

23-26
September | 09

Governance of Technical and Engineering Education in India *Learning Forum* Pilot

With one of the youngest populations in the world, India is estimated to have the capacity to create 500 million skilled and trained technicians by the year 2020 and claim a fourth of the global workforce. Education and skill development can be India's global opportunity.

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India at the Presentation of National Awards to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 30th August, 2008, New Delhi



QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

A WORLD BANK – NPIU INITIATIVE

Working in partnership with Indian State Governments, the Ministry of Human Resources Development – with support from NASSCOM

Governance of Technical and Engineering Education in India - Learning Forum Pilot

Aims and objectives

The overall aim of this *Learning Forum* is to assist participating State governments and institutions obtain better education and learning outcomes through more strategic, purposeful and effective governance of their technical and engineering education institutions.

1. The key outcomes and longer term benefits ultimately sought are: strengthened governance and improved accountability to support the development of high quality education and research in technical and engineering institutions across India, especially those that have been given, or seek, greater autonomy.
2. These will be pursued through the following objectives:
 - a. To establish a *Learning Forum* on *systems, structures and approaches to institutional governance*, set in the context of local, regional, national and international policies and stakeholder needs that apply to technical and engineering education in India.
 - b. To develop the *Learning Forum* and suggest related follow-up activities to meet the needs of senior policy makers, and institutional leaders responsible for the development and delivery of technical and engineering education.
 - c. To make use of international and State experience to examine both generic principles, a 'common language', examples of good practice and issues of governance in the context of national and regional policy developments that promote greater autonomy and better accountability.
 - d. To develop a conceptual framework for the *Learning Forum*, initially as a pilot with a small number of States, that could be up-scaled to ensure that experiences are shared with other Indian states, as well as other countries, also engaged in the development of more effective system and institutional governance.
3. A further objective is to evaluate whether such a Learning Forum helps State governments and institutions improve governance as measured over a two-year period, and if so, identify the ways and means by which this is achieved.

Context

4. There are approximately 1800 Technical/Engineering Institutions across India's 30 States, of which less than 8% are autonomous. Tertiary education, and in particular technical and engineering education, is critical to India's aspirations of being a competitive player in the global knowledge economy. As the demand for tertiary education continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that tertiary education systems, as well as individual institutions, are managed well to meet the needs of industry and society. National policies have stressed the importance of increasing autonomy **and** accountability in the tertiary education sector since 1964, and that this is key to the delivery of these national needs and to improving the quality of learning outputs.¹
5. The move towards greater autonomy, and the need for better accountability will have a profound impact on India's tertiary education system. The World Bank, together with the Ministry of Human Resources Development, through the National Project Implementation Unit of the Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme of India (TEQIP)² with support from NASSCOM³ and other Indian partners have proposed that a *Learning Forum* be established to support the development and delivery of these major systemic reforms at the State and institutional levels. Critically, it is envisaged that such a *Learning Forum* will provide an environment for senior policy makers and practitioners (who are leading on the delivery of these reforms) to examine key principles that underpin autonomy and accountability, as well as measures that are important for the effective governance of the sector, and the institutions within it.
6. The *Learning Forum* is proposed under the auspices of the Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme of India (TEQIP) and in particular in preparation for TEQIP II. It is hoped that there will be possibilities and opportunities arising from the *Learning Forum* to enable new opportunities and links to be developed relevant to the ongoing capacity and capability objectives of the TEQIP-II programme. The *Learning Forum* can also be seen as a concrete follow-up activity to the conference on *Accountability and Autonomy in Engineering Education: What is Working* (July 2008)⁴.
7. It is proposed that the initial *Learning Forum* be developed as a pilot. It is

¹ The Government of India's 11th Five-Year Plan, the **CABE Committee on Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions**, established by the Ministry of Human Resources (MHRD) (2005), and more recently, in the **Knowledge Commission's Report Toward a Knowledge Society: Three Years of the Knowledge Commission**, October 2008, and in June 2009, *The Yash Pal Committee Report: Report of 'The Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education'*, all call for major reforms for Higher Education in India including *Improving the Governance of Engineering Institutions*.

²

<http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?menuPK=228424&theSitePK=40941&pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&Projectid=P072123>

³ NASSCOM® is the premier trade body and the chamber of commerce of the IT-BPO industries in India. NASSCOM was set up in 1988, to facilitate business and trade in software and services and to encourage advancement of research in software technology. It is a not-for-profit organization, registered under the Indian Societies Act, 1860.
<http://www.nasscom.org/Nasscom/templates/NormalPage.aspx?id=5365>

⁴ Jointly organized by Indo-US Collaboration for Engineering Education (IUCEE), American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), Infosys Technologies, Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE), & the World Bank

considered this will meet the different, but aligned interests and needs of stakeholders. Key policy makers and institutional leaders in a number of Indian States ⁵ will be invited to join the first *Learning Forum* and to examine and benchmark State developments concerning governance and related policies and practice. A key aspect of the *Learning Forum* will be using a wide range of case studies from participating Indian State representatives, and national and international contributors, it is envisaged that a substantial body of knowledge and information arising from the *Learning Forum* will be capable of being shared both in an Indian and wider international context. Depending on the outcome and success of the pilot *Learning Forum*, as well as funding, the idea is to scale up the *Learning Forum* to cover all the participating TEQIP States.

Methodology

What is the Learning Forum?

8. The *Learning Forum* will bring together State senior policy and institutional leaders to examine the development of governance policies and practice within the context of national and regional policies and strategies.
9. It is proposed that the pilot initiative⁶ will comprise the following:
 - **Preparation** of case study materials by each participating State and the team of international facilitators prior to the *Learning Forum*. The case studies will follow a pre-determined format to assist and focus the preparation work. In addition, a literature search will be undertaken.
 - A **Three-day residential event** (delivered over four days) – *The Learning Forum* from 23-26 September 2009 will be delivered in two parts. *Part One* is aimed at State-level leaders (principally, State Secretaries and Directors of Technical Education). *Part Two* is aimed at leaders of institutions (up to four Heads of Institutions per State) working with the Directors of Technical Education. There will be crossover activities, when both State and Institutional Leaders will work together. (See also paragraph 15 and the outline schedule below). Throughout the *Learning Forum*, State representatives will be asked to review their State strategies and action plans.
 - **Evaluation** of the *Learning Forum*, followed by a decision on the benefits and feasibility of extending the pilot to other States. In addition, there will be:
 - **Discussion of possible related follow-up activities** (see below) including regional and international visits (September 2009- September 2010). The *Learning Forum* will report on outcomes and suggestions for any follow-up activities.

⁵ See **Annex 1** for selection and participation criteria

⁶ The timing, format and logistics of the Forum suggested in this proposal take into account the suggestions, concerns and comments made at the Planning Meeting held at NIT Warangal on 23 January 2009, following discussions with senior representatives.

- **Discussion of the benefits and issues of scaling-up, and support to other TEQIP States** through feedback and evaluation of the lessons learned from the *Pilot Learning Forum* and any related experiences. India's experience could also benefit other countries (see paragraph 30).

Why is a Learning Forum desirable?

10. The underlying framework for the *Learning Forum* is a 'learning journey' and the potential to share what has been learned with other Indian States and other countries.
11. On 23 January 2009 a planning meeting took place in NIT Warangal to discuss the idea of the *Learning Forum*. There was strong support for the *Learning Forum* concept from senior State representatives. It was clear from the highlights of *priorities* and *challenges* presented by the five States who attended the meeting that there are a number of common issues. For example:
 - a. How individual institutions can meet the demands of stakeholders within a more autonomous and accountable system?
 - b. How individual States and institutions can develop their capacity to deliver the wider needs of communities and tackle important equity issues?
 - c. How institutions can address internal capacity needs across a range of academic, administrative and management areas?
 - d. How confusion of roles can be avoided, and the need for greater clarity between State and institutional governance responsibilities?
 - e. How the *Forum* could support benchmarking and the sharing of information between and beyond States, including key performance indicators?
 - f. How the involvement of industry could be strengthened?
 - g. How individual States might feel it was important to look at failures, and to try to understand why these had occurred? They indicated that although they had made much progress in regard to governance there was a sense of urgency about their need to improve further. It was suggested that there were '*no soft options*' if States were to implement changes, strengthen accountability and make the sector more workable and feasible in the Indian context.
 - h. How there was a need to develop a more sustainable financial model – for institutions, both public and private?
 - i. How there was a need for a new look at delivering education to the rural areas? There was also the role that technology could play given the shortage of teachers and the need to deliver education, and the expansion of student numbers, in a more cost effective way.

12. The *Learning Forum* will strive to encourage and support the ‘*learning journey*’ undertaken by those charged with the responsibility of leading, developing and delivering these major reforms.
13. ‘*Learning Journeys*’ are continuous. However, four key points in a learning journey have been identified. These are:
 - a. ***The periodic examination of current positions.*** *What is the current position of each State? Where are they in terms of their strategies and implementation plans for improved governance? How does this work in practice? What national and State policies and conditions apply? What are the inhibitors to further developments/improvements – including, for example, current capacity and capability issues in relation to staff and availability of data? What is the current position internationally, and how do Indian States compare with developments undertaken in other countries? The case studies prepared and read in advance of the Learning Forum will provide an outline of the ‘current position’ for India as a whole, the Indian States participating in the pilot, and five international case studies.*
 - b. ***The identification of new strategies, direction and aspirations.*** *What is the strategic direction, and aspiration for each State? What strategic direction (plans and decisions) has been identified over given periods of time (1, 3, 5, 10, 20 years)? Why are they viewed as crucial to the development of technical and engineering education in each State? Have stakeholders been consulted and is there a needs/benefits analysis? What are the likely barriers to success? Discussion and contributions made during the Learning Forum will enable an exploration of National and State aspirations, strategies and direction.*
 - c. ***The identification of priorities and plans for implementation.*** *What implementation plans exist? How are changes being implemented? What are the priorities for improving governance systems? How will the States goals and aspirations for developing good governance be achieved? What are the barriers and risks that would prohibit or inhibit change/development/implementation plans? What needs to be done to build the essential capacity and capability required for successful implementation? Discussion and contributions made during the Learning Forum will enable an exploration of priorities, plans and barriers to implementation.*
 - d. ***The review and evaluation of these processes to examine what has been successful.*** *Have evaluation and assessment strategies been established to assess if the State has been successful in achieving its goals? How will developments and changes be evaluated? Will States be able to measure the distance they have travelled? The Learning Forum will explore review and assessment strategies considered or undertaken by institutions, State governments and at the national level in the context of increasing autonomy and improving accountability.*

Who will participate in the pilot Learning Forum?

14. There will be an initial group of States invited to join the pilot from the following States: Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

15. The *Learning Forum* is aimed at senior policy makers and institutional leaders from each State. Specifically, an invitation is extended to State Secretaries, Directors of Technical Education and two other senior policy officers for the initial two days (starting at 1230 on Day One and finishing at the end of Day Two with an option to stay on as observers for the remainder of the *Forum*). Heads of Institutions (up to four from each State) are invited to join the State leaders on Day One as observers. The **crossover from a State to Institutional focus begins from the end of Day One** when leaders at both the State and Institutional levels begin to work together. The Directors of Technical Education, plus their accompanying senior colleagues will continue at the *Learning Forum* with the Heads of Institutions and thus create a **bridge** between the two parts of the *Learning Forum* for the remaining one and a half days. This **split and bridge** approach will allow for State and Institutional peer group agendas to be discussed, both separately and together, as well as review their overall State strategies and action plans.
16. The *Learning Forum* will use Indian and International case studies, comparing Indian governance strategies and implementation, and policy and practice trends from a range of countries and regions, for example, the Japan, Korea, UK, The State of Virginia, an overview of the USA and European Trends, and China, by leading international facilitators identified by the World Bank, who will contribute to the *Learning Forum* with support from World Bank staff and others.
17. The needs of the primary group of representatives from the States participating in the pilot are paramount to the *Learning Forum*. *The number of non-participating observers to the learning forum will be limited.*

Prior to the Learning Forum the following supporting organisations will be involved:

18. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) through the NPIU, will be consulted for their support and written endorsement of the *Learning Forum*.
19. NASSCOM will also provide key support to the *Learning Forum* and will invite key industry partners to participate at appropriate times to encourage external input, and explore their responses to the strategies, priorities and developments put forward.

How will the Learning Forum be delivered?

20. State and international case studies will be prepared prior to the *Learning Forum* (the format will be confirmed and circulated well in advance of the three-day event). In order to facilitate the *Learning Forum* discussions State case studies will be returned to the *Learning Forum* team and analysed prior to the scheduled date of the *Learning Forum*.)
21. The *Learning Forum* will be delivered through plenary and small group sessions, with reference to the *Learning Journey Framework*, and inputs from participants and an international and national team of facilitators. The *Learning Forum* will encourage open and flexible dialogue leading to tangible outputs – including reviews of State strategies, agreement of clear definitions of terms used in relation to autonomy, accountability and

governance, and key principles for governance.

Possible subsequent supporting activities (subject to available funding):

22. **Focused support** from international and national facilitators could be offered to each participating State following the pilot *Learning Forum*.
23. **Tailored Inter-State and International visits** could be encouraged during the year following the *Learning Forum*. *Specific needs can be identified at the Learning Forum*.
24. **Remote Communications** using technology could be encouraged in these *post-Learning Forum activities* including video conferencing, and sharing of knowledge and information through a designated *Learning Forum* website.

Support to others:

25. *Learning Forum* materials, outputs and outcomes will be made widely accessible to others via the *Learning Forum* website.

Evaluation

26. The participants, sponsors and organisers will be invited to evaluate the *Learning Forum*. Structured feedback will be sought from participants, facilitators and stakeholders at the end of the Forum and six months thereafter. The World Bank and its partners will use this feedback to evaluate the outcomes of *Learning Forum*.

Success Criteria

27. The following success criteria have been identified for this pilot proposal:
 - Each participating State will **discuss a common set of key principles and a universally understood language** (definition of terms that relate to autonomy, accountability and governance) with other participating States that will underpin their strategies and plans for system and institutional governance of technical/engineering education
 - Each State and their institutions will have **identified ways in which the *Learning Forum* has helped to improve the governance of their technical/education sector** within one year of the *Learning Forum*.
 - Each State will have **clear implementation strategies for system and institutional governance**, working in partnership with their institutions, one year following the *Learning Forum* together with an ongoing timetable for delivery.
 - Each State will be **committed to share lessons** learned with other States following the *Learning Forum*.

- A **website for sharing the tools and outputs/outcomes of the Learning Forum** will have been established by the start of the *Learning Forum* by the World Bank/NPIU for one year following the *Learning Forum* and thereafter reviewed.
28. Depending on the outcomes of the pilot in relation to the above success criteria, the World Bank, in partnership with others, will use the lessons learned from the *Forum* to support the remaining TEQIP states, as well as exploring how lessons from India can be shared internationally.

Scaling up

29. Following this pilot, several options for scaling up could be envisaged:

Note: Scaling-up of the pilot Learning Forum is entirely dependent on funding and the approval of TEQIP 2 by the World Bank Board meeting scheduled for November 2009

Scaling up at the national level through TEQIP 2

30. Phase two of the World Bank-supported Technical and Engineering Education Quality Improvement project (TEQIP), currently under preparation, is expected to finance technical assistance and capacity building to reach the policy goals of extending the *Learning Forum* and help to establish a community of practice across India. Implementation of the Government of India-driven autonomy and accountability policy will be a cornerstone of such *Learning Fora*.
31. The pilot *Learning Forum* could be scaled up to assist other (non-TEQIP) States through similar capacity building workshops. For this, NPIU and the World Bank will continue to develop appropriate partnerships with national institutions, the development of a research base as well as work with other partners is critical. Further, the NPIU/World Bank team will endeavor to build a core of content/material, including research, working papers, and case studies. This core material would be made easily available to other stakeholders in India. An e-learning module on governance issues in higher education could be developed to form part of this core material.

Scaling up through regional or global learning events on University Governance, Leadership and Management

32. Several countries have consulted the World Bank on governance, institutional leadership and management. These issues are very much in the minds of many key stakeholders. There is a global demand for an effective sharing of experiences on these issues. Thus, preparing and delivering of other international *Learning Fora/conferences* would be a worthwhile outcome generally and from the viewpoint of the World Bank.
33. A global pilot would require active partnerships within the World Bank (regions, such as South and East Asia, the HD Network, World Bank Institute) as well as other key partners (client institutions, other learning institutions such as the British Council). An e-learning module could be

used to prepare participants for the course, provide them with background information, and also give them a chance to participate in discussion groups. This would build an international community of practice with interested stakeholders who are committed to carrying this agenda forward in their countries. India's experience will be of great interest to the wider world.

Scaling up through the production of core materials

34. Trained resource could help states individually formulate strategic plans to embed autonomy and accountability in technical, engineering and other higher education institutions in their State.

Summary remarks

35. We look forward to working with our Indian partners on this exciting new initiative. We believe that all those participating have a commitment to excellence and to sharing their learning and experience both in India and internationally.

Annex 1

State selection and participation criteria:

1. The pilot will comprise up to five volunteer States committed to ongoing development and the objectives of this initiative.
2. The States should be keen to participate and to measure their own strategies and action plans in developing the capacity and capabilities of their State's technical and engineering education and specific governance practices.
3. The States will be selected from middle to high achieving States, as identified by the evaluation of the TEQIP project.
4. The States should be committed to delivering improved governance in the context of their policies and strategies for greater higher education autonomy and improved accountability.
5. The States should be able to demonstrate that they have a commitment to participating in the *Learning Forum* over a period beyond the period of the *Learning Forum* itself and at least for two years.
6. The States should be keen to share their experience and their actions during, and following, this period to measure the impact of the change programme that they have introduced and are implementing.
7. The States will participate, as needed, in the scaling up of the *Learning Forum* and associated activities.
8. The selection of the participating states is not (and should not be seen as) a signal that these States will be given preferential treatment in selection for TEQIP II.