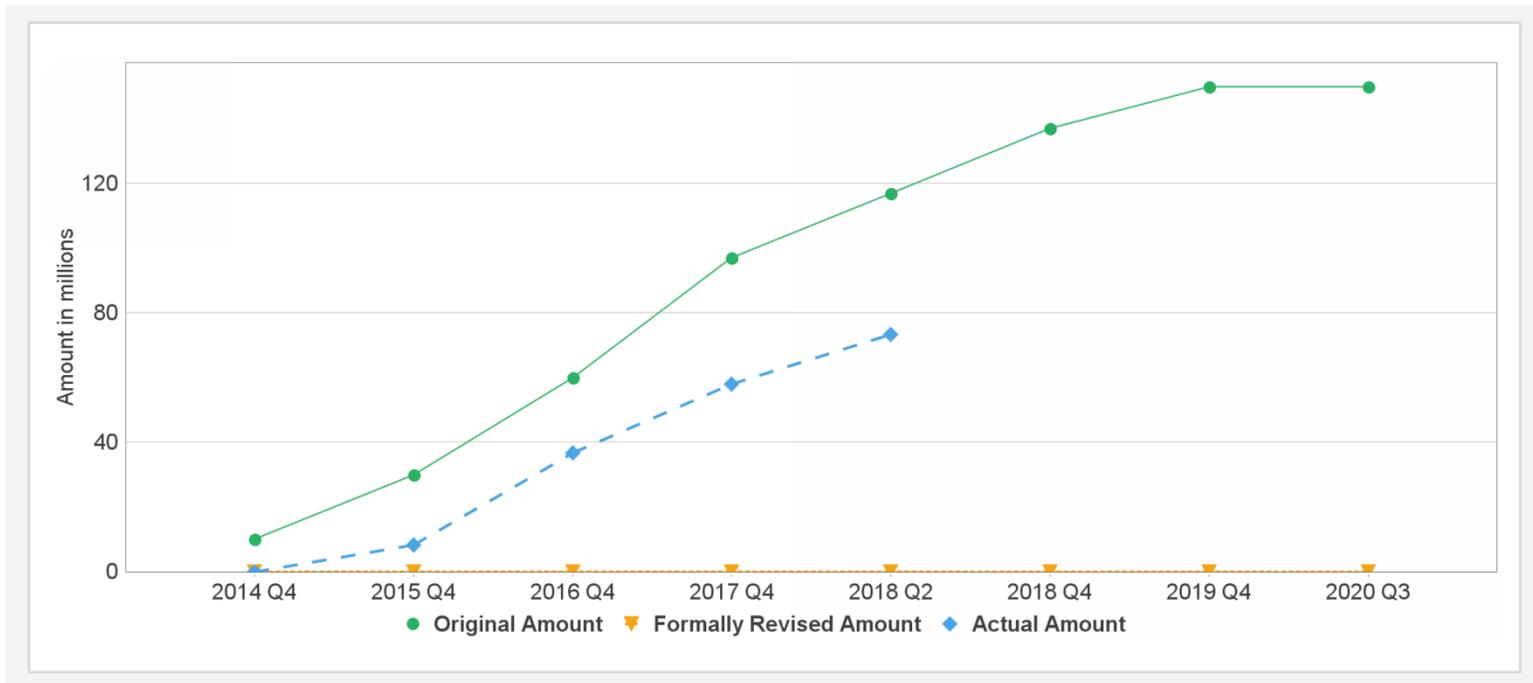
Key Dates (by loan)

Project	Loan/Credit/TF	Status	Approval Date	Signing Date	Effectiveness Date	Orig. Closing Date	Rev. Closing Date
P126974	IDA-54120	Effective	15-Apr-2014	05-Jun-2014	02-Sep-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54150	Effective	15-Apr-2014	25-Feb-2015	22-May-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54190	Effective	15-Apr-2014	10-Jul-2014	18-Dec-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54200	Effective	15-Apr-2014	16-May-2014	16-May-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54210	Effective	15-Apr-2014	20-May-2014	20-May-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54220	Effective	15-Apr-2014	14-Aug-2014	02-Apr-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54230	Effective	15-Apr-2014	10-Apr-2015	23-Jul-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-54240	Effective	15-Apr-2014	15-Jul-2014	07-Jan-2015	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018



P126974	IDA-57330	Effective	29-Sep-2015	20-Oct-2015	17-Feb-2016	31-Dec-2019	31-Dec-2019
P126974	IDA-H9300	Effective	15-Apr-2014	05-Jun-2014	02-Sep-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018
P126974	IDA-H9320	Effective	15-Apr-2014	27-Jun-2014	18-Aug-2014	31-Dec-2018	31-Dec-2018

Cumulative Disbursements



Restructuring History

There has been no restructuring to date.

Related Project(s)

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