

Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA)

Terms of Reference of the Task Team on Higher Education

1. Background, justification and objectives of the Task Team on higher education

1.1. Background and justification

Education is largely perceived by its different stakeholders and international organizations as one of the drivers of economic, cultural and social development of nations.

This conviction is also shared by leading figures of the political and economic spheres. President Nelson Mandela, when claiming that education was the most powerful weapon to change the world, did not think differently on the matter.

From a historical perspective, if primary and secondary levels have been subject to important investments, higher education has remained the weak link of the system, in particular in Africa. This situation is characterized by low investments in higher education and the lack of planning, which justifies partly the overcrowding effect observed in higher education and research institutions. This is why, despite this overcrowding, it is important to recognize that, while the access rate to higher education reaches 76% in Western countries, African countries barely exceed 18 %.

Generally speaking, higher education in Africa is facing major challenges. The growth in student enrolment, perceived as explosive, is linked to a lack of infrastructure planning and insufficient resource allocation. A World Bank report indicates indeed that enrollments increased from 200.000 to 4.500.000 between 1970 and 2009. In 2020, Africa will number 9.600.000 students.

These challenges fit well in the international community's concerns, integrated in 2015 into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in view of eradicating poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all human beings live in peace and prosperity. Among these 17 goals, one can highlight the existence of SDG4, which aims in particular at **"ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"**.

The SDGs are perfectly in line with the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025 and the CAMES Strategic development plan 2015-2019 (*Plan stratégique de développement du CAMES, PSDC*), which places the issue of the quality of higher education at the core of its concerns, in an increasingly globalized and demanding world in terms of service provision and exchanges.

In order to monitor SDG4 related activities, UNESCO Dakar, in partnership with other UN and civil society organizations, have established the Regional Coordination Group on SDG4-Education 2030 in West and Central Africa (RCG4-WCA).

In this framework, several thematic groups have been created. CAMES committed to lead the one relating to higher education, due to the relevance of the theme, its consistency with its missions and its regional dimension backed by its extensive experience in managing the harmonization of higher education and research systems and policies, guaranteed by a high number of experts in member countries and elsewhere.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives pursued by the task team on higher education are the following:

- Bringing together the major stakeholders of the higher education sub-sector, in view of reaching a synergy of activities and sharing best practices ;
- Carrying out sub-thematic monitoring actions on governance, bachelor's master's doctorate system's reform, quality assurance, professionalization, management of higher education's information systems;

- Creating and feeding an information portal on higher education, in West and Central Africa, with the involvement of all stakeholders
- Developing an analysis and monitoring framework for SDG4 activities, in particular on higher education

2. Implementation modalities

As for the other thematic teams, UNESCO Dakar Office will take on the function of network Secretariat and facilitate the coordination of its work, with the support of the CAMES General Secretariat, through a Steering Committee to be put in place after consultation.

The Committee will be established after the official constitution of the thematic group, taking the geographical balance into account. It will be composed of recognized experts with proven experience in the field of higher education, quality assurance, programs harmonization and university governance. It will bring together five experts for a two-year renewable term.

This committee will gather periodically during the year, at least once in a face-to-face meeting, for the adoption of an action plan, accompanied by a budget and a resource mobilization strategy.

The membership to the committee should be on a voluntary basis and should **financially engage the responsibility of the organizations who wish to participate**. The committee could also count on the support of some Development Partners. CAMES shall also consider financing some activities from its budget, for example by covering the logistics (hosting, catering, local transportation) costs in particular when the meetings are held on the sidelines of a regular event of the institution.

3. Monitoring of the activities

The monitoring of the Task Team's activities will be performed by the Steering Committee established by CAMES, in close collaboration with the Group's Secretariat hosted by UNESCO Dakar Office, based on a shared action plan. The designated focal points will liaise between the Secretariat of the RCG4-WCA and CAMES.

4. Task team members

Some institutions, in view of their scope, interest for the theme and possible synergies to build, will be co-opted based on a voluntary membership, to the higher education task team's objectives.

Any organization interested in higher education and related issues or with similar functions, shall be free to join the task team on higher education.

Among others, in a non-exclusive way, they include:

- Conférence des recteurs des universités francophones d'Afrique et de l'Océan indien (CRUFAOCI) ;
- Réseau pour l'excellence de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique de l'Ouest (REESAO) ;
- Réseau des établissements d'enseignement supérieur et instituts de recherche d'Afrique centrale (REESIRAC) ;
- Réseau international des établissements privés d'enseignement supérieur de l'espace CAMES (RIDEPEs) ;

- Conférence Internationale des Doyens des Facultés de Médecine d'Expression Française (CIDMEF)
- Conférence Africaine des doyens et des Facultés de Médecine d'Expression Française (CADMEF) ;
- Association of African Universities (AAU);
- Agence universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) ;
- Federation of West Africa Employers' Associations (FWAEA)
- West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) ;
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ;
- Central African Economic and Monetary Community;
- Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- UNESCO ;
- CONFEMEN ;
- UNDP ;
- World Bank ;
- African Development Bank ;
- UNICEF...

5. Expected results (details to be provided after the official launch of the task team and discussions with partners)

OUTPUTS	ACTIVITIES	LEAD/CO-LEAD	PARTNERS	PERIOD	FUNDS (\$)	
Tangible outputs and/or deliverables that will have been produced	Activities that are to be conducted to produce tangible output or deliverable	For each activity: RCG4 member(s) responsible for leading/co-leading its implementation	For each activity: RCG4 members / external partners	Months covered during annual WP period	Available	To mobilize
1. Tools/analytical work 1.1. Higher Education analysis and monitoring framework in the countries covered by CAMES						
2. Knowledge management						
3. Country support						
4. Capacity strengthening 4.1. Dissemination of CAMES QA tools						

4.2. Establishment of ANAQ (Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité) and CIAQ (Cellules Internes d'Assurance Qualité)						
4.3. Curriculum evaluation						
4.4. University-companies meetings						
4.5. IESR (Institutions d'Enseignement Supérieur et de Recherche Scientifiques) information systems						

6. Road map for the implementation of the task team's activities

Provisional dates	Tasks
1/12/2016 - 30/01/2017	Finalization of the concept note of the task team
03-04/2017	Awareness raising among stakeholders
04/2017	ToR and provisional agenda for a launching workshop of the task team
1-15/05/2017	Call for contribution for the launching workshop
10-20/05/2017	Invitation letters to the workshop participants
29-30/05/2017	Launching workshop