

## 1. Categories for Funding

Proposals presented by TEIs should adhere to one or more of the following categories:

1. Increase the institutional capacity for self assessment and/or strategic planning
2. Organize and develop institutional self assessment processes leading to the identification of the main aspects that should be taken into consideration in a strategic planning exercise
3. Develop a strategic planning exercise based on the outcomes of a self assessment process
4. Address the main weaknesses or areas for development identified through the self assessment or strategic planning processes
5. Implement the main strategies or actions designed to achieve the institution's goals established through the strategic planning processes.

The contents in each category should be derived from the 'Self Assessment and Strategic Planning Guidelines' developed for this program. (found at AQAC and TEP websites under CINDA guidelines)

As may be inferred, these categories follow a certain sequence: Category 1 is intended to help institutions develop conditions that will make it possible for them to carry out self assessment exercises or be involved in a strategic planning process. Categories 2 and 3 are meant to support the actual development of these processes within TEIs; in order to apply for these categories, institutions should have in place some of the basic conditions mentioned in the guidelines for carrying out viable self assessment exercises or strategic planning processes.

Categories 4 and 5 are reserved for those institutions which have already carried out either self assessment or strategic planning processes, and they must provide evidence of their outcomes and the way in which they underlie the project.

Institutions may submit proposals that cover more than one category; but they must explain clearly the way in which these categories are linked and their ability to carry out the processes involved.

## 2. Guidelines for Each Category

*Category 1:*

*Projects to increase the institutional capacity for self assessment and/or strategic planning*

### **Objectives:**

To put in place within the TEI the necessary conditions for self assessment or strategic planning. Issues that may be addressed under this heading are the following:

- Training of academic or administrative staff in order to enable them to organize the self assessment or strategic planning process (workshops, study visits, technical seminars, short courses, other similar strategies)
- Development or adaptation of management information systems within the institution, including the necessary equipment to make them operate effectively
- Strengthening of the quality assurance unit
- Development of an institutional research capacity within the institution
- Consultancy or technical assistance for the planning of the self assessment or strategic planning exercise

**Performance indicators:**

The project must translate its objectives into concrete indicators. These indicators must reflect the commitment of the institution with the objectives and actions of the project and be able to show in a concrete and effective way how these objectives have been achieved. Examples of useful indicators are the number and qualifications of people trained, linked to their position in the self assessment or strategic planning exercise; a description of the reports the information system is able to supply, at the different managerial levels of the institution; a description of the equipment bought through the project and a report of its effectiveness; reports providing evidence of effective assistance provided to the institution and enabling it to carry out successful self assessment or strategic planning processes.

**Eligibility of projects:**

It is *highly recommended* that projects under this category are presented jointly by two or more institutions.

*Category 2:*

*Projects to organize and develop institutional self assessment processes leading to the identification of the main aspects that should be taken into consideration in a strategic planning exercise*

**Objectives:**

To organize and develop institutional self assessment processes which can contribute to the identification of those aspects essential for a strategic planning exercise.

Issues that may be addressed under this heading are the following:

- Information gathering and processing, including primary analysis of institutional data; development, application and processing of questionnaires or surveys on internal (academic and administrative staff, leaders, students) or external (graduates, employers, government officials) opinions; studies of external conditions that may affect the performance of the institution (external regulations, political or economic conditions at the country or local level); analysis of disciplinary development in significant areas for the programmes offered by the institution.
- Construction of indicators associated to quality factors
- Institutional SWOT analysis

- Organization of workshops with internal or external stakeholders, for the analysis of information, the discussion and development of consensus on the outcomes of self assessment.
- Consultancy or technical assistance for the actual organization and implementation of the self assessment exercise.

**Performance indicators:**

The project must translate its objectives into concrete indicators. These indicators must reflect the commitment of the institution with the objectives and actions of the project and be able to show in a concrete and effective way how these objectives have been achieved. Examples of useful indicators for issues such as the ones identified above are reports from the information system; availability of indicators associated to quality factors; the actual instruments for the surveys, and the processed results of their application; reports of studies undertaken under the project; reports of SWOT analysis. Number of workshops or meetings organized, number of participants, percentage of academic and administrative staff having taken part in those meetings. Consultancy reports, processes in place as the result of the consultancy or technical assistance.

**Eligibility of projects:**

Projects under this category must show that the basic conditions for self assessment are in place; if this is not the case, it may be necessary to combine it with activities which belong in the previous category.

*Category 3:*

*Develop a strategic planning exercise based on the outcomes of a self assessment process*

**Objectives:**

To organize and develop strategic planning processes based on the outcomes of an institutional self assessment.

Issues that may be addressed under this heading are the following:

- Training of academic and administrative staff on the basic aspects of strategic planning: SWOT analysis, development of cost estimates, scenario analysis, analysis of resource availability and process optimization.
- Analysis of the outcomes of institutional self assessment from the point of view of the identification of quality factors and their relationship; operationalisation of the defined vision for the institution in order to organize strategic planning;
- First approximation to strategic planning at the institutional level: for the main aspects to be included in the exercise, translation of the results of the self assessment into a baseline, expected state and the identification of tentative strategies.
- Other approximations to strategic planning at other levels of the institution (faculty, department, school, service units)
- Organization of workshops or technical meetings bringing together institutional leaders and representatives of academic, administrative or service units, in order better to organize the strategic planning exercise.
- Development of cost estimates and scenario analysis.

- Consultancy or technical assistance for the actual organization and implementation of the strategic planning exercise.

**Performance indicators:**

The project must translate its objectives into concrete indicators. These indicators must reflect the commitment of the institution with the objectives and actions of the project and be able to show in a concrete and effective way how these objectives have been achieved. Examples of useful indicators for issues such as the ones identified above are number of trained staff and links to actual positions in the strategic planning exercise; reports on the first and following approximations to SP, at different institutional levels; number and percentage of participants in the different aspects of the exercise; reports on tentative strategies; number of workshops or meetings organized, number of participants, percentage of academic and administrative staff having taken part in those meetings. Consultancy reports, processes in place as the result of the consultancy or technical assistance.

**Eligibility of projects:**

Projects under this category must be linked to self assessment. It is possible to present complementary projects, dealing first with self assessment and then with strategic planning.

*Category 4:*

*Address the main weaknesses or areas for development identified through the self assessment or strategic planning processes*

*&*

*Category 5:*

*Implement the main strategies or actions designed to achieve the institution's goals established through the strategic planning processes.*

**Objectives:**

These projects are available only to those TEIs that have completed self assessment and/or strategic planning exercises, and are intended to help them implement the improvement plans resulting from these processes. Issues that may be addressed under this heading must be registered in the corresponding improvement plan, or established as significant strategies in the institutional strategic plan. Examples of possible issues:

- Improvement of human resources, including academic and administrative staff. Actions here may refer to the provision of opportunities for graduate studies in country or abroad, hiring of specialized staff in specific areas of importance to the institution, training courses for curricular or pedagogical development, etc.
- Curricular development, including studies for the development of new curricula, training of academic staff for the implementation of new curricular models, development of course materials, etc.
- Implementation of different strategies to overcome the identified shortcomings of the institution, such as new ways to organize the academic staff, introduction of new teaching modes, combining on line and face to face teaching, other.

- Teaching equipment, to increase the use of IT in teaching, to develop on line courses or sections of courses, including training for teachers.
- Other equipment, such as laboratory equipment, library resources, etc.

**Performance indicators:**

The project must translate its objectives into concrete indicators. These indicators must reflect the commitment of the institution with the objectives and actions of the project and be able to show in a concrete and effective way how these objectives have been achieved.

**Eligibility of projects:**

Projects under this category must show that they are the outcome of self assessment and/or strategic planning exercises. As such, they have to consider the opinion of external reviewers or institutional leaders related to the strategic planning process.

**3. General Eligibility of the Projects**

All universities and technical & university colleges in the West Bank and Gaza which are licensed and accredited by MOEHE are eligible to present project proposals, but only the proposals that meet the conditions stated below are eligible to receive funds.

Projects must be presented within the general framework of institutional development plans, which must include (i) an institutional mission statement; (ii) a management improvement plan; (iii) enrolment and staffing projections; and (iv) statements of past and projections of future financial performance.

Projects may be presented by one institution on its own, or by a group of institutions. Joint projects are encouraged when dealing with issues where economies of scale are present (such as training processes, the development of information systems, the hiring of foreign consultants), where joint efforts provide better opportunities for success or where the development of collaborative practices among TEIs is one of the expected outcomes. **Furthermore, partnership between colleges is a must for accepting proposals where the minimum number of partners should be between 2-5 colleges.**

In addition, institutions must fulfill the following conditions:

- Have a focal point in the form of a **Quality Assurance Unit** for both internal coordination and external liaison relative to quality assessment and improvement activities, including institutional and program accreditation. They must also show explicit commitment to the implementation of quality assurance policies and mechanisms within the institution.
- Have in place the necessary mechanisms to provide MEHE with basic academic information regarding their programs and activities, and to monitor the implementation of the proposed project.
- Have in place or be willing to establish (through the project or other initiatives) adequate self assessment and strategic planning mechanisms.
- Appoint the Directors of the projects and their deputies.

- In the case of joint projects, appoint an Executive Committee who will be responsible for the inter-institutional decisions on the main implementation policies and the use of the funds allocated to the project.
- It is highly recommended that institutions appoint an advisory board with members external to the institution, to provide technical support and global orientations on the issues covered by the project.
- Assure the effective operation of an Institutional Coordination Unit, charged with the administration of the project(s), the timely and adequate coordination between the institution(s) and MEHE, and the implementation of administrative procedures for procurement, financial statements, monitoring and evaluation of progress and achievements of the project(s) and contribute to the adequate follow up of the projects by the MEHE.
- Provide in their institutional websites an updated report on the progress of the project(s), in order to ensure appropriate transparency and follow up.

#### **4. Contents of the Proposals**

Project proposals must include the following information:

1. Formal acceptance of the terms of reference and conditions for the application (1/2 page)
2. Narrative summary of the project, which translates the logical framework matrix into a text. Sections in this text should consider at least: (1 page)
  - Identification of the Director of the project and his/her deputy, the institutional coordinating unit (quality unit) and the advisory board when appropriate.
  - An explanation of the goals, purposes and outputs, indicating the rationale that links them and the underlying hypotheses. This provides the justification for the project.
  - A description of the objectively verifiable indicators that will be used, and the sources or means of verification for the indicators. A word of caution here: Indicators stated in the matrix have to be achieved if the project is to be considered satisfactory. It is important to be realistic, and work towards a definition of useful and viable indicators, that effectively point towards the achievement of the respective goal, purpose or output. The means of verification must also be clear, so that indicators are readily available once the project has been completed.
  - An analysis of the external factors that may put the success of the project at risk. This means taking into account the external factors that may affect the satisfactory completion of the project, and also the assumptions or the measures that the design team envisions to counteract them.
3. A description of the activities of the project. These should include the methodology that will be followed, the inputs required for the effective implementation of the project and the required resources. (2 pages)
4. Work plan, specifying intermediate goals and timetable of the project, including the logical framework matrix. (max. 10 pages)
5. A detailed budget for the project, clearly identifying institutional counterpart funds, project funding and, when necessary, other sources of funding. (2 pages)
6. A description of the management and coordination units of the project, stating the respective obligations and responsibilities of the different parties. In the case of joint

projects, this description extends to all partners, as well as the project coordinator. (1 page)

7. Evidence of any quality assurance processes undergone by the participating institution(s) and of the outcome of other projects funded under this program. (1 page)

8. Information on the sustainability of the project outcomes. (1 page)

*Project funds may not be used for:*

- Construction or renovation of buildings
- Paying persons concurrently paid by the government
- Contributing to the endowment or general fund of a tertiary institution
- Student financial aid

## **5. Duration of Projects and Available Funds**

Duration of projects

Category 1 : 6 months

Category 2: 6 months

**Category 1& 2 together: 9 months**

Category 3: 12 months

**Category 1&2&3: 18 months**

**Category 4&5: 6 months**

**Categories 1&2&3&4&5: 18 months**

Distribution of Funds:

Each category could receive funds ranging from **20,000 – 30,000** USD

*However,*

- ❖ Each proposal will be evaluated individually to determine the allocated amount for the requested category/s based on the institutions needs, type and size.
- ❖ Requested budgets by TEI are subject to negotiations with AQAC and PCU
- ❖ Colleges must form partnerships with other colleges otherwise their proposals will be rejected.

## 6. Mechanism Of Processing Proposals

- ❖ AQAC will begin accepting proposals from **15/1/2008**
- ❖ The deadline for receiving proposals is **28/2/2008**
- ❖ Received Proposals will be reviewed and assessed by AQAC, PCU<sup>1</sup> and PC<sup>2</sup> based on the 'Self Assessment and strategic Planning Guidelines'/ CINDA.
- ❖ Subsequent recommendations will be finalised by **9/3/2008** and will be sent to AQAC Board
- ❖ The AQAC Board will meet on **23/3/2008** to make decisions on successful proposals based on AQAC, PCU and PC recommendations. Any proposals that require minor modifications will be returned to the concerned TEI<sup>3</sup> through AQAC to apply these modifications within a week.
- ❖ All decisions will be delivered officially to applying institutions by **31/3/2008** and Letters of Award will be sent to successful institutions.
- ❖ Successful TEI will be notified that the project launch should occur within the **first half of April 2008** at most.

## 7. Evaluation criteria

The main criteria for evaluating proposals will focus on the expected *benefits* of the projects, and their *viability*, based on the variables described below.

*Benefits* will be assessed based on the pertinent variables from the following list:

- ❖ Verifiable links of the project with policy guidelines of the MEHE
- ❖ Improvement of the institution's ability to carry out effective self assessment in order to start strategic planning processes.
- ❖ Improvement of the institution's ability to develop effective strategic plans to improve their quality and relevance within the Palestinian and regional context
- ❖ Effective and efficient implementation of improvement plans derived from self assessment processes
- ❖ Effective and efficient implementation of the strategies and actions identified through strategic planning processes
- ❖ Implementation of institutional conditions necessary for the adequate implementation of self assessment and/or strategic planning processes
- ❖ Improvement of the management capacity of institutions
- ❖ Consistency of the objectives, activities and outcomes of the project with institutional, national and regional development priorities, and the public interest
- ❖ Improvement of academic indicators of effectiveness and efficiency, such as rates of retention, graduation, time to completion of the course of study.
- ❖ Introduction and/or promotion of collaborative practices among tertiary education institutions in Palestine
- ❖ Replicability of the project in other TEIs

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<sup>1</sup> Project Coordinating Unit at MEHE

<sup>2</sup> Planning Committee at MEHE

<sup>3</sup> Tertiary Education Institution

- ❖ Establishment of opportunities for coordination, integration or articulation both inside the TEI and with other institutions in the country or abroad.

*Viability* will be assessed on the basis of the pertinent variables in the following list:

- ❖ Verifiable links of the project with the institution's mission and goals
- ❖ Consistency of the project with program accreditation results and/or institutional self assessment outcomes
- ❖ Clarity and adequate definition of objectives
- ❖ Consistency between the project objectives and the proposed strategies, actions and use of resources
- ❖ Consistency between the project and the existing resources in the institution
- ❖ Quality and effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms for the progress of the project
- ❖ Future sustainability of the project
- ❖ Adequacy and quality of the proposed outcomes indicators

Project proposals will be assessed against these criteria. The AQAC Board will review each proposal, and if necessary, will propose amendments to the proposals in order to improve them. In the case of proposals that do not meet these criteria, they will be considered "pre-proposals" and will be assigned specialized support in order to develop them to an acceptable level, and thus be eligible for funding.