To: Harsha Aturupane

From: Ministry of Higher Education

Date: 25-Oct-2016

Dear Dr. Harsha,

I hope this letter finds you in a good health.

The MoHE has made quite reasonable progress on the agreed actions and the operations of the project.

Attached you can find the Progress Report of the Higher Education Development Program for the period (July to September 2016) for your information and review.

We are much delighted for your prompt support to the higher education sector of the country.

Yours Truly,

Prof. Dr. Farida Momand

Minister of Higher Education
PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

July to September 2016

Date of Report Submission: November 6, 2016
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>AfgREN</td>
<td>Afghanistan Research and Educational Network</td>
<td>NHESP</td>
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<td>University of Technology, Malaysia</td>
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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 staff 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

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<th><strong>Project ID</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Project Duration</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Donor</strong></td>
<td>The World Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Director</strong></td>
<td>Noor Ahmad Darwish</td>
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</table>
**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 against Eligible Expenditures Programs (EEP) 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 (EEP) 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 July to September 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, OMST has been able to propose two proposals to the World Bank on the establishment of a pilot academic counseling center for the Shaheed Rabbani Education University, as well as equipping an existing Child Care center at Kabul Medical University with facilities.

HEDP has been coordinating through Coordination meetings with the presence of MoHE Gender Officer, Gender Officers of Kabul Based Universities, and has come up with a joint action plan for the Gender Development Activities in MoHE. This action plan will strengthen the MoHE recently launched Gender Strategy and the Anti-harassment and Anti-discrimination Policy.

During this quarter a proposal and a training plan were submitted to the Bank, emphasizing the importance of training the Gender officers in universities on the Gender strategy and more importantly on Gender Officers’ TOR. The training is scheduled to be conducted in the last week of October.

Moreover, the HEDP Gender Specialist will host the third Bank’s Gender Coordination meeting at MoHE, following the ones hosted at Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Development (MRRD).

Furthermore, the Kankor guideline for 12 graders has been updated and through an official letter, it has been communicated with the MoHE.

Additionally, with the efforts of the Gender Specialist, holding First Year Students Orientation has been added to the SIDPs of the three Kabul-Based Universities.

Furthermore, to manage the quality assurance activities at the university levels, Apart from the four Internal Quality Enhancement Units (IQEU) and assigning four IQEU leads at KU, KEU, KMU and Kandahar University, four additional IQEUs are planned for the year 2017. The leads for Balkh,
Kapisa, and Nangarhar Universities are assigned and Khost's IQEU lead will be soon recruited as well.

Moreover, an Accreditation Enhancement Workshop was held from 18th to 21st of September 2016; where IQEU leads, CEQA Leads, and External Peer reviewers from public and private universities, as well as observers from USWDP, joined the workshop. A full report is available in ANNEX 1.

In addition to that, an internship program from 26th to 30th September was held in Malaysia Quality Agency (MQA) located in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. 8 External Peer reviewers, 4 IQEU leads and the representative of HEDP participated. An objective of this program was to enhance interns understanding of the quality assurance (QA) concept and system. The full report of the workshop is attached as ANNEX 2.
Moreover, two International external peer reviewers are contracted to start the peer reviewing tasks in selected universities in November 2016.

Additionally, the British Council has approved to train the QA peer reviewers in a workshop held in Dubai, in December 2016. So far the QAA tasks have been smoothly going on, though the resignation of the QAA Manager in HEDP has not been insignificant.

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.

The planned three ICT centers to be established for KEU, Khust and Faryab are at their final stages are being contracted. Once we have the ICT centers close to be completed Trainers will be contracted to develop materials and start teaching the IT technicians in the Universities.

Moreover, MoHE with the support of HEDP will have ICT technician positions at universities added to the MoHE Tashkeel (Organizational Structure).

As part of the academic and learning department, OMST and 5 select OBE-SCL champions from Kabul based universities worked on draft curriculum of OBE-SCL certificate. The workshop was carried from 25th to 28th of September 2016, under the title “OBE-SCL Training Certificate Curriculum and Contents Development”. It’s intended that the draft OBE-SCL certificate curriculum will be reviewed by 24 OBE-SCL champions on October 18 and 19, 2016. It’s also planned to discuss different strategies that will be used for promotion and institutionalization of OBE-SCL in higher education.

It is to be mentioned that OBE-SCL strategy is at its final stages and will be finalized soon. A development plan for the Staff Development Centers (SDCs) under the name of (Establishing of Professional Development Centers) has been drafted, 12 universities are included to have their SDCs/PDCs functional by HEDP.

Moreover, 24 OBE-SCL champions are about to depart for Malaysia to receive advanced training in outcome based education, student centered learning, student assessment and blended learning at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM).
As part of OBE-SCL component, a questionnaire has been developed to collect OBE-SCL practice data from trained faculty members. The questionnaire was explained to university coordinators who are instructed to train the target faculty members on how to fill the questionnaire and submit additional documents.

Furthermore, to improve the qualification of the public universities’ academics, HEDP has announced the call for application for the second round of the World Bank-sponsored Masters scholarship for the academics in priority disciplines for the academic year 2017. End of October has been marked as the application deadline. As a special privilege for women, female academics who also teach in Education, Law, Journalism, and Social Sciences and Psychology are also eligible to apply for the scholarship. Additionally, through an official letter and a request made by HEDP and approved by H.E. Minister the field Economics has been listed as a priority discipline.

From 2016 cohort, 82 have already started their studies, those with pending visa (10 awardees) issues and offer letters (6 awardees) will start their courses in the next semester at the relevant universities.

Moreover, for Chancellors, Vice Chancellors or high-level managements of universities to gain advanced skills needed to make quality decisions and implement strategy through effective management of resources, HEDP is in the process of organizing leadership and management courses. The training will be commenced on November 19th and will last until November 30, 2016; While, such training, though technical, will be conducted for the technical staff of Universities. The short-term technical training will commence on 29th of October and will last till 9th of November 2016.

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 call for application for the second round of the World-Bank sponsored Research projects for the academics in priority disciplines for the year 2017, in both group and individual research.

The 2016 cohort has already started their projects and has sent their monthly progress report.

Additionally, to improve the system within the higher education institutions, apart from quality tools, a strategic planning is required to focus the efforts of each institution as a whole. In order to lend stability to the Afghan universities, in spite of increasingly frequent leadership changes, HEDP conducted is following up on the workshop where the Chancellors, VCs, and faculty deans were trained on how to develop a strategic institutional development plan. The SIDPs are now at their final stages and shall be soon discussed at MoHE level. HEDP is optimistic to have the SIDPs finalized by November 2016.
Overall Progress [Component II]

In the operation section of the project, the human resources and admin department is engaged in the recruitment process, hitherto with respect to recruitment, most of the key positions in both program and operations sections, OMST and HEDP respectively. Internal Controller, Teaching, and Learning Manager, Research and Strategic Planning Manager positions have been filled. Also based on the project need, Academic Experts have been identified and will be assigned after receiving the Bank’s NOL.

The process of recruiting Communication Specialist, Translator, and Quality assurance and Accreditation Manager, HR, and Admin Specialist and University Operation Coordinators at Parwan and Paktia are at recruitment stages.

The team working on the first and second component has been successful in revising the plan and cost table for construction of the facilities.

Similarly, the Information and Technology department has been active in updating the [www.hedp.af](http://www.hedp.af), while the Admin has printed Business Cards for the staff of HEDP.

Additionally, there has been two withdrawal requests made to Ministry of Finance (MoF) for component 2.

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 also started planning for activities like capacity building to specific audiences as well.

With respect to the Environmental Safeguard activities, there have been noticeable achievements for the project. Initially, the specialist has designed three-phase of capacity building, first for MoHE engineers, second for Universities and involved NGOs, and third for the beneficiaries of the construction activity. So far, HEDP has been able to successfully deliver the two phases of the capacity building plan. Once the construction of any project completes the third

![Figure 4. First phase of Ev.Social Safeguard awareness for MoHE related staff and engineers](http://example.com/figure4.png)
phase i.e. awareness training for the beneficiaries (such as students or community people will be facilitated. Moreover, the work of the Bamyan Project has been started and HEDP has been directly involved in the evaluation of the area from the MoHE side. ESMP has been applied to this project. Additionally, an Initial Environmental Examination template has been developed by the safeguard department and is shared with Engineers to test the level of water, the soil and etc. before starting the project.

As part of the second phase of the training, it is planned to have CB training for the universities in the province through Video Conference, to save money and time. The targeted universities for the first round will be Kunar, Badghis, Ghazni, Kandahar, Jawzjan, and Sar-e-Pol Universities.

With respect to the internal Auditing the audit report of three universities, to include, Balkh, Takhar and Kabul Medical University are finalized and shared with the Bank. Similarly, the audit work of two-quarters of Component II of the project has been finished, and relevant audit reports are shared with the Bank. The MoHE payroll audit is still under process.

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.

In respect to Monitoring and Evaluation, strict follow up with the agreed tasks have been going on. The 5 years enrollment data for all disciplines as well as for priority disciplines have been prepared and shared with the Bank. An on the job training concept has been prepared on data management course for the staff of database department in MoHE. Moreover, internal database for the HEDP is under development, while a Beneficiary satisfaction mechanism has been developed and shared with Bank for comments.
Project Activities

The following is the details of activities undertaken from July to September 2016. Each table encompasses the relevant theme and the activities under it, the accomplished activities, outputs, the activities in progress, challenges encountered and the proposed solutions for each challenge is included in the table too.

Component I

Theme 1.1 - Increasing Access to Priority Degree Programs for Economic Development

With the activities being performed under this theme, MoHE/HEDP aims to expand enrollment in degree programs that are of direct relevance for future economic development. Special attention is given to increase female enrollment in priority degree programs.

1.1: Expanding Enrollment in Priority Degree Disciplines and Promotion of Female Enrollment in Priority Degree Programs

Outputs:

- Kankor guideline has been revised and shared with MoHE and Kankor directorate along with an official letter.
- Prepared two proposals to the World Bank on the establishment of a pilot academic counseling center for the Shaheed Rabbani Education University, as well as equipping an existing Child Care center at Kabul Medical University with facilities.
- Prepared a concept on training Gender focal points on their ToR and Gender Strategy as well as MoHE’s Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy.
- Planning for the 2017 Students Orientation in Balkh, Herat, and Jowzjan, while the three Kabul-based universities with SIDP will conduct the orientation as well.

Activities in Progress:

- Planning for the conduct of a Gender Focal Points’ training is in progress.
- Cooperation with USWDP, MoHE Gender Unit on the implementation of the joint action plan.
- Establishment of Counseling Units in Kabul Education University as a pilot.
- Establishing ties between MoHE, Private Partners and MoLSAMD for child care facilities at Kabul Medical University.
Challenges and proposed solutions:

- Less coordination of Universities in providing data.
- Not taking of responsibilities from universities’ leadership (providing space for orientation, etc.)
- Late response of Gender Officers from Universities for any task “according to them for not having office and office equipment”
- Duplicate tasks with USDWP and not a good management from Gender Unit of MoHE
- The Late response of Coordinators.

Theme 1.2 - Modernizing and Enhancing the Quality of Teaching and Learning
HEDP/MoHE through the activities under this theme assists universities in introducing modern OBE and SCL in line with current international trends in higher education and establish ICT centers and train faculty members’ accordingly.

1.2.1: Outcome Based Education and Student-Centered Learning

Outputs:

- Holding OBE-SCL Curriculum and Content Development Workshop from 25th to 28th of September 2016.
- The OBE- SCL strategy/ plan is completed and at the final stages.

Activities in Progress:

- 24 OBE-SCL champions will meet to discuss the draft OBE-SCL Certificate Curriculum before their departure to Malaysia.
- 24 OBE-SCL champions are about to depart for Malaysia to receive advanced training at University Technology Malaysia (UTM).
- SDC establishment plan has been drafted. 12 Universities to include the following will be covered by HEDP: Kabul University, Kandahar University, Herat University, Shaikh Zayed University (Khost Province), Balkh University, Nangarhar University, Kabul Medical University, Kabul Education University, Kabul Polytechnic University, Bamyan University, Faryab University, Albiruni University.
- OBE-SCL practice data collection is in process and will be soon completed. The status report will be developed and shared later.

Challenges and proposed solutions:
Faculty members trained in training 1 and training 2 by UTM need additional training to become master trainers.

OBE-SCL is a new concept in Afghanistan, it needs more efforts and time to have a sufficient number of master trainers.

During the past two OBE-SCL training, the training materials were developed in English, which was challenging in terms of comprehension and understanding the basic concepts.

The candidates in first and second training are not all the same. In the 2nd training, some universities introduced more candidates, causing excess in number of trainees, as a result UTM could not cover the expected training materials. Therefore, it is difficult to track and to teach such large number in the future.

The issue of training 150 master trainer by end of 2016 needs to be discussed, more appropriate ways needs to identified and agreed between MoHE and HEDP.

1.2.2: Information and Communications Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning

Outputs:

- The planned three ICT centers to be established for KEU, Khust and Faryab are at their final stages are being contracted

Activities in Progress:

- Strengthening AfgREN.
- ICT training for ICT technical staff of Universities once the ICT centers are functional.
- MoHE with the support of HEDP to have ICT technician positions at universities added to the MoHE Tashkeel (Organizational Structure).

Challenges and proposed solutions:

- In general, activities related to AfgREN take longer than anticipated mainly due to coordination challenges. Strengthening and sustaining AfgREN involves the engagement of different stakeholders such as Ministry of Communication and Information, Ministry of Higher Education, TEIN-4, donor community and universities and timely coordination needs to take place between all these parties.
Theme 1.3 - Improving the Qualifications and Skills of University Staff Members

Under this theme, the number of academic staff members who are qualified to at least Master’s Degree level is substantially increased. Special attention for support is given to (a) academic staff from degree programs identified as priorities for economic development, and (b) female academics. Scholarships target faculty staff of public universities and are restricted to full-time, regularly employed faculty staff.

1.3.1: Scholarships for Masters Degrees in Priority Disciplines and sub-disciplines

Output:

- MoUs are signed with Universities.
- 2016 Cohort have started their courses, only 6 are waiting for a visa and 9 for offer letters.
- 2017 call for application for the Master’s scholarships is announced. HEDP is receiving applications.

Activities in Progress

- Acquiring the offer letter for the remaining awardees from 2016 cohort.
- Seeking solutions and communicating with Malaysian Immigration department for those with pending Visa status from 2016 Cohort.

Challenges and proposed solutions:

- Due to the traditional culture of Afghan families, it is very difficult to find female professors accepting to go to the Masters. Most of the time they have the family restrictions as a number1 excuse for rejecting the scholarship.
- Since the process of admission and acquiring visas take time, it is proposed to start the process earlier for the year 2017.

1.3.2: Short Term Courses for Technical Staff

Output 3.2:

- The training will commence on 29th of October and will last till 9th of November 2016.

Activities in Progress

- Training commencement.
Challenges and Proposed Solutions:

- Regarding the technical training, the model of public university professors teaching the technical staff brings us certain issues. First of all, if the professors knew how to use the machinery, it should already be being used. Second, coordinating with professors to take a week off and train for a week is possible but the monetary incentive to train the technicians is very little comparatively. The lessons learned will be implemented for the year 2017.

Theme 1.4 - Strengthening Governance, Quality Assurance, and Accreditation

Through this theme, HEDP/MoHE promotes the substantive and procedural autonomy of universities, and to develop the quality assurance and accreditation system. Increased substantive autonomy empowers universities to take greater initiative and responsibility for the development of academic programs, research activities and community services.

1.4.1 Strategic Institutional Development Plans

Outputs:

- Universities are sending the first draft of the SIDPs.

Activities in Progress:

- KEU, KMU, and KU to discuss their SIDPs with MoHE in Mid-October
- The SIDPs to be finalized and published by November 2016.

1.4.2 Internal Quality Assurance and External Quality Assurance

Outputs:

- From four Additional IQEU Leads, Balkh University, Nangarhar University, and Kapisa University have introduced the leads. Khost University is yet to introduce its IQEU lead.
- Trained IQAUs’ Heads on Quality Enhancement and developing their strategies.
- Hired to International Consultants to start the peer reviewing work in November.
- QAA Afghan Officials including IQEU leads and External Peer reviewers attended MQA internship program in Malaysia.
Activities in Progress:

- IQAU heads to send their strategies.
- Self-assessment reports being received from the targeted universities.
- External Peer Reviewer’s training in Dubai in December
- External Quality Assurance activities to be started by the two international peer reviewers hired.

1.4.4: Leadership and Management Courses for Senior Managerial and Administrative Staff

Outputs:

- The training will commence on November 19th and will last until November 30, 2016

Activities in Progress:

- Training commencement

Challenges and proposed solutions:

- Regarding the leadership and management training, OMST has designed the training which will be conducted wholly in Kabul for chancellors and vice chancellors (1 week) and deans (4 batches, four weeks). It will be hard for all of them to come to Kabul at once. The solution is that for 2017, the trainers train in the provinces. It will not only increase the participation but will decrease the cost as well, comparing the cost of a couple of trainers to the cost of all the trainees.

Theme 1.5 - Stimulating Development Oriented Research

HEDP/MoHE by undertaking the activities under this theme, develop a research culture in universities. The focus is on applied, development-oriented research Projects, mainly from the priority disciplines. However, research Projects from other disciplines, if clearly development oriented, are also eligible for resources. Both group research Projects and individual research are supported.
1.5: Stimulating Development Oriented Research

**Outputs:**

- Call for application for the 2017 research project has been announced. Research proposals are being received.
- The 2016 Researchers cohort have been updating OMST with their monthly progress report through the report format that was shared with them.

**Activities in Progress:**

- Research deadline and starting shortlisting of the proposals by the research committee.

**Challenges and proposed solutions:**

- It was difficult to contact some of the researchers who were in the provinces; at the final stage, HEDP had to replace one of the research projects with another one from the 2016 cohort, since the researcher was not responsive to either email or phone calls.
- The members of research committees have to be from a variety of disciplines, so understanding of the topics would be easier and the judgment be transparent.
- The type of research proposal being funded should be negotiated with the Bank as we work in all priority disciplines, but the Bank is funding and accepting projects that have a direct economic impact while not all the priority disciplines are linked directly with economic development.
- A broader range of awareness should take place to have more applicants.

Component II

Program Operation

**Human Resource and Admin Related Activities:**

**Outputs:**

- Completed recruitments procedure for the projects’ positions include:
Teaching and Learning Manager, Research and Strategic Planning Manager, Internal Controller and Technical Officer for the office of the H.E. Deputy Minister are hired.

Based on the need, 9 Academic Experts for KMU, KEU, KPU, KU, Herat University, Balkh University, Nangarhar University, Kandahar University and Khust University, where HEDP is active for the selected year, are identified and will be assigned upon the receipt of NOL from the Bank.

- Staff business cards have been printed and distributed.

Activities in Progress:

- Recruitments that are under process for the projects’ positions include:
  - QAA Manager, HR and Admin Specialist, Communication specialist, translator, and UOC of Parwan and Paktia positions recruitments are under process.

Challenges and proposed solutions:

- Having insufficient time in hand, the department is excessively engaged with recruitment processes. Some of the positions require highly technical and qualified candidates, which is difficult to find in a short time. However, the team involved in this matters strives for the betterment and effectiveness of the work of HR and Admin department.

Procurement Department:

Outputs:

- The infrastructure plan and the cost table for the construction and facilities provided by the HEDP are revised.
- The process of purchasing and providing facilities to MoHE and related universities through Component 1 are going on.

Activities in Progress:

- Following up on need assessments of dormitories, water and latrines facilities for female students, transportation for females, lecture blocks for OBE- SCL, library supports, and research centers, for their design, estimated costs, and cost of required equipment. So far the status of each part of the plan is as of the following:
  - In respect to the establishment of the ICT centers, KEU ICT Center Evaluation Report is completed and submitted to National Procurement Authority (NPA) for
review, (Khost and Faryab) ICT Centers are under Evaluation in Procurement Directorate MoHE

- For the ICT Equipment, a list has been prepared by the directorate of IT and is sent to the NPA and is in announcement.
- In regards to Dormitories, the contracts have been awarded, the Bamyan dormitory construction has been started. The Contract for two dormitories are signed and the construction work is going on, and the contract will be also soon awarded to Kunar dormitory.
- Regarding the lecture blocks with large class rooms and small class rooms, the contract for Ghazni lecture block is signed and the construction work is in progress, the Sar-e-Pol has been re-announced and the Logar lecture block will be sent to NPA for announcement.
- With respect to transport and purchasing vehicles, the decision will be taken to re-announce or single source.
- Regarding library support, a committee comprised of four members from all Kabul-based public Universities are assigned to check the list of the books requested by each university and make a summary of the list.
- Supply Equipment for Existing Lecture Blocks: For the year 2016, 12 universities have been identified to receive the five pieces of furniture for each lecture blog. The 5 pieces include desks, Chairs for students, Chairs for teachers, cupboard and addressing table. It is now at NPA. The contract is signed.
- Research Center: The Plan directorate is working on it and shall identify the type, and design of the center, and direct it to Procurement. Kabul RC has been announced and Kandahar RC will be announced soon as well.
- Lab Equipment for 36 Universities are in announcement.
- Water and Lavatories for female dormitories: 6 Bill of Quantity (BOQ) are received from 7 selected planned provinces, they are under procurement processes. The remaining will be followed up.
- Official letters are sent to Plan directorate to prepare the ToR, for the company that should be selected for designing the constructional projects.
- The physical equipment of the 4 IQEUs will be followed up and completed in each respected University.

- ToR and REOI were earlier prepared for the Third Party Validation (TPV) of the DLIs. After the bid opening, it is now under evaluation process at procurement, to choose the proper firm.
Finance Department:

Outputs:

- Requesting and withdrawing two withdrawal request for Component 2 amount 239,247 USD (app no 6), and amount 350765.38 USD (app no7).
- Preparation of the SDU report and sharing it with the MoF.
- Preparation of the Cost Breakdowns for the training inside and abroad by the OMST.
- Facilitating for the staff monthly salary to be deposited on time.

Information Technology related activities:

Outputs:

- Updating the hedp.af on a timely basis, based on the project activates until the communication specialist arrives.
- Identity Cards for each of the project personnel have been issued and handed to the new staff.
- Administrative processing began for linking the hedp.af to the MoHE website, where a visitor can be directed to the www.hedp.af website by a click.

Activities in Progress:

- Logo and branding for HEDP are being developed.
- Official email addresses for the staff of HEDP

Audit and Control

Internal Audit

Outputs:

- Audit report of three universities to include Balkh University, Takhar University, and KMU are finalized and shared with MoHE and Bank.
- The internal audit report for two-quarters of Component II of HEDP has been prepared and shared with the Bank.
Activities in Progress:

- MoHE payroll audit is under process.

Internal Control:

Outputs:

- Oversight of the compliance of the policies developed by the internal controller took place in a timely manner.
- Making a request for solving project policy problems such as top up cards, transport, etc.
- Strengthening the coordination between Operation and Academic Departments.

Activities in Progress:

- On the process of preparing a compliance checklist and controlling the fixed asset inventory

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Outputs:

- Furnished monthly and quarterly monitoring and progress report to OMST and the Bank in a timely manner.
- Strict follow-up with the agreed tasks has been going on.
- The 5 years enrollment data for all disciplines as well as for priority disciplines have been prepared and shared with the Bank.
- An on the job training plan and concept have been prepared on data management course for the staff of database department in MoHE.
- A Beneficiary satisfaction mechanism has been developed and shared with Bank for comments.

Activities in Progress:

- The internal database for the HEDP is under development.
Environmental and Social Safeguard

Social Safeguard and Environmental Safeguard:

Outputs:

- The first phase of the capacity building training plan (ESMF social awareness rising sessions) for the engineers and involved officials of the MoHE is completed.
- The second phase which is for the awareness of the Universities and the involved NGOs in construction projects are completed as well.
- Developed GRM review report and plan to operationalize GRM
- Developed IEE and shared with MoHE engineers.

Activities in Progress:

- Developing a GRM manual.
- Provincial public universities soil test review.
- As part of the second phase of training, it is planned to have CB training for the universities in the province through Video Conference, to save money and time. The targeted universities for the first round will be Kunar University, Badghis University, Ghazni University, and Kandahar University, Jawzjan University, and Sar-e-Pol universities.

Challenges and Proposed Solutions:

- Lack of environmental knowledge (ESMF) at MoHE.
- Lack of appropriate unit or person to correspond to this important matter.
- Lack of close cooperation, and
- Lack of taken responsibility at MoHE and Plan and policy department.
- The solution for all these challenges should be ESMF introduction and understanding of it at the MoHE high authority level. Moreover, the establishment of environmental safeguard department in MoHE Tashkeel as mentioned in the ESMF would help overcome the abovementioned challenges.
**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 mid-May. 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 December.