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PRACTICAL GUIDANCE NOTE 14

THE CONTRIBUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO DEVELOPMENT

1. Topic overview

Role and benefits of higher education

"Education and culture are key to building inclusive and cohesive societies, and to sustaining our competitiveness" [i].

European leaders placed education firmly onto the agenda at the European Council in December 2017. It was a recognition of the role of high-quality education in creating more inclusive, as well as more economically successful and sustainable, societies.

Similarly, the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development recognises the importance of access to education, including higher education, as illustrated in SDG4.3: ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education. Furthermore, target 4.5 speaks about the importance of eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. The 2017 European Consensus on Development also recognises the importance of ensuring access to quality education for all as a prerequisite for youth employability and long-lasting development.

Higher education supports not only personal talent development but also knowledge-driven economic development and poverty reduction strategies by: training a qualified and adaptable labour force, including high-level scientists, professionals, technicians, teachers, and future government, civil service and business leaders; generating new knowledge through basic and applied research; and providing the platform for accessing existing stores of global knowledge and adapting this knowledge to local use. Higher education institutions are unique in their ability to integrate and create synergy among these three areas. Sustainable transformation and growth throughout the economy are not possible without the capacity-building contributions of an innovative higher education system, especially in low-income countries with weak institutional capacity and limited human capital.[ii]

Looking at the impact of human capital development policies at the national level is not the only way of exploring the interface between innovation and higher education. Recent research in Europe indicates that the local or regional dimension of economic development may be as important as what happens at the national level, or sometimes even more important. The most successful regions and cities are those that manage to attract and retain qualified people in employment,

Summary

The innovative application of knowledge has become a fundamental driver of social progress and economic development. Higher education is indispensable for the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge and for building institutional, professional and technological capacity as also recognised in the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG4. Developing countries must strengthen their capacity to create and apply knowledge through well-trained graduates and relevant research produced by a diversified and increasingly international higher education system. SDG4B tries to address this by substantially expanding globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries for enrolment in higher education. Through knowledge sharing, capacity building and resource mobilisation, the donor community can accompany partner countries in their efforts to expand coverage in an equitable manner and improve the responsiveness of their higher education system. Against this background, this note sets out some key higher education reform themes and potential areas for EU dialogue and support.

i EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1, European Council Conclusions, 14 December 2017 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32204/14-final-conclusions-rev1-en.pdf

ii Salmi, J., *The Tertiary Education Imperative: Knowledge, Skills and Values for Development.* Boston and Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2017

improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises, and increase investment in human capital through skills matching and upgrading.[iii]

Higher education's contribution goes beyond the economic sphere. Nations with high levels of educational attainment also enjoy important social benefits. Studies indicate that people with higher education are much less dependent on welfare programmes.[iv] A DFID-commissioned literature review of 99 studies worldwide about the impact of higher education concluded: *'a number of studies showed a positive impact of tertiary-level study on graduates' capabilities. Impact was shown in areas of health, nutrition, political participation and women's empowerment'*.[v]

The social dimension of higher education, which is focused on ensuring that the higher education population reflects the population of the surrounding community and that higher education institutions contribute to their community, is recognised as a crucial societal goal of higher education. This is a strong element of the inter-governmental cooperation within the 48-nation European Higher Education Area[vi] and is also relevant for higher education in low-income countries where participation can be limited to a small segment of the community, with women in particular under-represented as students, researchers and academic staff.

It is doubtful that any low-income country can achieve the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without inclusive access to quality education generally, as well as participation in well-performing higher education and vocational training systems. The essential contribution that higher education can make to the goals of sustainable economic growth (SDG 8) and poverty reduction (SDG 1), from developing a sustainable agricultural sector and building up a resilient infrastructure, to mitigating the devastating effects of climate change and preserving the environment, cannot happen without the participation of scientists and well-trained professionals and the application of leading-edge research for finding solutions to societal challenges.

The contribution of higher education is crucial, in particular, for achieving real progress in basic and secondary education. Higher education supports the rest of the education system through the training of effective teachers and school principals, the involvement of highly qualified specialists in curriculum development and educational research, and the design of appropriate tests to assess students' learning outcomes. There is also an inter-generational factor: children with parents who have completed higher education are more likely to access higher education themselves.

In conclusion, higher education contributes a wide range of private and social benefits:
'When taken as a whole, the body of evidence ... suggests that tertiary education plays an important role in both economic and non-economic development in lower-income contexts. For years, much of the international literature on tertiary education in lower-income contexts emphasised the private benefits to individuals. However, recent studies have indicated that investment in tertiary education also yields significant social returns, both in terms of economic growth and in terms of non-economic benefits. The included studies show a consistent positive impact of tertiary education on societal institutions and on a range of capabilities that have public, as well as private, benefits'.[vii]

The changing context

The higher education ecosystem is evolving at an increasingly rapid pace, influenced by elements of uncertainty, complexity and disruption, such as climate change, changing demographics, global competition, political volatility, diminished public funding, greater private involvement, growing accountability demands, alternative delivery modes and game-changing technologies. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic can be expected to have direct and indirect impacts on higher education, such as the sudden introduction of online education, budget constraints and lack of mobility between students and staff in higher education institutions, at least in the short term.

Changing labour markets in the digital era

In designing their future programmes and pedagogies, higher education institutions must take notice of the considerable transformation in knowledge, skills and competences needed to thrive, both personally and professionally, in an increasingly globalised and digitalised society and labour market. According to a meta-analysis of twenty-first century skills carried out by the World Economic Forum[viii], graduates must master complex competencies to be able to contribute effectively to addressing today's challenges: critical thinking and problem-solving skills, creativity, communication and teamwork.

iii Ederer, P., Schuller, P. & Willms, S., *Human Capital Leading Indicators: How Europe's Regions and Cities Can Drive Growth and Foster Social Inclusion.* Brussels: The Lisbon Council, Policy Brief, 2011 https://lisboncouncil.net/component/downloads/?id=509

iv OECD, *"Higher Education: Quality, Equity, and Efficiency"* in Education Policy Analysis 2006: Focus on Higher Education, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2007 https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-policy-analysis-2006/higher-education-quality-equity-and-efficiency_epa-2006-2-en

v Oketch M, McCowan T, & Schendel, R., *The Impact of Tertiary Education on Development:* Department for International Development, 2014 https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/Tertiary%20education%202014%20Oketch%20report.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-161044-887

vi http://www.ehea.info/pid34436/social-dimension.html

vii Oketch, M., McCowan, T., & Schendel, R., *The Impact of Tertiary Education on Development:* Department for International Development, 2014 https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/Tertiary%20education%202014%20Oketch%20report.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-161044-887

viii World Economic Forum, New Vision for Education: Unlocking the Potential of Technology, 2015 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEFUSA_NewVisionforEducation_Report2015.pdf

New forms of accountability

Complementing the recent, widespread development of national quality assurance agencies in most parts of the world, new instruments of accountability have appeared or been suggested as relevant ways of complementing the information available to measure the performance and operation of higher education institutions.[ix] Of particular relevance in this context are student engagement surveys, assessment of student learning outcomes, labour market results information and rankings.

The global higher education market

Globalisation, declining communication and transportation costs, and the partial opening of political borders have translated into rapidly rising numbers of international students, a growing number of academics moving from one country to another, in pursuit of more attractive professional opportunities, and a rapid increase in international collaborative projects among university researchers. Many countries are exploring how to counteract permanent movement by academics and students from countries with less favourable conditions, known as brain drain, in favour of brain circulation, where students and academics return to their home institutions after a period of time abroad. In addition, a growing number of universities in industrial countries have opened branch campuses in developing and emerging economies, and more higher education institutions are offering online programmes internationally. These factors also have an impact on the ability of home higher education institutions to attract and retain students and staff.

New providers and new technologies

With the emergence of new providers and new modes of delivery, the higher education landscape is changing substantially. Four developments are particularly worth mentioning: the rapid growth of for-profit providers; the multiplication of alternative modes of delivery; the impact of open science and open education resources; and the rise of big data and learning analytics.

First, the growth of for-profit providers has continued and even accelerated in a number of countries, sometimes in response to concerns about the quality of public higher education institutions. In Brazil, Peru, the Philippines and South Korea, for instance, enrolment in for-profit colleges and universities accounted for 40 to 50% of the total student population in 2017.[x] This makes it all the more important for countries to put in place a strong quality assurance system to protect students from low-quality programmes, in both private and public higher education institutions.

The multiplication of alternative modes of delivery is a second dimension of disruption. E-learning, blended learning, the flipped classroom, and virtual reality simulations have allowed higher education institutions to introduce innovative curricular and pedagogical practices that make the learning process more experiential and interactive. MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), in particular, are offering new opportunities, with provision varying from recognised degrees to short, uncertified lifelong learning courses. If a programme is accredited by a higher education institution, it is quality assured and recognised on the same basis as a campus-based programme. Worldwide, estimates indicate a total of 81 million students participated in MOOCs in 2017, compared to 35 million and 18 million the previous two years. Low- and middle-income countries make up a large proportion of MOOC users, with figures varying from around a third to 80%[xi].

Third, open science, defined broadly as *'a systemic change in the modus operandi of doing research and organising science,'* offers new opportunities for higher education in all countries. The paradigm shift embodied by open science refers to the rapid development of interactive and collaborative modes of knowledge acquisition, generation and dissemination, facilitated by networks that rely on modern information and communication tools. The open education movement represents a unique opportunity for higher education institutions and learners in developing countries to access Open Educational Resources (OER) in the form of free courses, scientific articles, software and other education resources.

Finally, big data and predictive analytics have arisen in just a few years as powerful tools to assist policy-makers and practitioners in making data-informed decisions through mathematical modelling, digital simulation and scientific computation. They appear to be very powerful, in particular, in addressing low internal efficiency and high dropout rates. Big data could be used effectively to map out future labour market needs and influence the shaping of curriculum and pedagogy, but must be used in an ethically responsible manner.

ix Salmi, J., *Is Big Brother Watching You? The Evolving Role of the State in Regulating and Conducting Quality Assurance.* Washington DC: Council of Higher Education Accreditation, 2015 https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED562064.pdf

x Salmi, J., The Tertiary Education Imperative: Knowledge, Skills and Values for Development, Boston and Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2017, p. 19

xi Garrido, M., Koepke, L., Andersen, S., Mena, A., Macapagal, M., & Dalvit, L., Executive Summary of *An examination of MOOC usage for professional workforce development outcomes in Colombia, the Philippines, & South Africa,* Seattle: Technology & Social Change Group, University of Washington Information School, 2016 https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/35647/Advancing_MOOCs_for_Development_Final_Report_Summary_2016_Final.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y/, Shah, D.,"A Product at Every Price: A Review of MOOC Stats and Trends in 2017", Edsurge, January 22, 2018 https://www.edsurge.com/news/2018-01-22-a-product-at-every-price-a-review-of-mooc-stats-and-trends-in-2017

Teachers

Many higher education teachers have received little or no pedagogical training. Research output remains more important for career progression than high-quality teaching. With increased focus on learner-centred pedagogies, digital means of delivery, in particular in the context of COVID-19, and the acquisition of transferable skills alongside expertise in the subject of study, there is increasing recognition of the importance of initial and ongoing pedagogical training for academic staff. However, there is generally no national legal requirement to train academic staff to a certain standard, in contrast to teacher training in schools.

2. Areas for EU support to higher education

There are several ways in which the EU can support the role of higher education: promoting mobility of students and academic staff, strengthening higher education institutions and policies, promoting the contribution of higher education institutions to equity in local economic development, leveraging their role in promoting a societal debate and wider civic engagement. Apart from global programmes such as Erasmus+ or Horizon 2020, the EU can develop or support projects specifically designed to support higher education institutions or policies, or involve them as a key actor in a broader intervention.

Tailor-made programmes in support of higher education

Various EU bilateral and regional programmes address specific challenges in the field of higher education, ranging from strengthening the policy framework to building skills in specific areas. The text box below presents the example of how the Africa-EU Partnership aims to improve the performance of higher education in Africa and its linkages to the private sector.

In Asia, the SHARE programme aims to strengthen regional co-operation and enhance the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions and students. Begun as a pilot project from 2015-2019 and now extended to 2022, its objective is the creation of an ASEAN higher education space, similar to the European Higher Education Area. To achieve this, it focuses on mobility, recognition, quality assurance and policy dialogue. It has received €15 million from the Asia Regional Indicative Programme. More information can be found on https://www.share-asean.org/.

Section 3 presents a case study on South Africa and details how budget support is used to strengthen the education system as a whole by improving teacher training, curricular development and research capacity. For the design of tailor-made interventions in the field of higher education, the table below provides an indicative list of policy objectives and areas of intervention.

Indicative list of policy objectives and areas of intervention for the design of HE support programmes		
Policy objective	**Situation assessment**	**Possible areas of intervention for governments, with EU support**
Increasing access and equity	What is the gross enrolment rate in higher education? What proportion of high school graduates are able to enrol in higher education? What access and success disparities exist between low-income and high-income students? What is the situation for other equity target groups (gender, ethnic minorities, students with disabilities)?	Outreach and bridge programmes Lifelong learning framework (recognition of prior learning, pathways, credit transfer) Design and implementation of income-contingent student loan system Development of a wider variety of higher education institutions (polytechnics, universities of applied sciences, community colleges) Support services for disadvantaged groups (dormitory, canteen, student advisory services, etc.) Retention programmes Research on factors impacting access and success
Improved quality and relevance	Does the country measure student learning outcomes? Is there a national student engagement survey? How good are the results? Is there a comprehensive labour market observatory? What are the labour market results of graduates? How well are the country's top universities ranked internationally and regionally?	Faculty development Innovations in curricular, pedagogical and assessment practices Safeguards for academic freedom and integrity Development of the educational infrastructure (library, scientific labs, workshops, classrooms for active learning) Development of graduate tracking (graduate surveys etc.) Strengthening of university-industry linkages Entrepreneurship education Developing networks of universities, inter-university cooperation
Increased research output and impact	What is the research output (national and institutional levels)? What is the quality and impact of the research (H-index, proportion of top publications, alignment with the country's and region's development challenges?)	Innovation policy framework Career paths for young researchers Centres of excellence Development of postgraduate education Scientific and digital infrastructure Safeguards for academic freedom and integrity
Strengthened quality assurance	Is there an independent agency for externally evaluating higher education institutions and/or programmes? Are the rules and procedures for external quality assurance transparent? On what basis are experts for external quality reviews selected and how is it ensured that they are impartial? How meaningful and real is the involvement of students in quality assurance processes? How rigorous is the national quality assurance system to license new providers and programmes? How is transparency ensured in this regard? How are higher education institutions encouraged and incentivised to strengthen internal quality assurance and a genuine quality culture?	Establishment / strengthening of national system for external quality assurance and accreditation Establishment / strengthening of internal quality assurance within each higher education institution Establishment / strengthening of a national qualifications framework Development of transparent and fair criteria and practice for the recognition of foreign qualifications, supported by appropriate institutions/entities in charge (ENIC centres or similar, together with other relevant authorities, HEIs, student representatives and other relevant stakeholders) Measures against academic fraud, essay and diploma mills, etc. Strengthening international cooperation in the field of quality assurance, recognition (UNESCO Global Convention of Recognition, Bologna Process)
Improved stewardship and governance	Does the country have a well-formulated vision for the future of higher education? Is there effective stewardship and coordination at the national level? Does the government have a comprehensive Management Information System to inform and monitor policies? Is there a good balance between national steering and institutional autonomy?	Formulation of national vision for the development of higher education Strengthening of planning and monitoring capacity at national level Definition of appropriate institutional autonomy and accountability framework Processes put in place to involve higher education institutions in strategic decisions related to the sector (consultation processes, open information sharing, feedback loop on decisions)
More sustainable financing	Is the level of public funding adequate? Does the country rely on transparent and objective resource allocation mechanisms? Is student aid adequate in volume and effectively targeted? Are there measures in place to fight corruption?	Resource mobilisation at the national level Resource diversification at the institutional level Performance-based allocation of public funding (formula, performance contracts, competitive funds) Effective targeting of student support Transparent and efficient financial management at institutional level

Academic cooperation through Erasmus+

Erasmus+ is the European Union's flagship programme in education, training, youth and sport, and has a strong international element to its higher education actions. The programme aims to support Partner Countries to deal with the challenges facing their higher education systems and institutions, including those of quality, relevance, equity of access, planning, delivery, management, governance and internationalisation by offering a balanced mix of actions addressing individuals, institutions and higher education systems. It is structured as follows:

- The **international credit mobility** component provides for short-term study periods (3-12 months) or traineeships abroad that count toward a degree back home at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral level and for staff. Mobility provides students and academic staff with benefits beyond the immediate impact on their competence in their chosen field, as students develop transferable skills, such as resilience and inter-cultural awareness, as well as developing long-lasting links with the places where they spent their mobility period. Participation also builds the university's internationalisation mission and internal quality assurance practices.

- Universities in partner countries can participate in the delivery of **Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree programmes**, top-level highly integrated programmes offered by a consortium of a minimum of three universities in the EU (and partner countries) offering scholarships for students from around the world. Students can participate in Joint Master's degree programmes, which are 12 – 24-month full Master's courses with study in several countries leading to a joint or multiple degree.

- The **capacity-building** component of Erasmus+ supports projects to improve the teaching, research and management capacity of beneficiary higher education institutions and to promote policy reforms in the field of quality assurance and recognition of qualifications which facilitate international mobility, including Ministries and higher education institutions.

- **Jean Monnet** activities provide grants to universities and professors to teach about European integration.

For the 2014-2020 period, Erasmus+ financed a total amount of about EUR 1.9 billion for international activities, which came from the regional envelopes of external aid financial instruments. More information, including presentations and brochures, is available at: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/presenting-and-promoting-erasmus-plus-guidance-and-promotion-materials-for-eu-delegations_en

Erasmus+ is managed by DG EAC with the support of EACEA and through the network of national agencies in Member States. EU Delegations can play a crucial role in disseminating the opportunities provided by the programme, such as by organising, or promoting the organisation of, events with students benefiting from mobility grants funded by the EU, supporting the local Erasmus alumni network, or organising events with institutions benefiting from capacity building actions. The benefits of the Erasmus+ programme should also be included in the policy dialogue with authorities in charge of higher education and research [xii]. Specific training of national contact points for Erasmus+ in EU partner countries can also be provided by DG EAC.

Strengthening research capacities through Horizon 2020

Horizon 2020 is the largest EU Research and Innovation programme with nearly €80 billion of funding available in the period 2014-2020. The goal is to ensure Europe produces world-class science and technology, removes barriers to innovation and makes it easier for the public and private sectors to work together in delivering solutions to big challenges facing our society. The range of topics is very broad, including, but not limited to, health, ICT, environment, satellite technology, energy and socio-economic sciences.

While the bulk of funding targets EU countries, many institutions and researchers in EU partner countries have participated. The instrument contributes to the strengthening of research capacities of higher education institutions and public and private research centres in partner countries, and fosters links with their EU counterparts. Included in the top 20 of third countries receiving most funds under the 7th Framework Programme of Horizon 2020 are Brazil, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico, Tanzania, Thailand and Uganda. More information on funding in each partner country can be found on the Horizon Dashboard: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard

Of particular relevance are the Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA), which support the career development and training of researchers – with a focus on innovation skills – in all scientific disciplines through worldwide and cross-sector mobility. For this, the Programme provides grants at all stages of researchers' careers, from doctoral candidates to highly experienced researchers, and encourages transnational, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility. The MSCA is the main EU Programme for doctoral training, funding 25,000 PhDs over seven years. More information is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/

xii Several delegations have also set up a direct policy dialogue on higher education and research between DG EAC and RTD and national authorities.

Horizon 2020 is managed by DG RTD with the exception of MSCA, which is managed by DG EAC with the support of REA.

Promoting regional economic development

Higher education institutions are key players in driving local economic development. The EU regional development policies promoted by DG REGIO require EU Member States and regions to identify the knowledge specialisations that best fit their innovation potential, based on their assets and capabilities. The Regional Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS) involve businesses, research centres, universities and local authorities working together to identify a Member State's or region's most promising areas of specialisation, as well as the weaknesses that hamper innovation. RIS set out priority investments and key funding sources. Higher education institutions are key contributors to this process, through their capacities in the field of research (e.g. adapting technologies to local needs) and through skills building.

There is growing interest in different parts of the world in assessing the European experience with RIS as a tool to strengthen regional competitiveness, and at the same time to promote greater territorial cohesion. This is also of relevance for border areas, which are often very remote from the capitals and where formal employment opportunities can be scarcer. Several countries in the European neighbourhood and in Latin America have benefited from technical assistance of various DG REGIO and DG DEVCO projects. In a number of countries, Delegations also facilitate regular sectoral policy dialogues on regional development between national authorities and DG REGIO on the use of RIS.

Further information on the use of RIS in partner countries can be found on:
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/international/
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/smart_specialisation_en.pdf

Promoting citizen engagement in public debate

The EU can leverage the role of universities as change agents in societies by promoting active citizen engagement. Higher education institutions can be important change agents by promoting research or civic debate on a wide range of topics such as electoral reform, democracy, human rights, climate change, gender equality and the risks and opportunities of digital development. The promotion of research or civic debate can be integrated as part of larger bilateral projects in those fields. This can include the following activities: co-organising conferences with higher education institutions, partnering with them to carry out specific research or by involving them in consultations (e.g. in the context of budget support programmes).

3. Case Study

Source	Financing agreement between the European Commission and the Republic of South Africa: Teaching and Learning Development Sector Reform Contract (2015) Evaluation Report: Mid-Term Evaluation of the Teaching and Learning Development Sector Reform Contract (2018)
Programme	**Teaching and learning development in South Africa** The main objective of the project is to improve the quality of education at all levels through direct support for (i) Early Childhood Care and Education, (ii) Primary Teacher Education, (iii) TVET and CET College Lecturer Education, and (iv) Inclusive Teaching. The theory of change for this intervention underlines a multi-pronged approach including (a) policy, regulation, standards, (b) programme development, (c) material and course development, (d) work integrated learning, (e) advocacy and (f) research. The main implementing agency is the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which in turn has delegated the execution of the programme to several South African universities. Financing for this project comes in the form of direct budget support and competitive grants for a total amount of EUR 26 million..
Context and challenges	The main difficulties faced by the South African higher education sector are the low quality of teaching and learning, with the exception of the elite research universities, and the large disparities in opportunities between the Black and White population. In spite of the impressive investment efforts of the government to develop education since the end of apartheid, it has proved challenging to expand educational opportunities for all while improving or even maintaining quality across the board. The historically disadvantaged universities and the vocational education colleges, in particular, have suffered from insufficient funding, lack of qualified academics, and dilapidated infrastructure.
Action taken	The main higher education activities financed by the project are as follows: • Master's and doctoral scholarships to train future teachers (with special attention to women) • Technical assistance for the design of new teacher training degrees and certificates • Technical assistance for curriculum development within universities providing teacher training and elaboration of adequate material • Technical assistance to develop the research capacity of universities in the area of teacher education • Infrastructure audits in the TVET sub-sector • Capacity building of DHET for coordination, planning and monitoring purposes

Impact	As the project is still being implemented, it is difficult to assess its impact at the moment. The available information comes from the mid-term evaluation. The fact that the evaluation team found proper alignment between the project's Key Results Areas, the planned outputs and the preliminary results at mid-term shows a high probability of positive outcomes in the medium term. According to the mid-term report, *'... anecdotal evidence suggests that both the TLDCIP (Teaching and Learning Development Capacity Improvement Programme) and TIMIS (TVET Infrastructure Management Information System) sub-programmes have a high likelihood of effecting systemic change relating to the quality and quantity of teachers in the education system'.* The two areas where significant delays were observed are the possibility of new programmes established by participating universities to be recognised by the accrediting body (Council for Higher Education) during the project timeline and the implementation of online education modalities. The mid-term evaluation also found a discrepancy between some of the technical assistance outputs and the actual needs of DHET.
Lessons learned	Using a budget support funding modality allows the project to be integrated into the government's own higher education development programme. Furthermore, reliance on disbursement indicators that are linked to the implementation performance of the various actors can serve as a strong incentive. Although the five-year implementation period seems adequate for this type of intervention, the delays observed with some of the activities indicate that the possibility of a second phase could be considered to ensure that all new programmes supported by the project can bear their fruits. It would, for example, be useful to ascertain the quality of the new teachers trained through the project once they graduate and actually teach. The mid-term evaluation found that project implementation involved many stakeholders, which contributes to a sense of ownership, effective execution, and likelihood of long-term sustainability of project activities. A final lesson coming out of the mid-term evaluation is that project design should have been better informed by an in-depth analysis of country needs. The project responded well to the needs and plans of the South African government, but this was not sufficiently well articulated in the EC project document.

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