

PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID) CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: PIDC12194

Project Name	Higher Education Support Project (P151318)
Region	AFRICA
Country	Mali
Sector(s)	Tertiary education (70%), Vocational training (30%)
Theme(s)	Education for the knowledge economy (80%), Other human development (20%)
Lending Instrument	Investment Project Financing
Project ID	P151318
Borrower(s)	Ministry of Economy and Finance
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Higher Education
Environmental Category	B-Partial Assessment
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Concept Review Decision	Track II - The review did authorize the preparation to continue

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Mali has recovered from the political and security crisis of 2012, but the situation remains challenging. Tenacious insecurity in the north has led to the 2012 rebels attack and seizing of the three main regions of the north, followed by a coup d'état in March 2012 and a de-facto military government in place, which in turn led to the suspension of donors support, and had negative impact on the economy. With the international community support, the country has returned to relative normalcy with a President and a National Assembly democratically elected in 2013. However, the country security situation remains volatile and northern regions remain unsafe (particularly rural areas). While national institutions are in place, there is a need for sustained support to ensure capacity building and strengthening after the shock of the crisis, and the continuous fragile country context.

The poverty level is high, especially in rural areas. While poverty declined in Mali from 55.6

percent in 2001 to 43.6 percent in 2010, it increased to 46.1 percent in 2012, mainly as a combination of the impact of climatic changes and the political crisis; it remains however geographically concentrated, affecting predominantly populations living in rural areas, which account for 78 percent of the population and also displaced populations living in the south. Poverty is more prevalent in rural areas (57.6 percent), where most people continue to derive their livelihood from agriculture. In addition to being vulnerable to exogenous shocks, degradation of soil and climate change are major concerns, since the majority of Malians still depend on their environment for their livelihoods (herding, farming, and fishing). The combination of climate change and degradation of resources has resulted in food insecurity and malnutrition.

The country economic growth relies on few areas. Notwithstanding a sustained growth averaging five percent annually between 2006 and 2011, Mali's gross domestic product (GDP) declined during the crisis, but rebounded to US\$667 in 2013 (back to its 2011 level). Gold plays a critical role in Mali's economy, accounting for six percent of GDP, 70 percent of exports and 15 to 20 percent of government revenue. The rapid increase in mining production and exports coupled with a higher volume of cotton exports and an increased output and productivity in rice production for domestic consumption have been the key determinants of Mali's steady economic growth. The four most important sectors in terms of contribution to GDP are agriculture (21.9 percent); trade – notably in the informal sector (16.6 percent), livestock (9.7 percent) and mining (5.7 percent). These sectors employ roughly 80 percent of the labor force, with skilled workforce coming predominantly from neighboring countries. Agriculture and livestock activities are concentrated mainly in rural areas where most families are vulnerable and poor. The political and security crisis impacted severely the economy with a substantial deterioration of social services, thus increasing the country vulnerability to various shocks (security crisis, climatic, pests, and commodity prices), which are exacerbated by deeply rooted obstacles to growth, including a poor investment climate, deficient infrastructure, and most importantly, inadequate and limited skills which hold back the country economic prospects.

Demographic pressure and the country fragile context call for an urgent need to better prepare Malian youth to take advantage of employment opportunities, improve their productivity and further prepare the workforce to support economic diversification and growth of the modern sector. With a population growth rate estimated at 3.3 percent annually and around 20 percent of the population age 15-24 years (while the population 24 years of age or younger represents 65 percent of the population), more is needed at all education and training levels to provide the required academic, technical and entrepreneurial skills to the 550,000 new entrants that will enter the Mali job market every year from 2030 onwards. Programs aimed at responding to structural deficiencies that thwart Mali's economic diversification strategy, limit its productivity, and perpetuate its vulnerability to climatic changes need to address key constraints such as the lack of infrastructures, the poor investment climate and the limited skills at all levels of young Malians.

The Investment Climate Assessments and Surveys (ICAs) and the World Bank Doing Business Reports conducted in 2010 and earlier highlight major constraints to business development including poor access to finance and land, complex import and export logistics, weak institutional arrangements for private sector development and insufficient skilled labor in sectors with the highest growth and employment rate potential such as agriculture, mining, and construction. In particular, a critical issue is related to low level of qualifications of the workforce in its emerging formal labor market which constraints further potential for growth and diversification by not addressing the needs of existing employers, who complain of difficulties in finding individuals with

the right skills, and hampering the growth of foreign investments and new businesses in the modern sector. There are also multiple challenges in the informal sector related to low workforce productivity. This miss-match was exacerbated by the crisis which led many skilled workers who can compete in the sub-regional market to move out of the country.

It is the recognition of this skills gap that has led the government to conclude that, without an ambitious skills development program that imparts entrepreneurial and labor skills commensurate with the requirements of a dynamic economy, it will not be able to implement an economic diversification strategy, compete in a globalized regional and world economy or escape the vicious cycle of drought, famine, insecurity and population displacement which led to poverty and inequity. The government's 2009 National Policy and Strategy for Higher Education Development, and the 2011 National Policy on Technical and Vocational Training were developed in response to this concern. On this basis, the Government is implementing a World Bank supported operation aimed at improving youth employability through education and training and private-sector led job opportunities, including strengthening public and private secondary TVET institutions in key selected sectors and supporting dual apprenticeships programs and entrepreneurship. A commensurate effort needs to take place at the tertiary education level to complete the skills value-chain necessary for the upgrading of the economy.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

Skills constraints at different levels are largely the product of insufficient quantity, quality and relevance of education and training in Mali. Between 2004 and 2010, Mali has made significant progress in basic education: the Primary Education Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) increased from 72 percent in 2004 to 82 percent in 2010 mainly due to the momentum generated and maintained by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda; access to secondary and tertiary education also increased respectively from 12 to 34 percent, and from 4 to 5 percent during the same period. However, progress was hampered by the impact of the crisis which affected social sectors, including education with a significant decline of enrollment indicators: in particular the primary education GER declined to 69 percent in 2013, while the primary completion rate went down from 58 percent in 2010 to 48 percent in 2013. Equity is also a concern with secondary and tertiary education benefitting largely the upper income quintiles.

Of even more concern are issues related to the low quality and relevance of learning at all levels of the education sector, as illustrated by results of the 2011 national student assessments which showed that less than 20 percent of students completing six grade of primary have the required skills, and the poor labor market outcome indicators of, notably, upper secondary and post-secondary education graduates with unemployment rates close to 60 percent pointing, in combination with the modern sector's employers' complaints on difficulties to find the right skills for many occupations, to lack of relevance to the needs of the formal sector.

All of these issues can be related to a poor teaching and learning environment to a large extent symptomatic of pervasive inefficiencies in the utilization of resources and broader overall governance gaps in the education and training sector. As confirmed by the Report on the Future of Higher Education in Mali, these issues are particularly pronounced in tertiary education, which therefore is not fulfilling its role of provider of high level skills in Mali greatly constraining the potential for economic diversification and growth.

The following provides a brief overview on the tertiary education sector in Mali and highlights

some of its key features:

The Mali tertiary education sector is largely public, articulated around universities and high level teaching institutions, and concentrated in Bamako. In 2011 the young but oversized University of Bamako created in 1995 was dismantled and four new universities were created based on the existing overcrowded faculties: namely, the University of Social Studies and Management (USSGB); the University of Science and Technology (USTTB); the University of Social Studies and Humanities (ULSHB); and the University of Law (USJPB). Overall, the public Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) comprise five universities (the four new universities in Bamako and the University of Segou created in 2010), and four technical institutes and grandes écoles, with a total of approximately 110,000 students in 2012-2013, while the 70 approved private higher education institutions cater to a further 5,000 students. Nine out of the 10 HEIs are located in the capital city accounting for 99 percent of students. The sector's relevance, quality, internal efficiency and equity are constrained by a poor teaching and learning environment (as illustrated by the lack of institutional and curriculum diversification and pedagogical inputs) to a large extent related to systemic and institutional governance gaps.

Lack of institutional, program and degree diversification

Enrollment in public HEIs account for more than 95 percent of total enrollments at the tertiary level, thus becoming a de facto monopoly, and more than two-thirds of students are enrolled in Law and the Humanities. The lack of private options and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills, which are also symptomatic of a poor regulatory and information framework and weak university governance, greatly constrain the supply of skills available to key sectors of the economy. There are also insufficient opportunities of short technical degrees that lead to professionalization. Increasing Science and Technology (S&T) offering and introducing new and better programs and degrees, while fostering higher participation of private higher education institutions, would help HEIs to respond to challenges related to relevance and quality.

Lack of pedagogical inputs and innovation

There is limited emphasis on pedagogical inputs such as books and scientific documentation, information and computer technology (ICT), laboratory equipment and supplies, research activities, staff recruitment and development, and investment in infrastructures. The situation is compounded by uncontrolled admissions which, adding to the high repetition rates during the two first years of schooling, results in overcrowding as there is limited investment on infrastructures.

With the fragmentation of the University of Bamako into four universities, no investment was made to develop new campuses to accommodate the four new HEIs. Private premises were rented in most cases to host the new universities exacerbating the overcrowding of universities, which has led in many cases to low internal efficiency. For example, in the most crowded university such as law, there were 30,000 students enrolled in 2012/2013, and the University of Segou had 846 students with a first year failure rate above 80 percent. In 2013, the government paid CFA650 million (US \$1.4 million) for often inappropriate space rental to deliver lectures to students.

Accounting for all teachers including secondary teachers (which account for more than 50 percent of tertiary education teachers), the teacher-students ratio stood at 1:160 in 2012/2013. A better allocation of resources and enhanced institutional diversification (see below) would enable HEIs to reduce the teacher-students ratio to reasonable levels and acquire pedagogical inputs so as to increase internal and external efficiency and improve Mali public financing of higher education.

There also continues to be no comprehensive staff development plan to meet the present and future teaching load and quality requirements. There are few trained PhD graduates who benefitted from uncompetitive distributed bilateral scholarships, but attempts to create graduate programs at the former University of Bamako have been frustrated by the lack of a critical mass of qualified faculty to run graduate programs, as well as the absence of an atmosphere conducive to research. This is compounded by capacity and information gaps at the system level. Training faculty and post-graduate students to become qualified teachers while building partnerships with international HEIs such as those participating in the African center of excellence would support introduction of greater innovation and enhance pedagogical inputs.

Systemic and institutional governance gaps

The lack of pedagogical inputs is indicative of poor resource utilization. Indeed, the bulk of the budget is allocated to students' welfare and extra teaching hours at the expense of pedagogical inputs. This is due, in part, to a scholarship system that absorbs the largest share of the sub-sector budget. The scholarship budget accounted for 56 percent (CFA18.5 billion, equivalent to US\$40 million) of the total higher education budget in 2013 and has been increasing at an unsustainable rate (10 percent annually) due to the rapid growth of high school graduates that are admitted automatically to the university and granted a scholarship (independently of income), and the lack of a management system to effectively monitor enrolments and scholarship provision. In addition, supplement paid for additional teaching hours accounted for more than CFA2 billion (US\$4.2 million) in 2013. The admission and scholarship policies increase the lack of accountability of faculties and HEIs leading to poor management, which impact severely on the quality of learning, thus leading to unemployment of graduates. Improving the financing structure would allow HEIs to increase budget for pedagogical inputs and innovations.

Additionally and related to the above, there are no performance standards for higher education institutions, limited institutional autonomy and no accountability for results (management gaps). University rectors and institutes directors are appointed by the government, they report to the Minister of Higher Education instead of the Board of the university/institutes, members of the latter are civil servants appointed by the government. Deans are elected by teachers, thus university rectors have limited power for deans to cater to the university interests. All important issues are dealt with at the government level as the university and the institutes cannot make business, investment and personnel decisions such as hiring, firing, determining compensation, conducting consequential evaluation of performance, etc. Therefore, HEIs are part of the civil service administration and run as normal departments of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). Recruitment of teaching staff is organized by the Civil Service Ministry and the definition of academic schedule and student's admissions criterion are defined by the MoHE without taking into account availability of teaching staff and budget limits. This situation has resulted in recurrent and long lasting teachers and students strikes, reducing substantially the academic year and affecting negatively learning outcomes. Increasing institutional autonomy while increasing accountability would enable HEIs to professionalize their management and look for alternatives to increase internal collection of revenues (including, for example, by introducing student fees).

Finally, the higher education sector system suffers from the lack of a comprehensive regulatory and financing framework to support the development of private higher education institutions and university-industry linkages. Despite the existence of an accreditation system for private HEIs, there is no incentive or regulation in place to allow private HEIs to access land or financing facilities

(private or public). Improving incentives for the participation of private HEIs would help Mali diversify its programs.

Government Efforts to Reform Higher Education:

To address these issues, the 2014 Forum on the future of higher education (supported by ECOWAS), beyond discussing the situation prevailing in the education system, also strived to forge a consensus on the necessary reforms. Participants in both this and the 2008 National Forum on Education (NFE) recognized the negative impact that institutionalized, recurrent and de facto predictable strikes and poor governance have on the quality of education. These two meetings concluded that systemic changes were needed to: (i) improve quality and increase the internal efficiency and relevance of higher education; (ii) move away from the ritual of annual strikes, followed by lengthy negotiations and the signing of protocol agreements which contain financial obligations the government cannot fulfill; (iii) put in place a financing system that is compatible with public finances parameters and serves as leverage to enable the expansion and performance of the higher education system; and (iv) introduce a regulatory framework that attracts investment in higher education by the private sector. The government has prepared, as a follow up to the NFE recommendations, a national policy on higher education and scientific research approved in 2010 that incorporates these principles but stills needs to be translated into an Action Plan for implementation.

Other Partners and World Bank Group Projects:

In 2011, the Government of Mali requested support from the World Bank to assess higher education institutions and develop a program to reform the sub-sector. A project was developed and was at its appraisal stage when the coup d'état occurred in March 2012 and a de-facto government was put in place which led to the suspension of aid as well as project preparation. Within the process of project preparation, a study on HEIs governance was conducted, which concluded that the sub-sector and its institutions needed more autonomy and greater accountability to efficiently use allocated resources, and to expand resources mobilization through adequate responses to emerging needs. To support the government in developing a response, a legal framework and regulatory tools were developed and discussed among stakeholders, but it remains to be approved.

The Netherlands are in the process of developing a five-year project (in the amount of Euro 3 million, for the period 2014-2018), aimed at improving HEIs governance, and diversifying in-service training opportunities, through the Netherlands Postsecondary Education Capacity Building Project (NICHE Project). The NICHE project will focus on eight public HEIs providing support to governance and management with an emphasis on gender, in-service training programs, and creation of enterprises. The project is expected to begin in October 2014.

The Canadian Cooperation, through The University of Laval, is in the process of designing a non-solicited project aimed at improving resilience to food shortage. It is expected to have a component focusing on improving relevance of programs in agriculture at the IPR of Katibougou along with four other TVET institutions. The process is at its inception stage. AfDB and UNESCO have been partnering with ECOWAS and UQAM to support universities in participating countries, including Mali to develop new programs in selected areas and develop eLearning system to provide quality learning and tools for greater access to tertiary education.

In this overall sector and strategic context, the proposed Higher Education Project will support the development of high and intermediate level skilled workers needed to complete some critical value-

chains in agriculture, livestock, and mining and auxiliary services, therefore enhancing the potential of the Mali economy for diversification. The project will complement and strengthen IDA national and regional projects in agriculture, livestock including pastoralism in the Sahel, mining, skills development, electricity and communication, by supporting high level training programs in agribusiness and livestock, construction, communication, and engineering. Relevant IDA-funded projects (ongoing or under preparation) include: the Programme de Compétitivité et de Diversification Agricole (PCDA), the Projet d'Accroissement de la Productivité Agricole (PAPAM); the Projet d'Electrification Domestique et Accès aux Services Sociaux de Base (PEDASB), the Sahel Regional Telecommunications Project (WARSHIP), and the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project. In addition, the proposed IDA Higher Education Support Project will complement the Skills Development and Youth Employment Project which focuses on supporting education and training programs for youth employability and private sector led job opportunities in Mali targeting basic and intermediate skills in economic sectors such as fruits and vegetables, animal products (meat, milk, and skin products), construction, mining and auxiliary services, artisanal programs and ICT.

The proposed higher education support operation will take stock on the ongoing African higher education center of excellence project to build synergies and foster more collaboration in key areas identified by Malian HEIs such as teachers training, curriculum design and implementation, research, etc.

Relationship to CAS

The Mali Interim Strategy Note (ISN) approved in May 2013 focuses on: (i) laying the foundations for long-term accountability and stability; (ii) protecting human capital and building resilience; and (iii) preparing the conditions for economic recovery which would require investing on private sector-led growth by addressing key constraints, while tackling governance issues for efficient use of public resources, and developing the capacity to upgrade managerial and technical skills toward a more competitive economy. The ISN focus is in line with the Bank's twin goals of promoting shared prosperity and reducing extreme poverty.

The Project is expected to contribute to achieving transformational growth through economic diversification by increasing the ability of the tertiary education sector to provide relevant, high-quality graduates, especially in science, technology, and engineering disciplines through an improved learning environment, and thus address the issue of insufficient skilled labor that limits opportunities in areas such as mining, agro-industry and livestock, and high value-added service sectors such as ICT that require high level of education, as well as reduce the country isolation through business collaboration with foreign firms potentially interested in investing in Mali.

The project will also contribute to narrowing inequalities and the gender gap in tertiary education, thus further contributing to the reduction of extreme poverty and enhancing better shared prosperity in Mali.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)

The development objective of the proposed Mali Higher Education Support Project (HESD) is to improve the relevance of selected higher education programs and the stewardship of the higher education system in Mali.

Key Results (From PCN)

The Key Results indicators will be selected from among the following:

Relevance and quality:

- Increase in the number of students enrolled in upgraded programs related to selected key sectors, by gender and region;
- Increase in the number of upgraded programs related to selected key sectors which are operational; and
- Increase in the percentage of qualified teachers in the new upgraded areas

Quality and governance:

- Decrease in the proportion of students repeating the year, by gender

Governance and Stewardship:

- Increase in the percentage of the budget allocated to pedagogical inputs;
- Increase in the amount of cash generated internally by each institution supported under Component 1;
- Number of institutional development plans approved for participating HEIs;
- Number of Governance bodies operational in participating HEIs;
- Number of operational resources management systems (including tools) in place in participating HEIs with two Institutional Monitoring and Information System Reports (IMIS) produced during the project life time.

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

The project will focus on improving training in three sectors that are key contributors to the country economic growth - Agriculture, livestock, and mining, by supporting related programs in selected institutions, while also supporting some broader improvements in the stewardship of the higher education system. Under the institutional support, to be comprehensive while targeting selected programs, the project would support both at programs level and at institutional levels activities aimed at rapidly improving the teaching and learning environment, while tackling longer-term governance challenges:

- (i) Improving quality and relevance of the teaching-learning process with the introduction of pedagogical inputs and innovations, and updated programs and curriculum;
- (ii) Improving management which will enhance internal and external efficiency, and provide more equitable access to higher education; and
- (iii) Increasing system and institutional financing (or budgetary) efficiency through disbursement linked indicators funds to catalyze innovation.

The project would have three main components: (i) Support to selected programs in public HEIs; (ii) System institutional development and private HEIs support; and (iii) Project management and Technical Assistance. Component 1 will be financed using Development Linked Indicators (DLIs), while Components 2 and 3 will be financed using regular investments instrument.

Component 1: Support to selected programs in public HEIs (Estimated amount: US\$20 million). This component would improve the governance, quality and relevance of selected programs targeted to agriculture and livestock and mining and related fields by supporting key indicators of the HEIs'

development plans related to teaching and learning and governance. The component is also expected to generate broader positive impacts on the governance of the higher education system.

Possible participating HEIs are selected based on the availability of programs in targeted economic sectors; they are the University of Science and Technology of Bamako (USTB), The National School of Engineering of Bamako (ENI), The University of Segou (US) and The Institute Polytechnic Rural of Katibougou (IPR). Final HEIs to be directly supported will have to demonstrate willingness to reform through the following actions to be completed before the finalization of project preparation: (i) setting-up a functional Conseil d'administration with one third of members from non-public institutions (private sector, diaspora, etc.); (ii) setting-up a functional Conseil de perfectionnement with effective participation of private businesses representatives to review programs and content; (iii) development and adoption of implementation manual and management tools and schedule for audits; and (iv) finalization of the institutional strategic plan with clear objectives and annual targets which will be used as DLIs. The Project Preparation Advance (PPA) will provide support for addressing these criteria, and each HEI which has completed these minimum requirements will be eligible for further support.

This component will help participating HEIs implement their institutional development plans which were drafted during the stopped project preparation in 2011-2012. Implementation of HEIs medium-term development plans to be finalized will further raise the quality and relevance of HEIs and foster the emergence of a diversified and dynamic higher education landscape. It will create conditions for: (i) HEIs to begin generating their own resources, and (ii) government to develop capacity to regulate the sector including accreditation and monitoring of accredited institutions. Beyond immediate improvements in the teaching and learning environment, support provided to specific programs through HEIs will serve as a cornerstone for the introduction of a number of organizational innovations and new forms of governance that include but are not limited to institutional autonomy, accountability for results and academic excellence, budget preparation determined by the academic missions of the HEIs (results-based budgeting), and increased internal cash generation by the institution. The component would be divided into four sub-components articulated around the support to each individual institution.

Sub-Component 1: Support to the Institute Polytechnic Rural of Katibougou (IPRK): IPRK was created in 1902 first as a school which would train technicians in agriculture. In 1952, IPRK became a sub-regional school, when in 1995 it was transformed into a Training and Research Institute in agriculture. The Institute has around 1,400 students from Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Comoros Island, Congo Republic, la Democratic Republic of Congo, la Côte d'Ivoire, le Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Chad, and Togo. The project would support the institution's objectives by disbursing according to selected indicators in the strategic plan (DLIs) related to programs targeted to agriculture and livestock. Examples of target indicators would be linked to proposed PDO indicators mentioned above and specified at the institutional level. Also, the project would provide support for the rehabilitation of existing infrastructures to improve the learning conditions.

Sub-Component 2: Support to the University of Segou (US): established in 2010, the US is the only public university outside of Bamako. Located at Segou near the office du Niger-the institution that manages lands and investment in the Niger delta which has a potential of more than 1 million km² of exploitable land, the University of Segou is in a region also known to have a substantial livestock. The project would support the institution's objectives by disbursing according to selected

indicators in the strategic plan in relation to agriculture and livestock relevant programs. Civil works (new construction) may further be financed within the existing fenced facilities to improve the working environment of the university.

Sub-Component 3: Support to the University of Science and Technology (USTB): the University of S&T has four faculties: the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Pharmacy, the Faculty of Science and Technology, and the Institute of Applied Science. The project would support the Faculty of Science and Technology and the Institute of Applied Science; the two first faculties mentioned have already many partnership and collaboration activities with international institutions and universities. The project would support the institution's objectives by disbursing according to selected indicators in the strategic plan in relation with science and technology programs for the three sectors. Indicators would cover activities such as upgrading of programs (including content, teaching methodology, new programs relevant to the economy, and equipment to be provided only in facilities owned by the university (not in rented facilities)), and teachers' training programs including visiting missions, as well as improved management and governance system.

Sub-Component 4: Support to the National School of Engineering (ENI): established in 1939 as a regional school for training technicians, the ENI became in 1969 the National school of Engineering with nearly 700 students in two main areas: Engineering and High level technicians. The school offers STEM programs in energy, water management, environment, civil works, mining, and industry. The project would support the institution's objectives by disbursing according to selected indicators in the strategic plan in relation to science and technology for the three key sectors. Selected DLIs to be monitored would cover upgrading of programs (including content, teaching methodology, new programs relevant to the economy, and equipment), and teachers training programs including visiting missions, as well as improved management and governance system.

Component 2: System, Institutional, and Private HEIs Support (Estimated amount: US\$7 million). This component would improve the stewardship of the higher education system by financing the introduction of management information systems and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Higher Education in management, data collection and analysis, and monitoring and evaluation. Investments in a system-wide ICT network to support teaching, learning and research, including libraries, as well as improved management will include the provision of high-quality connectivity to research and higher education institutions, the implementation of a digital library system to enable the higher education community to gain access to science and research databases and e-learning resources for teachers and students to enhance the efficiency and quality of classroom teaching and learning, and give students and teachers access to network-based electronic resources. An essential element will be the development of capacity to manage the system and provide quality services and train the university community to make the best use of the resources. The component will also support the development and implementation of a strong communication plan to be carried out from the inception of the project to generate support for reforms.

In addition, Component 2 will finance innovative ways of developing and expanding private HEIs through IDA-IFC collaboration to explore alternatives with local Banks. A study on the factors which constraint private HEIs development will be conducted and will provide the basis for the support to be provided. The study will: (i) identify the key constraint for expansion of private higher education in Mali; (ii) examine the importance and constraints for increased commercial lending to private institutions to expand capacity and quality, (iii) identify options for PPPs, including a private investment/guarantee fund for private higher education and could include a PPP element for "land-

grant/leasing” for new private institutions outside of Bamako; and (iv) develop models for joint IDA-IFC-Government (guarantee) fund for expansion of private higher education and identify any needed improvements to the regulatory framework.

Component 3: Project Management and Technical Assistance (Estimated amount: US\$3 million). This Component will fund project management activities and operating costs, technical assistance (TA) required as well as studies and other analytical work needed. In alignment with component 1, the component will finance exchange programs with internationally-renown institutions of higher learning, and innovations that bring about better learning outcome, academic excellence and responsiveness to market demand. There will be an allocation for TA to help academic institutions prepare strategic plans and the ministry conduct studies such as labor market information to help the ministry and institutions make the right decisions on the relevant programs. The TA sub-component will finance provision of higher education services to the institutions supported in Component 1 from 19 Africa Centers of Excellence in West and Central Africa. These Centers of Excellences within Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, Health and Agriculture sciences are supported by a Bank-supported regional project. Malian institutions would define their needs and competitively purchase support packages that could include short-term specialized training, longer term faculty development, visiting faculty, and curriculum development. This would build upon a similar arrangement in place for Gambian institutions. The project team would explore if the national IDA funding could be leveraged with regional IDA given the regional objective of collaboration in higher education.

IV. Safeguard Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No	TBD
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	x		
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		x	
Forests OP/BP 4.36		x	
Pest Management OP 4.09		x	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		x	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		x	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12	x		
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x	

V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	30.00	Total Bank Financing:	30.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		
Financing Source			Amount
BORROWER/RECIPIENT			0.00
International Development Association (IDA)			30.00
Total			30.00

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