



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 08/14/2002	
PROJ ID:	P001090	Appraisal	Actual
Project Name:	Higher Education Management	Project Costs (US\$M)	7.3
Country:	Guinea	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	6.6
Sector(s):	Board: ED - Tertiary education (50%), Central government administration (50%)	Cofinancing (US\$M)	6.01
L/C Number:	C2787; CP830	Board Approval (FY)	96
Partners involved :		Closing Date	06/30/2000
			12/31/2001

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The purpose of the project was to provide a framework for the rationalization of higher education in Guinea . Its long term objective was to establish a reconfigured, streamlined system with greater institutional autonomy, improved cost effectiveness, and increased relevance for economic development . This was to be done by reorganizing the Ministry and the institutions of higher education based on identified need and resource availability; building financial and budget management capacity at the Ministry and institutional levels; and establishing a viable information and communications system.

b. Components

The project had three components :

- Institutional reorganization (\$3.6 m.): analysis and reform of university governance, finance, management, female participation, student services, and user fees; consultant support for a collaborative process to reconfigure the higher education sector, prepare new recruitment criteria and procedures, develop accreditation procedures, and redefine administrative responsibilities .
- Development of information and communication (\$2.0 m.): improve data collection, analysis and dissemination; upgrade institutional information systems; improve communications .
- Establishment of budgetary programming and monitoring capacities (\$1.1 m.): support for Ministry-level and institution-level financial management.

c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates

An 8-month delay between approval and effectiveness was attributed to a change of Minister . Lack of continuity among senior staff slowed progress and disbursements until after mid -term and the project implementation period was extended by 18 months.

3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:

The project achieved most of its objectives :

- Reorganization of the subsector was partially achieved . The higher education institutions gained autonomy to manage their own budgets, completed development plans, and agreed on action plans . Competitive criteria were established for award of research grants . An accreditation system was set up and administrators were trained; however, the system will not be functional until faculty members have also received training . A few marginal academic programs were closed . Some measures were implemented to rationalize financing (e.g., teaching hours were increased; state-funded restaurants were closed; eligibility criteria for scholarships were tightened; and registration fees and dormitory charges were increased) but the impact was counteracted by increases in the size of scholarship awards .
- The objective of building financial and budget management capacity was fully achieved . Computer hardware, software and training were provided to the Ministry and higher education institutions . An external technical audit was conducted at each institution, leading to development and adoption of a manual governing accounting procedures in all higher education institutions . Software was installed, linking the Ministry and institutions, for the administration of research grants .

- The objective of establishing viable information and communications systems was partially achieved . Systems for computerized data collection and analysis were put in place in the Ministry and in each institution . A VSAT satellite dish, internet system and telephone network were installed in the Ministry and two key institutions and were expected to become fully functional about six months after the project closed . However, the planned radio network for other higher education institutions was not implemented .

4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

- A new policy framework for higher education was established with a high level of stakeholder awareness and acceptance. Institutional autonomy was greatly increased, with the Ministry assuming a more appropriate supervisory role. Budget transfers from the Ministry to the institutions are now based on institutional business plans and personnel management is moving away from civil service engagements to limited contracts .
- Financial management capacity has been substantially enhanced . The value of the new comprehensive and uniform accounting procedures is now widely recognized by budget staff in higher education institutions . The more accurate financial data now produced are serving as a basis for refinement of sector performance indicators.
- Information management capacity established in the Ministry and institutions now supports annual production of a higher education statistical yearbook with information on finance as well as enrolments .
- Some progress was made towards improving efficiency and cost recovery and the Ministry is committed to advancing this. The introduction of cost sharing together with efficiencies in scholarship management allowed a 20% increase in new enrolments.
- The basis was laid for significant improvement in the quality and relevance of tertiary programs . The project was responsible for introducing the internet to Guinea, transforming the potential for professional and intellectual communication within the country and with scholars abroad . A new culture was introduced of critical assessment of the relevance of programs . Female participation in higher education increased from 6% to 15%.

5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):

- Delays and unsatisfactory progress up to 1998 are attributed in part to shifts in Ministry organization, frequent changes of Minister, inappropriate skills mix in the project unit, and difficult relations between the Ministry and the project unit. Contentious issues included the management of international TA and coordination of studies with project activities.
- Progress on cost recovery was below expectations, due mainly to resistance from Parliament : in terms of fiscal impact, savings from the new cost sharing measures were more than offset by increases in the number of students and in the per-student scholarship amount.
- Failure of the project to install the proposed radio system presents the risk that outlying institutions remain or become marginalized -- although other donors are taking the lead in improving communications infrastructure in some of these locations.

6. Ratings:	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Institutional Dev. :	Substantial	Substantial	
Sustainability :	Likely	Likely	Sustainability of the institutional impacts is likely but sustainability of the communications system will depend on improved cost recovery and maintenance systems.
Bank Performance :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Borrower Perf. :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

NOTE: ICR rating values flagged with '*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

- When institutional capacity and momentum for reform are weak, a modest project can stimulate institutional development and set the stage for more complex reforms . In these conditions, project performance is especially sensitive to the commitment, ability, and continuity of key individuals . Implementing politically contentious reforms, such as cost recovery in higher education, depends on activities to build broad national ownership, beyond the education sector .
- Difficult institutional and financial reforms can be more broadly accepted when investments are made concurrently in visible academic areas (such as incentive funds for faculty and internet installation) . Small competitive or incentive funds can also have a substantial impact on academic culture .
- The effectiveness of TA for higher education reform is related to close collaboration with the staff of higher education institutions .
- The use of external audits to diagnose deficiencies in financial management of individual education institutions may be a difficult process to manage in the short run but can be an effective way to generate awareness of the

need for change and provide a concrete basis for defining new procedures .

8. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

Why? In a very weak institutional context, the project succeeded in building awareness and ownership of fundamental reforms in sector policy and management . Better understanding of the factors that made this possible (and the reasons for the less than satisfactory progress in the two years up to mid -term) could provide useful lessons for projects in other countries with similar institutional conditions and capacity constraints .

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

This is a good ICR. The summary in English of the Borrower's Comments is welcome, but it would be better to translate the full report which contains insights not reflected in the summary . The list of acronyms is missing.