



PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

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Acronyms

AfgREN	Afghanistan Research and Educational Network	NHESP	National Higher Education Strategic Plan
APR	Annual Progress Report	NPA	National Procurement Authority
BoQ	Bill of Quantity	OBE	Outcome-Based Education
CEQA	Center of Excellence for Quality Assurance	OMST	Operation Monitoring and Support Team
DLI	Disbursement Linked Indicators	PAD	Project Appraisal Document
EEP	Eligible Expenditures Programs	PPR	Project Progress Report
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework	QA	Quality Assurance
GoA	Government of Afghanistan	QAAD	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Directorate
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism	RBF	Results- Based Financing
HEDP	Higher Education Development Project	SC	Steering Committee
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	SCL	Student-centered Learning
IQEU	Internal Quality Enhancement Unit	SDC	Staff Development Center
IT	Information Technology	SIDP	Strategic Institutional Development Plan
KMU	Kabul Medical University	TNA	Training Need Assessment
KU	Kabul University	UTM	University of Technology, Malaysia
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	USD	United States Dollar
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock	USWDP	University Support & Workforce Development Program
MoF	Ministry of Finance	VC	Vice Chancellor
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education		
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding		
MQA	Malaysia Quality Agency		
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Development		
NA	Need Assessment		

Executive Summary

This report examines the progress of the activities undertaken by the Higher Education Development Program (HEDP)/ Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) since July to September 2016. In order to increase access to higher education and enhancing the quality of it in Afghanistan, the HEDP/MoHE have been facilitating the expansion of higher education in the country with a strategic focus on the future development. With the coordination and support of HEDP, the highlights of MoHE's achievements can be listed as of the following: promotion and expansion of students' enrollment especially females in priority degree programs; facilitating the reformation of the educational model of Afghan Universities to an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) with a Student Centered Learning (SCL) philosophy by introducing the model to faculty members; undertaking activities around framing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enhanced teaching and learning; awarding Master's level Scholarships to qualified university lecturers considering 33% seats for women; and approving group and individual research proposals developed by eligible researchers on the topics mainly from priority disciplines to promote the culture of research in the higher education system of Afghanistan.

Similarly, in the technical side of the project, the staffs of Operation Monitoring and Support Team have been providing HEDP/MoHE with technical support. Though the project's activities are in accordance with the planned targets, this project has faced particular challenges that are either implementation related, stakeholder, related, and/or are due to external factors. These challenges encompass, difficulty in confirming the accuracy of provided data from MoHE; unavailability of data for need assessment required from MoHE, and mapping out the existing programs and activities in MoHE prevent duplication of tasks. For such challenges, reanalyze of the data is recommended to take place by the MoHE with the support of Operation Monitoring and Support Team (OMST).

Project Overview

Project Basic Information

Project ID	P146184
Project Duration	September 15, 2015 – Dec 31, 2020
Total Project Budget	US\$ 50.00 million (Component I :US\$ 40 m + Component II: US\$ 10 m)
Implementing Agency	Afghanistan Ministry of Higher Education
Donor	The World Bank
Project Director	Noor Ahmad Darwish

Project Background

Afghan policy makers perceive higher education as a vital engine of growth and development. The Government of Afghanistan (GoA) is fully aware of the strategic importance of human capital in the modern global knowledge economy. The higher education system produces the pool of high-level human resources, such as policy makers, professionals, managers, academics and technical experts, who are essential for economic development. Policy makers also recognize that the contribution higher education can make to the promotion of civic values and attitudes needed for a modern, enlightened democracy, and the development of a socially cohesive nation. In this context, the MoHE has prepared a second National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP II) to accelerate the development of higher education over the period 2015-2020. The NHESP II outlines a broad development framework to be implemented through a multi-year rolling plan.

Thus, the overall objective of the HEDP is to increase access to and improve the quality and relevance of, higher education. The HEDP supports the NHESP-II 2015-2020, which aims to develop the higher education sector by expanding enrollment, improving quality, and orienting higher education to promote the future economic and social development of Afghanistan.

The HEDP's concept, design, and components have been prepared through an extensive process of consultation and collaboration with the MoHE, MoF, representatives of universities and higher education institutions from the state and non-state sectors, public and private employers, the academic community, and major development partners active in higher education in Afghanistan. There has also been close collaboration and synchronization between the GoA team in charge of developing the NHESP-II, and the Bank team responsible for designing the HEDP, to ensure alignment and consistency.

HEDP is organized into two components: (a) a Higher Education Development Program component; and (b) a Program Operations and Technical Support component. These components are different in nature but complementary. The first component (US\$ 40 million) is comprehensive and has been designed to directly support NHESP-II. The flow of funds under this component follows a results-based financing arrangement. Disbursements are linked to a specific result that would contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of the NHESP-II and the HEDP. They finance Eligible Expenditures Programs (EEP) selected from the MoHE's budget, rather than against specific investments. The second component (US\$ 10 million), assists the implementation of the first component through coordination, technical assistance (TA), capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, innovation and pilots, and research and communication. The flow of funds under this component will be provided by specific investments, as normally done under the Bank's Investment Project Financing modality.

Component 1: Higher Education Development Program

This component supports the implementation of the NHESP-II through a Results-Based Financing (RBF) modality. Disbursements are associated with specific results called Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs). Financing is provided by Eligible Expenditures Programs (EEPs) selected from annual MoHE budgets, rather than against specific inputs. The following key themes are supported under the component.

Component 2: Component Two: Program Operations and Technical Support

This component strengthens the capacity of MoHE and universities to implement the reforms of the NHESP-II. Support under this component covers coordination, capacity building, innovations, monitoring and evaluation, research and communication. The technical assistance and capacity building activities of this component assist the MoHE to implement the development initiatives of the NHESP-II. Policy studies include beneficiary feedback surveys of staff and students of institutions and programs supported by HEDP. Communication enables higher education authorities to disseminate development initiatives to political authorities, policy makers, academics, students, and the general public. The component also helps MoHE to support innovative approaches such as the orientation of the universities in provincial towns to support the economic development of their provinces. This component also finances incremental operating costs for an OMST in the MoHE.

Project Financing Modality

The HEDP uses an Investment Project Financing (IPF) instrument based on Results-Based Financing (RBF) modality. Under the RBF component, Project funds are disbursed against selected line items in MoHE's annual budgets (EEPs) up to capped amounts and conditioned on achievement of the agreed set of DLIs. This component supports the reforms initiated through the NHESP-II and focuses on outcomes and results rather than inputs. In case these indicators are not achieved the World Bank will not grant the money allotted for that particular indicator.

Progress Overview

Overall Progress [Component I]

Overall, the Higher Education Development Project has had a solid progress in its relevant activities during the past quarter of the project from October to December 2016. This section of the report represents a recap of the activities undertaken by the first component of the project; while the detailed activities are bulleted, in the next section of this Project Progress Report (PPR).

Similar to the previous activities, the undertakings, especially those delivered by academic and learning department, have been to facilitate access to and improvement of the quality of higher education in Afghanistan.

In respect to the Gender development-related activities, as a stimulus to increase female enrollment in higher education, the following steps have been taken. The term “disadvantaged” has been defined and accepted by the MoHE as a ground for a scholarship scheme to be provided for disadvantaged female. Additionally, the plans for child care facilities are in process for them to be established in Bamiyan and Takhar. Counseling facilities are also planned to be established in Bamiyan, Mazar, and Parwan. Kankor guideline has been updated and the allocated seats for the female students in Kankor are revised. To have a hand in the data, OMST took the commitment of the MoHE, Plan directorate to provide the project with updated soft copies of the data.

During this quarter of the project, the OMST has taken good steps in quality assurance and accreditation. The Internal Quality Enhancement Units IQEUs of three Kabul-based universities were inaugurated by H.E. Minister. Also, a 2 day training workshop for development of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit Leads was organized and delivered in Delhi in December 2016. The report and the related pictures can be found in [Annex 1](#).

Moreover, the self-assessment process of 8 universities to include: KPU, KU, Balkh and Kandahar plus AUAF, Katib, Kardan, Khatam-ul-Nabiyeen have been started. As per the plan, this procedure shall be completed in 6 to 8 weeks. The QAA department has been successful to complete three types of documents have been completed; one is the framework the self-assessment template, and the Quality assurance Institutional Handbook. Additionally, the Quality Assurance Plan a template has been drafted. It includes the Action Plan and Work Plan for 2017 which can be found in the [second annex](#) of this report. The plan been shared with USWDP and for Coordination on the QA, there will be a bi-weekly meeting held between, MoHE, HEDP, and USWDP.

In respect to External quality assurance and peer reviewing to include teaming and schedule of the peer review, as well as list of peer reviewers, [Annex 3](#), can give a good picture of the plan for the year 2017.



Figure 1. An example of the newly inaugurated IAEU



Figure 2. IQEUs' inauguration by H.E. Minister

Likewise, to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in universities, and so to help learners to achieve better outcomes, activities around framing Information and Communication Technology-enhanced teaching and learning are undertaken by HEDP.

MoHE has been successful to create 600 new positions for IT Technicians, from which 510 are allocated for provincial universities. Moreover, the work of the ICT Centers in Ghazni, Konar, Takhar, and Paktia are in final stages and contracted out.

As part of the academic and learning department, OMST in the last quarter of 2016 apart planned to implement 5 training/conferences around OBE-SCL. These programs include:

1. Two-day OBE-SCL training for the 24 champions on the standard course syllabuses and etc.
2. Training for 76 faculty deans on OBE and SCL teaching and learning philosophy.
3. A conference to be held in coordination with UTM for 100 participants from the leadership of 24 universities, where the participants will receive certificates at the end.
4. 12-day training for 60 participants from KPU, KEU and Balkh University.
5. A one day workshop for the PDC inauguration in 9



Figure 3. OBE - SCL Workshop (Parwan University)



Figure 4. OBE - SCL Workshop (Takhar University)

universities to include: KU, KPU, KEU, KMU, Kandahar University, Balkh University, SZU, Nangarhar University...

Also to reflect the activities and success/case stories from OBE-SCL practitioners on the www.hedp.af, a link has been created to a weblog especially designed for the academic department of HEDP.

Furthermore, to improve the qualification of the public universities' academics, HEDP after the completion of the competition-based application procedure has announced the awardees for the 2017 academic year Master's scholarship program, for the Academics in priority disciplines. As a special privilege for women, female academics



Figure 5. KU, KEU, and KMU SIDP Presentation Session

who also teach in Education, Law, Journalism, and Social Sciences and Psychology have been also eligible to apply for the scholarship.

On the other hand, to improve the quality of teaching and to promote economic and social development and culture of research in Afghanistan higher education system, HEDP has announced the awardees for the second round of the World-Bank sponsored Research projects for the academics in priority disciplines for the year 2017. However, the final list of the awardees will be announced at a conference in the first quarter of 2017 for both group and individual research projects. From the 2016 cohort, more than 20 researchers have completed their researchers and either published or are in the process of submission and publishing their articles in an international journal.

To strengthen the autonomy of universities, three universities to include Kabul University, Kabul Education University, and Kabul Medical University have developed and finalized their Strategic Institutional Development Plans. The mentioned plans have gone through different filters of MoHE and are finalized by the MoHE's leadership in an official gathering.



Figure 6. H.E. Minister's speech during the Universities' SIDP finalization session

Overall Progress [Component II]

In the operation section of the project, the human resources and admin department are engaged in the recruitment process, hitherto with respect to recruitment, all of the key positions in both program and operations sections, OMST and HEDP respectively. Internal Audit Officer and Scholarship Officer Positions are the newly created ones at HEDP to be filled in the year 2017. Moreover, two vacancies for position, Power and water supply Engineers was announced. The recruitment processes for the remaining UOCs are now finalized and vacancies are filled. OMST drafted contracts for 12 HEDP and MoHE staff after WB clearance, where some of the contracts were finished by Dec 2016, and some were supposed to be expired by Jan and Feb 2017. Contracts for the 9 assigned Academic Experts are also created.

As part of the finance department work, the following activities have been taken place:

1. The training plan is created, completed and shared with the Bank.
2. Training of Odoo software has been delivered to all employees of HEDP and the Odoo (Enterprise Resource Planning) software has been implemented on Finance, Procurement of Component 1, HR & Admin, and Operations & will be implemented on the rest of section soon.
3. Quick Books Accounting software has been successful implement on component 1 and is under process on component 2 of the project.
4. Replenishment of Withdrawal application #8, amount \$579,455.97 was debited to component II.
5. IUFR for both components have been created and after review of the Senior Operation Manager will be sent to Bank.
6. B3 form for both components has been created and sent to MoHE for further process to MoF Budget Sector.
7. The annual budget for component II has been finalized.

The procurement department work has been divided into two parts, the tasks related to component I and the task related to component II. For the component I, the department has been able to work closely with Operation team and finalized lab equipment list for all 19 universities. Also, it finalized library lists received from provinces and prepared documents and announced Lab KITs as ICB.

For component II, the TPV Evaluation and Negotiation was awarded and contracted out. The company started the evaluation and has already shared the inception report. The department also was able to finalize the procurement plan for 2017. It distributed quotation for IT equipment list request by Kankor Directorates already cleared by WB to be purchase out of HEDP, Component II budget.

Overall, the following plans have been created and finalized by the Operation-related departments

1. Finalized Infrastructure Plan and shared to the Bank.
2. Finalized Component 2 Budget breakdown for the year 2017 shared to the Bank.
3. Finalized Work plan for both components shared to the Bank.
4. Finalized Training plan for both components shared to the Bank.
5. Finalized IOC and shared to the Bank.

Moreover, it is to be mentioned that environmental safeguard department's activities as crosscutting actions are implemented shoulder to shoulder to other activities of the project; nevertheless, the department has been planning to continue the capacity building to specific audiences. The department has been successful to complete the following activities.

- New Format of ESMP has been received. 4 ESMP for HEDP projects in Bamyan, Konar Badghis and Ghazni in 2016 has been developed and shared with the Bank.
- A draft of the annual report has been developed and shared with the Bank.
- Projects' site selections for 2017 project with engineering team of MoHE have been started. They have visited Parwan.

As part of the social safeguard department, OMST has been able to work on a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and has been able to finalize a grievance redress manual for the MoHE. Moreover, it has been successful to prepare few selected social reports to the donor.

The Internal Controller also has been following up and check with remaining tasks. In respect to making a request for solving project policy problems such as top up cards, transport, completing all the personal files, as well as strengthening the coordination between Operation and Academic Departments, significant steps have been taken. OMST is also working on a procedure to be

developed for the finance and admin with the help of the finance department to sit together and arrange duties for the travel and etc.

In respect to Monitoring and Evaluation, apart from the agreed actions follow up, monthly monitoring reports are produced. The new format also contains the update on the project development indicators and intermediate outcome indicators. The 2016 enrollment data for all disciplines as well as for priority disciplines will be finalized in March 2017, as it will comprise data from all 24 selected universities.

Concluding Note:

Hitherto, with the coordination received from OMST, the HEDP/MoHE appears to have its steps on the journey to success and effective project implementation. It has been heading toward success to increase access to higher education especially among women and in priority disciplines and sub-disciplines. Additionally, effective work on raising the quality of the higher education system and facilitating the expansion of higher education in the country with a strategic focus on the future development has been going on. Overall, the HEDP/MoHE is on target for its planned activities. The MoHE- HEDP has been successful in following up and performing the activities listed by the new aide memoir that has been effective from December 2016. The second half of the progress of the HEDP based on the recent aide memoir will also be reflected in the next quarterly project Progress Report; as the HEDP expects another plan to be received early April 2017.

ANNEXES