

**MOZAMBIQUE:**  
**Quality Enhancement**  
**And Innovation Facility**  
**(QIF)**

The Government of Mozambique and the World Bank have agreed a credit to finance a Higher Education Project to assist in the implementation of a ten-year national Strategic Plan for Higher Education (PEES), which was approved by the Council of Ministers in August 2000, with a detailed Operational Plan approved by the Council of Ministers in July 2001. The goal of the Strategic Plan is to achieve a diversified, flexible, integrated and cost-effective higher education system which will contribute to the socio-economic development of the country by training high level human resources with appropriate, relevant and flexible skills and knowledge, able to respond to changing social and labor market needs.

The objectives of the Higher Education Project, in line with national development objectives and the national Strategic Plan for Higher Education, are to:

- (i) enhance internal efficiency and expand the output of graduates
- (ii) improve equity of access by increasing participation in higher education by under-represented groups (gender, location and socio-economic)
- (iii) improve the quality of the teaching-learning process and the relevance of the curriculum.

To achieve these objectives the Higher Education Project (HEP) has three main components:

1. System-wide Reform and Development
2. Institutional Development and Investment
3. A Scholarship Program, administered on a pilot basis in three provinces (Tete, Gaza and Cabo Delgado).

The second component of HEP (institutional development and investment) includes investments in five sub-components:

- (a) Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM)
- (b) Pedagogical University (UP)
- (c) Higher Institute for International Relations (ISRI)
- (d) Mozambique Distance Learning Network (MDLN)
- (e) Quality Enhancement and Innovation Facility (QIF).

## What is the Quality and Innovation Facility (QIF)?

The Quality Enhancement and Innovation Facility (QIF) is a fund, managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), to provide financial support for investments in capacity building and innovation in higher education, designed to enhance quality and relevance of teaching and research, improve efficiency of management and administration, and create more flexible and responsive programs and courses. QIF provide three kinds of award:

**(i) Institutional Awards**, in the form of grants or repayable loans to selected higher education institutions (HEIs) and support improvements in quality and efficiency of teaching and management of resources and innovations in the design and delivery of academic programs and courses;

**(ii) Academic Staff Awards** provide grants to groups of academic staff from HEIs (including collaborative teams involving more than one HEI) to enable them to invest in development of new skills, teaching methods or learning materials, design and introduction of innovations and improvements in curriculum, delivery of courses and academic support of students;

**(iii) Research Awards** provide grants to support basic or applied research and to develop linkages or other forms of collaboration with Mozambican industry and the productive sector, other national or international research and higher education institutions.

## Objectives of QIF

The purpose of QIF is to support investments for quality enhancement, capacity building and innovations designed to (i) improve *internal efficiency* of HEIs through improvements in administration and management of resources, design and delivery of academic programs, increased graduation rates and reductions in drop-out and repetition; (ii) increase the *quality and relevance* of teaching and research through design and development of new types of academic program and curricula (including new degree programs, short courses in priority subjects, preparatory or 'bridging' programs), improved teaching methods and learning materials, and research projects (particularly basic or applied research with a strong development focus); (iii) improve *linkages* between teaching and research in higher education, the labor market and the productive sector, to improve the skills and flexibility of graduates and respond to new and emerging needs; and (iv) increase *equity* (regional, social and gender) by expanding opportunities for under-represented groups and geographical regions.

## Activities that can be supported by QIF awards

Since the purpose of the QIF is to stimulate and support capacity building and innovations proposed by HEIs and groups of academic or research staff, it will be both competitive and demand-driven. QIF awards could support:

- Postgraduate education or and specialized training of academic, research or administrative staff (through Staff Fellowships for Master's and Ph.D. programs in the region or overseas, and postgraduate education by distance education); awards for Staff Fellowships are made only as Institutional Awards , and not as individual Academic Staff Awards (i.e. proposals for Staff Fellowships must be submitted by HEIs, rather than by individual academic or research staff);
- Short upgrading programs, workshops, training in new teaching methods;
- Technical assistance (consultant services, short advisory visits by international experts or academics);
- Feasibility studies for design and adoption of new curricula, programs, teaching methods etc.
- Equipment, computers, laboratories etc.
- Design, development and procurement of learning materials (including translation and adaptation of existing textbooks or commissioning new materials);
- Study tours (including short visits in the region or further a field) to investigate possible models for new courses or programs, new teaching methods etc.
- Academic or research links with other HEIs in the region or abroad (including exchange visits, joint research projects etc.) and links with the productive sector (exchange or sharing of staff, facilities, joint research etc.) to improve relevance of programs and responsiveness to labor market needs;
- Links with secondary schools (summer schools, bridging courses etc.) and provincial education authorities to improve access for disadvantaged groups and relevance of programs to social needs;
- Minor civil works (rehabilitation of facilities, e.g. laboratories etc.).

### **The overall size of the QIF Fund**

The total size of the QIF Fund, during the life of the Project, is expected to be around US\$ 5 million. The former Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MESCT) and the World Bank estimate that the total will be distributed as follows:

(i)	QIF Institutional Awards	US\$ 3 million
(ii)	QIF Academic Staff Awards	US\$ 0.5 million
(iii)	QIF Research Awards	US\$ 1 million
(iv)	Operating Costs	US\$ 0.45 million

### **The size of QIF awards**

*Institutional Awards:* The *maximum* award (grant or loan) from the QIF Institutional Program is US\$ 250,000 (for any single grant or loan). HEIs are permitted to submit a second or subsequent proposal (for a new capacity

building or innovation project, or for further extension of a pilot project), but evaluation of such proposals is take into account the implementation capacity demonstrated and results achieved during the period of the first award. The *maximum* cumulative amount that can be awarded to any HEI is US\$750,000. *Academic Staff Awards and Research Awards:* The *maximum* grant to individuals or groups of academic or research staff is US\$25,000.

### **Criteria for evaluation of QIF applications**

All proposals for QIF support (including for all three types of support: Institutional Awards, Academic Staff Awards and Research Awards) are evaluated on the basis of the same four criteria:

- (i) *Clarity and relevance* of the proposal, and its *consistency* with the *objectives* of the Strategic Plan for Higher Education (PEES): (increasing the supply of graduates with necessary and appropriate skills in priority subjects, improving quality and flexibility of programs and efficiency of teaching, learning, research and management of resources, and increasing regional, social and gender equity);
- (ii) Expected *impact and results* of the innovation or capacity building, on the basis of *measurable indicators* of improvements in quality, efficiency, or access to higher education opportunities and programs, or of specific outputs of research;
- (iii) *Feasibility*, in terms of realistic and achievable goals, implementation capacity and availability of necessary staff or facilities; assessment of feasibility take account of the commitment to innovation and quality improvement demonstrated by the HEI (or group of academic or research staff) by willingness (which should be quantified) to contribute to the costs of the investment from their own resources (either financial, or in kind);
- (iv) *Balance* of the proposed investment, in terms of appropriate balance between different types of activity, (e.g. staff training, consultant services and other technical assistance, study tours, equipment, books or other learning materials and minor civil works).

The QIF Program Manager, with the assistance of members of the Evaluation Committee, design a grading system which award marks or points to each proposal, which reflect these four criteria.

### **Implementation of Quality and Innovation Programs**

Responsibility for implementation of the quality enhancement program / innovation lies with the HEI (in the case of Institutional awards) or the group of staff (in the case of Academic or Research Awards) receiving the award. All HEIs

or groups of staff receiving an Award must sign a Grant or Loan Agreement, drawn up by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) specifying the terms and conditions of the grant or loan. Only after the Grant or Loan Agreement has been signed can the HEI (or group of staff) begin to implement the QIF award.

All institutions or groups of staff receiving QIF awards must implement these awards with due diligence and efficiency, and in accordance with sound educational, technical, financial and managerial standards and practices and must maintain adequate records and accounts.

### **Eligible Expenditures**

The following categories of expenditure are eligible for financing under a QIF Award:

- equipment
- scientific journals and books
- international consultants and visiting scholars from overseas
- local consultants
- overseas fellowships and internships
- local fellowships and internships
- overseas study tours
- local training
- small renovations/civil works to accommodate required equipment
- operations and maintenance
- consumable materials

### **Reporting Requirements**

All HEIs receiving awards from the Fund must submit to the PCU regular (normally twice a year) financial and progress reports on (a) the use of funds, and (b) the implementation of the quality enhancement program / innovation. The overall format and deadlines for submission of these reports are determined by the PCU, which prepare and submit regular reports to the National Council for Higher Education, Science and Technology (CNESCT) and the World Bank on (i) the evaluation and selection of proposals, (ii) the implementation and results of innovations supported by the Facility.

### **Positive Experience and Constraints**

Significant progress was achieved as per planned work plan, and further implementation and development of contracts signed regarding Cycle 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

The evaluation of proposals are made in accordance with the defined evaluation process, which involves technical evaluation commissions, QIF Manager and the final deliberation by CNESCT (National Council on Higher Education, Science and Technology);

Currently, QIF has registered about 60 technical evaluators, differently involved in project technical evaluations depending on specific project thematic areas and the professional experience.

It was possible to monitoring the projects on implementation, including support to individual coordinators for the development and timely submission of their progress reports, as well as technical and financial analysis of progress reports submitted until fourth cycle.

It was possible QIF progress dissemination through regular up-date of Web Page.

Exchange of experience from QIF with other programmes and institutions that are establishing new competitive funds, for instance:

- FUNDEC – Skills Development Fund; a programme under the current reforms of the vocational professional technical skills of the education sector,
- NPT/HIV-Aids research Fund, a new programme under the Higher Education sector
- Research Scholarships/Grants, a programme under the Good Governance and Public Administration under the Global Strategy of Public Reform (an NPT component)

Various capacity building meetings and advising were made to project Coordinators for matters related to project management and procurement of goods and Support to projects for the establishment of national and international partnerships for specific project activities

## **Constraints**

The unique type of niche that QIF awards is fulfilling to institutions of higher education, led to a tendency of institutions in the first QIF cycles to submit proposals that include too many activities and, at times, disjointed initiatives in the hopes of obtaining the maximum level of financing to cover as many needs in institutions of higher education. Evidence to this is the fact that all approved institutional proposals (with the exception of one) are awarded the ceiling amount of US\$250,000.

Additionally, project coordinators tend to underestimate the time it takes to launch and complete all implementation activities, mainly the ones involving acquisition and procurement of equipments. The delays are mainly related to the time needed for the procurement of equipments, but also to the unavailability of

equipments at the local market. This is leading to an increase in the requests for contract amendments to extend the implementation period. On average the time estimated for the completion of projects is 1 ½ years, however, in practice projects are implemented in 2 and 2 ½ years.

On the other side, this is being reflected in the accounting of QIF results, as funds advanced are not being justified in the planned dates.

QIF Management is undertaking monitoring measures of such cases, through letters of remind to project coordinators and individual meetings with project coordinators, as well as ensuring Agreement Addenda's extending the implementation period without project budget changes.

**Constraints** of unavailability from technical evaluators, due to other commitments from the evaluators in this Government transition period, and also because no alternatives for evaluators were found on projects in the area of medical sciences, chemistry and physics (there are few Mozambican professionals in those areas, and the majority of projects were coming from the same departments or institutions from the candidates and so, not possible to involve them in the evaluations to avoid possible conflict of interests.

According to the Operational Manual, if all the HEIs submit proposals & get approved for the maximum allowed of USD750.000, the USD3.000.000 available will not be sufficient to cover the costs.

This situation will be aggravated if QIF becomes eligible for the other HEI, not mentioned in the operational manual, but that were officially formed in the last and coming years.

### **Suggestions:**

- If eligible and good QIF HEI proposals are received & approved from all HEIs & with the maximum amount, all proposals can only be funded if additional funds are made available.
- If not QIF will have to consider only the best proposals and strengthen the ranking criteria for the final deliberation upon funds availability.
- Additionally QIF may need to consider reducing the budget limits of HEI, Academics and Researchers proposals to assure that more projects are funded.

### **Two final Lessons:**

QIF has provided grants and loans to private, public HEIs and individuals contributing to quality improvements, research and improved teaching.

QIF appears to have had a particularly significant impact on the facility and improvement in the education environment at the private HEIs with very limited resources. For instance, 57% of loans are for equipment.

