



Our Ref: IAD/WCCBIP/REP/002/23

MEMO

To:

Director ACE Project WACCBIP,

Cc:

Vice Chancellor

Pro-Vice Chancellor, ASA Pro-Vice Chancellor, ORID

Registrar

Director of Finance Legal Counsel

Deputy Director, Research Senior Accountant, ORID

Senior Accounts Officer, WACCBIP

Logistics and Procument Manager, WACCBIP

Chairman, Audit Committee

From:

Ag.Director, Internal Audit

Date:

30th January, 2023

Subject:

A COMPLIANCE AUDIT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD BANK AFRICA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (ACE)-IMPACT PROJECT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ORID)

Please, find attached the Audit Report on the World Bank Africa Centre of Excellence (ACE)-impact project for the period January 01, 2022 to June 30, 2022

We will be glad to have some feedback on implementation of recommendations prior to discussions by the Audit Committee.

Thank you.

Mr. Thomas Kwegyir-Abaidoo Ag. Director, Internal Audit



INTERNAL AUDIT DIRECTORATE

Final Report

A COMPLIANCE AUDIT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD BANK AFRICA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (ACE)-IMPACT PROJECT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ORID)

Report No. UG/AUD/03/23

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Submitted by: Mr. Thomas Kwegyir-Abaidoo - Ag. Director, Internal Audit

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Mr. Fidel Nunoofio - Member

Date Issued: 30th January 2023

TABLE OF CONTENT

Co	ontent	Page
1.	Executive Summary	2
2.	Outline of Key Issues	7
3.	Key Audit Matter	9
4.	Overall Audit Opinion	
5.	Detailed Findings and Observations	10
6.	Appendix I: Competitive Procurement	24

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Introduction

The audit was carried out following a request from the Director of the Project. The audit covered the period January 01, 2022 to June 30, 2022 but fieldwork started on August 22, 2022 and ended on September 30, 2022.

1.2. Background to the WACCBIP ACE-Impact Project

The West Africa Centre for Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens (WACCBIP) also known as the Centre is hosted by the University of Ghana since its inception in 2014 and has been at the forefront of addressing health-related problems through applied scientific and biomedical research in infectious and non-communicable diseases as well as human genetic research. It has attained significant milestones through the conduct of cutting-edge research.

The research carried out by the project implementation team has been well-documented and published in several journals. The publication follows a series of assessments by established bodies in the field of scientific research including the renowned and acclaimed Royal Society of Biology situated in the United Kingdom. The University Management is encouraged to own this research work and ensure strong ownership and management of the Centre.

The Centre is an African Centre of Excellence (ACE) of Higher Education and situated on the serene Legon campus of the University was conceived in response to the ACE Impact initiative of the World Bank. This initiative aims to equip Africa to use postgraduate education in the form of training offered to Master's and PhD students to address major developmental challenges of the continent.

The Centre operates as an Academic Centre of the College of Basic Applied Sciences under the Statutes of the University of Ghana. It has financial autonomy and is responsible for the mobilisation of its resources with oversight from the Finance Directorate of the University.

1.3 Audit Objectives

The objectives of the audit were to:

- i. Determine whether funds committed to the ACE-Impact project have properly been disbursed in line with the contract and the financial controls of the University.
- ii. Ascertain the adequacy of records maintained on the ACE-Impact project.
- iii. Validate the accuracy and completeness of the financial information and reports.
- iv. Ascertain whether all project activities have been performed within the remit of the Project Agreement.

1.4 Scope of the Audit

The audit focused on the following areas:

- Management and Governance
- Risk Management System
- Cash inflows and Funds Disbursement
- Adherence to Reporting Requirements
- Procurement Management
- Asset Management
- Assessment of ACE-Impact Sponsored Students

1.5 Audit Approach

We adopted the risk-based approach in carrying out the audit.

1.6 Audit Methodology

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted International Standards for Professional Practice of Internal Auditing issued by the Institute of Internal Auditors. The Standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain enough, appropriate

evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Key officers of the project were interviewed and files for the audit period were reviewed.

The University of Ghana statutes, Financial Regulations and Governance Policy and the relevant publications were also considered for this audit.

1.7 Acknowledgement

We are grateful to the following officers for their support during the audit:

• Prof. Gordon A. Awandare - Director, ACE Impact Project

• Dr. Lydia N. Mosi - Deputy Director, Administration

Dr. Peter Quarshie - Deputy Director, Research

Ms. Sika Menka - Grant Manager, WACCBIP

Ms. Emefa Adzadu - Senior Accounts Officer, WACCBIP

Ms. Marian N. Nanor - Accounts Officer, WACCBIP

• Mr. Anthony H. Hofe - Senior Accountant, ORID

• Mrs. Selasie E. Agamah - Head of Pre and Post Award Services, ORID

1.8 Summary Rating

1.8.1 Summary of Risk Assurance / Control Effectiveness

LEVEL	AUDIT OPINION	NUMBER OF ISSUES
Effective	Addition/improvement of internal control measures is not necessary now and are strong.	1
Reasonable	Internal control measures exist now, but they need to be reviewed and strengthened.	3

Ineffective	Internal control measures are weak and need urgent attention for improvement	2	e.
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Overall Audit Opinion: Reasonable

1.8.2 Risk Rating

Level	Description	
Low	Management may consider reducing the cost of control. Management should constantly monitor the risk exposure and related control effectiveness	of Issues
Medium	The residual risk exposure is acceptable. Management should implement more controls or increase the effectiveness of current controls to reduce the residual risk to a more acceptable level.	3
High	Management should take immediate action to reduce residual risk exposure to an acceptable level	2

Overall Risk Rating: Medium

1.8.3 Control Failure Risk Rating

Control	Type of Control Category	Control Failure Resolution	Number of
Code		Rating	Issues
1	CATEGORY # 1: Lack of Adequate Management Oversight and Accountability	Responsible for Promoting High Ethical and Integrity Standards	5

Overall Risk Category: Lack of Adequate Management Oversight and Accountability, and Inadequate Communication of Information.

Overall Control Resolution: Responsible for Promoting High Ethical and Integrity Standards

1.9 Outline of Key Issues

The table below summarises the key issues:

Issue Rating	Main Findings	Action Owner	Resolution Date
Effective	Impact Assessment of Project. The requirements of the funder led to the preparation of a monitoring and evaluation framework and a report that analyses the progress of work of sponsored students after completing their postgraduate programme at the Centre.	Ms. Sika Menka (Grant Manager, WACCBIP)	N/A
Reasonable	Inefficient Competitive Procurement We noted that goods and services in the sum of GH¢324,680.92 were procured through an inefficient but competitive bidding process.	Mr. Michael Abogro (Logistics & Procurement Manager, WACCBIP)	March 31, 2023
Reasonable	Unachieved Planned Programme The project implementation team have not been able to execute all the activities earmarked for the period under review due to administrative difficulty.	Prof. Gordon A. Awandare (Director, ACE- Impact Project)	March 31, 2023
Reasonable	Incomplete Assessment of Risk The audit revealed an inaccurate assessment of residual risk due to an error with the application and interpretation of the risk assessment framework.	Ms. Emefa Adzadu (Senior Accounts Officer, WACCBIP)	March 31, 2023

Ineffective	Inaccurate Disclosure of Imprest The Accounts Staff expensed running imprest allocated to the project even before liquidation owing to the quantum of receipts and invoices submitted by the project staff.	Mr. Anthony H. Hofe (Senior Accountant, ORID) & Ms. Emefa Adzadu (Senior Accounts Officer, WACCBIP)	March 31, 2023
Ineffective	Co-mingling of Transactions We noticed that as a result of the volume of transactions processed by ORID, payments were made from the WACCBIP account to persons working for different projects within the University.	Mr. Anthony H. Hofe (Senior Accountant, ORID)	March 31, 2023-

1.10 Key Audit Matter

The key audit matter is an issue arising from our observations that in our professional judgement is most significant in our audit of the ACE-Impact project, and therefore calls for some attention.

Unachieved Planned Programme

The failure to implement the entire activities of the work plan for the period requires urgent attention.

1.11 Overall Audit Opinion: Reasonable

The overall implementation of the ACE Project has been reasonable except for the non-implementation of some of the activities that relate to achieving excellence in training and the periodic bottlenecks associated with the banking transactions.

2.0 Detailed Findings and Recommendations

Issue Title	Risk/Issue/Control Effectiveness Rating	
2.1 Impact Assessment of Project	Highly Effective	

Paragraph 3 & 4 of Part I of the Regional Operations Manual of the Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact provides among others that the project development objective is to improve the quality, quantity and development impact of postgraduate education in selected universities through regional specialisation but the overarching objective is to meet the demands of the labour market for skills and applied research in specific priority sectors, where there are shortages affecting development outcomes and economic growth.

Condition

In line with the aforesaid goal captured in the operations manual of the project, we noted that the project implementation team had prepared a monitoring and evaluation framework that seeks to document the relevant indicators necessary for the measurement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the efforts towards achieving its operational and development objectives of the Centre. The measurement of the impact of the project per the framework is as follows:

- 1. Training
- 2. Research
- 3. Communication and Public Engagement
- 4. Sustainability and Partnerships

Additionally, an alumni tracer survey report had been prepared and feedback from the respondents revealed that the training regime at the Centre has provided the beneficiaries with the requisite skills and knowledge to make an impact, exposing students to a wider career network whilst providing excellent career paths. The respondents totalling one hundred and forty-one (141) had either graduated after pursuing a Master's or Doctorate

Degree Programme and were currently pursuing further studies or working in industry. The others were also working in academia as:

- Lecturers
- · Research Fellow
- Postdoctoral Fellow
- Research Associate
- Research Assistant
- Teachers at the sub-university level

The information extracted from the tracer survey report suggests that factors contributing to the decision to pursue a higher programme at WACCBIP include but are not limited to the availability of financial assistance, the reputation of the University and the alignment of the programme to career goals.

Cause	Control Category
We attribute the situation to the quality of the governance and management structure of the Centre and compliance with section 5 of the performance and funding contract executed by both the University and the Ministry of Finance.	N/A
Effect/Consequences of the Issue for the University	Risk Rating
The practice would enhance the reputation of the University in the sight of donor agencies.	Low
Commendation	Control Resolution
We commend the Project Coordinator for the good work.	N/A

Issue Title	Risk/Issue/Control Effectiveness Rating	
2.2 Inefficient Competitive Procurement	Reasonable	

Section 35 (1) of the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act 914) requires that a procurement entity shall procure goods, services or works by competitive tendering except as provided in this part.

Condition

The audit revealed that procurement of goods and services amounting to GHS324,680.92 was acquired from different suppliers following a competitive selection procedure. The process could however be automated to facilitate a speedy purchase considering the peculiar nature of the activity involved. The specific procurements identified during the audit have been summarised and attached to this report as Appendix I.

Cause			Control Category
The competitive procurement process is attributable to conditions attached to the grant and described in Section 2.2 of the performance and funding contract.			C1
Effects/Consequences of the	Risk Rating		
Efficient delivery of scientific research is expected with an automated procurement process.			Medium
Recommendation	Control Resolution		
The procurement of reagents and other related research materials should be automated to facilitate the speedy purchase and timely execution of research work.			CR 1
Management Response	Action Taken	Action Owner	Action Date
Under one of the milestones for the ACE		Mr. Michael Abogro	March 31, 2023

Impact Project,	(Logistics &	
procurement software is	Procurement Manager,	
being procured for the	WACCBIP)	
University, which will help		
speed up the procurement	enteres entire that process goods, seeded within	
processes.	thought at boldy	

Issue Title	Risk/Issue/Control Effectiveness Rating	
2.3 Unachieved Planned Programme	Reasonable	

Section 4.5.1 of the Performance and Funding Contract Executed by both the University and the Ministry of Finance enjoins the University to prepare an annual work programme.

Section 3.6 of the same contract also provides inter alia that the entirety of funding received by the University for the ACE project must be immediately transferred to the account of ACE, if, and exclusively spent for the project and in accordance with the approved implementation plan and approved annual work programme.

Paragraph 3 of Part B of Annex 7 of the Regional Operations Manual of the Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Development Impact states among others that the work plan shall provide details of how all the various tasks, sub-tasks, and activities will be undertaken with specific timelines for each task.

Condition

The audit team observed the existence of an approved work programme governing the implementation of the activities earmarked for the project. These activities have been captured under nine (9) broad headings namely;

- Achieving Excellence in Training
- Improving the Learning Experience
- Promote Applied Research
- Management and Governance Establishment
- Financial Sustainability
- Private Sector Engagement
- Financial & Performance Oversight
- Programme Management
- Contingency

We noted that all the activities planned for the year were on schedule except the development of a curriculum for a new Master's programme in Bioinformatics and the enrolment of students on that same programme. This activity is long overdue and the expectation is that it should have been implemented by the end of the second quarter of 2022.

Cause				
Cause			Control Category	
The inability to adhere to the dicta on the part of the College Acade the new Master's Degree Program	mic Board of the Uni		C1	
Effects/Consequences of the Issue for the University			Risk Rating	
The expected revenue through the payment of fees would remain unrealised till the programme is rolled out.			Medium	
Recommendation			Control Resolution	
We recommend that the approving authority prioritise the outstanding activity and provide the relevant approval since the proposed postgraduate programme in Bioinformatics will attract new students to the University and increase the internally generated funds of the University.			CR 1	
Management Response	Action Taken	Action Owner	Action Date	
The delay is partly due to the strike by labor unions in the university which caused delays due to postponement of meetings of the School of Graduate Studies Board and the College Academic Board. Though there are delays, WACCBIP has already maxed out the amount allocated for		Prof. Gordon A. Awandare (Director, ACE- Impact Project)	March 31, 2023	

this result using the existing	Mary 9722 Section 1997
programmes. Hence this does	ABIT autol
not affect the project's funding	
and overall project objectives.	
The recommendations have	Seeling 7 (2) of the Pt blic Francish Manage sons Ast
been duly noted.	received of the response or and manuactions of the receiver

Issue Title	Risk/Issue/Control Effectiveness Rating
2.4 Incomplete Assessment of Piels	Passaralla

Section 7 (2) of the Public Financial Management Act, 2016 (Act 921) enjoins a Principal Spending Officer to establish an effective system of risk management, internal control and internal audit in respect of the resources and transactions of a covered entity.

Paragraph 5 of the Guidelines of the Risk Management Policy of the University requires the identification, development and maintenance of a risk register and risk action plans to ensure risks are properly managed.

Paragraph 7 of the same policy also prescribes that an appropriate risk management strategy must be developed on account of the requirements of operations, seeking to minimise the impact of disruptive events and activate a rapid and effective response capability.

Condition

We noticed the development of a risk register showing details of the risks that the project is exposed to and related controls meant to address the risk. The risk areas identified by the project team covered:

- Finance
- Information Technology
- Human Resources
- Health and Safety
- Legal & Compliance
- Reputation and Strategic

A risk owner had been assigned for each risk identified in line with best practice and the expected timeframe for the resolution of the risk documented. The inherent risk based on the likelihood and impact had also been computed but the residual risk rating had erroneously been calculated with the omission of the score for the effectiveness of the controls, policies and procedures put in place to address the risk.

Cause			Control Category
We attribute the error to wrongful interpretation and application of the risk assessment formula.			C1
Effects/Consequences of the Issue	for the University		Risk Rating
 An inaccurate assessment of risk would adversely affect the time frame allocated for addressing the risks identified and lead to the misallocation of resources. An ineffective action plan would also be developed. 			Medium
Recommendation			Control Resolution
We recommend that the residual risproduct of the likelihood and imponential.	CR 1		
Management Response Action Taken Action Owner			Action Date
The assessment criteria were not wrongly interpreted. The criteria definitions are indicated in the template. Hence, the assessment was done based on the criteria definitions. The template has no column for rating the perceived control effectiveness. However, it equates the control effectiveness to the residual risk impact. If there are suggestions/recommendations		Ms. Emefa Adzadu (Senior Accounts Officer, WACCBIP)	March 31, 2023

for modifications, I think they		
should be captured as such.		
The recommendations have,		grace or some to summin
however, been noted.		

Issue Title	Risk/ Issue/Control Effectiveness Rating
2.5 Inaccurate Disclosure of Imprest	Ineffective

Regulation 102 (2) of the Public Financial Management Regulations, 2019 (L.I. 2378) requires that a special imprest issued for making a particular payment or group of payments shall be fully retired within ten days of completion of the activity.

Regulation 102 (3) of the aforementioned regulation also provides that unretired imprest shall be charged to the personal name of the Principal Spending Officer or the holder of the imprest or the ultimate recipient of the imprest, as appropriate.

Condition

The audit revealed that petty cash disbursement meant for the running of the office of the project was not properly posted in the cost centre report of the ACE project. We noted that the imprest payments amounting to GH¢48,775.72 were expensed by the Accounts Staff prior to liquidation or retirement.

Cause	Control Category		
The anomaly occurred due to the inordinate number of receipts and invoices required during retirement.			C1
Effects / Consequences of th	e Issue for the Univ	ersity	Risk Rating
An extraction of a credible imprest debtor (receivables) report would be impossible with existing practice.			High
Recommendation			Control Resolution
We recommend that subsequent disbursements are initially posted as receivable and the liquidation of the debt performed only upon retirement.			CR 1
Management Response	Action Taken	Action Owner	Action Date
The imprests are		Mr. Anthony H.	March 31, 2023
expensed because the project reporting is on a cash basis. The		Hofe	

recommendations have	(Senior	
been duly noted.	Accountant,	
	ORID)	
en up in 1972S T. D. P. III. I montained	&	
ed their elements of the engine or many	Ms. Emefa	
	Adzadu	
Ledo tomorni bushinan te ir ashisasa	(Senior Accounts	
odi to vibini situ in test 10 sotter	Officer,	
	WACCBIP)	

Issue Title	Risk/ Issue/Control Effectiveness Rating	
2.6 Co-mingling of Transactions	Ineffective	

Paragraph 10 of Policy Number 1403 of the University of Ghana Financial Regulations and Governance further prescribes that common to the regulations of all agencies is the fundamental requirement that a particular grant or contract may only be charged for costs related to that project and co-mingling of charges for research contracts or other restricted sources is not allowed.

Condition

During the review of the bank statements provided, we noticed that payments were made from the bank account of WACCBIP without the approval of the Project Director. On one occasion, allowances for June to August 2022 amounting to GH¢3,240.00 was remitted to Eunice Ampadubea Ayerakwa. This disbursement was made as part of the Caprex Small Grants Application. An additional USD34,263.00 was also transferred from the WACCBIP account on July 08, 2022 in favour of the Characterising Familial Genetic Breast Cancer Project.

Cause	Control Category
The infraction occurred due to the large volume of transactions processed by the Accounts staff at ORID.	C1
Effects / Consequences of the Issue for the University	Risk Rating
The anomaly could lead to misuse and loss of project funds.	High
Recommendation	Control Resolution
 The Project Director may be made an additional signatory to the account of the project. The Principal Investigators of the affected projects should refund the erroneous disbursements together with the bank charges into the WACCBIP account domiciled at Standard Chartered Bank. 	CR 1

Management Response	Action Taken	Action Owner	Action Date
The payment of		Mr. Anthony H.	March 31, 2023
GH¢3,240.00 made to		Hofe	
Eunice Ampadubea		(Senior	alled to our lambach
Ayerakwa was authorized		Accountant,	
by the Principal		ORID)	emines terromakona
Investigator, Dr. Lydia		s lu pattanim-us inu	Indiana Bash of Bedefeel
Mosi, as per the attached			ormolia ton el esquesa
ORID Grant Request form			
and charged against the			
correct Cost Centre.	and only in the same		
However, during the			
process of printing the			Security of the supplication
cheque, the cashier			Makes to an managera
inadvertently selected the			
WACCBIP bank account			
instead of the External Fund			
Account. A bank transfer	Marie In motion		
will be made to correct this		ONO to Name of	
anomaly.			
In relation to the transfer of			
USD 34,263.00 from the			
WACCBIP account on July			
08, 2022, in favour of the	y rot ingle imposition	a mushamed year tob	
Characterizing Familial		1200	
Genetic Breast Cancer	Majorg harysla	stir to moragineers	
Project; this project is	and after methodol	ningas disbuscants	
managed at WACCBIP, and	de la ballaceab	Marine SIECOLOV s	dayed who
it was not wrong that	*		
payments were made from			
payments were made nom			

the WACCBIP bank
account. However, the
funders transferred the
funds through the External
Funds bank account instead
of the WACCBIP bank
account. ORID will transfer
the amount to WACCBIP.

Team Lead: Mrs. Doris M. Asante

Signature: A

Ag Director: Mr. Thomas Kwegyir-Abaidoo

Signature:

Appendix I: Competitive Procurement

S/N	Contract Date	Description of Contract	Vendor/Contractor	Amount - GH¢
001	12-Jan-2022	Supply of Laboratory Consumables	Lifekerr Ventures	6,542.64
002	19-Jan-2022	Supply of Laboratory Equipment	Mes Equipment	26,832.00
002	21-Jan-2022	Supply of Office Consumables	Compu Ghana	24,155.97
003	25-Jan-2022	Supply of Executive Swivel Chair	Gracefilled Limited	4,784.00
005	03-Feb-2022	Supply of Office Consumables	MagHero Enterprise	7,125.00
006	25-Feb-2022	Supply of COVID -19 Rapid Test Kit	Excelsior Global Limited	255,241.31
Total				324,680.92

Source: 2022 Payment Vouchers of the ACE-Impact Project