

**UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT**  
**WORLD BANK AFRICA CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE (ACE) PROJECT**

**MINUTES OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> JOINT ACE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2020, AT THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S COMMITTEE ROOM.**

**A. PRESENT.**

1. Prof. Stephen Okodudu – Chairman
2. Prof. Onyewuchi Akaranta – Coordinator, UniPort ACE Project

**ACE-CEFOR**

3. Prof. Ogbonna Joel – Centre Leader
4. Prof. Ikechukwu Agbagwa – Deputy Centre Leader
5. Prof. Ibisime Etela - Procurement Officer
6. Dr. Edwin Harcourt – Internal Auditor
7. Dr. Chikwendu Ubani – Safeguards Officer
8. Mr. Benson Timah – Finance Officer/Project Accountant
9. Mr. Uduma Ikpa – Monitoring & Evaluation Officer/Secretary
10. Mrs. Benedicta Omeni– Communication Officer

**ACE-PUTOR**

11. Dr. Daprim Ogaji – Center Leader
12. Dr. Orish Ebere Orisakwe – Deputy Center Leader
13. Dr. K. C. Patrick-Iwuanyanwu - Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
14. Dr. Oluseye Babatunde – Applied Research Coordinator
15. Dr. Faith Diorgu – Industry Liaison Officer
16. Dr. Ezejiofor Anthonet N. – Environmental, Social & Safeguards Officer
17. Williams Wodi - Communication Officer
18. Mrs. Nengi M. Isagua - Finance Officer/Project Accountant
19. Mr. Anselemi Godpower Umor - Internal Auditor
20. Ikewuchi, Catherine Chidinma – Nutritional Biochemistry/Toxicology Team Leader
21. Engr. Nicholas Abule – Procurement Officer
22. Mr. Confidence Igwe – Administrative Head

**B. AGENDA**

1. Opening Prayer – ACE-PUTOR Deputy Center Leader
2. The ACE Project in UniPort – The Coordinator
3. Introduction of Project Steering Committee Members/Comments – Center Leaders
  - i. ACE-CEFOR
  - ii. ACE-PUTOR
4. Comments from 4 members of the PSC, two from each Center
5. Comments by the Vice Chancellor
6. Adjournment/Vote of Thanks – ACE-CEFOR Deputy Center Leader
7. Closing Prayer – ACE-PUTOR Project Accountant

**Opening**

1. The Meeting began at 2.11P.M. with the Chairman, the Acting Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt (UniPort), Prof. Stephen Okodudu, presiding.
2. The opening prayer was said by Dr. Orish Ebere Orisakwe, ACE-PUTOR Deputy Center Leader.
3. The ACE Project Coordinator, Prof. Onyewuchi Akaranta, in his opening remarks welcomed all present to the meeting and thanked the Acting Vice Chancellor and Chairman of the ACE Project Steering Committees, UniPort, Prof. Stephen Okodudu for convening the meeting. He informed all present that the purpose of the meeting was to brief the Acting Vice Chancellor on the ACE Project within the University of Port Harcourt, involving the Africa Center of Excellence on Oilfield Chemicals Research (ACE-CEFOR) and the Africa Center of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research (ACE-PUTOR). He then gave a run-down of the agenda for the meeting, stating that due to the 30-minute duration of the meeting, the proposed comments from 4 members of the PSC, two from each Center, would have to be cancelled.

The ACE Project Coordinator also stated that going forward, there would be two joint ACE Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings each year, preceding each ACE Workshop. The purpose of these meetings will be to brief the Vice Chancellor on the activities of the ACE Project in the University of Port Harcourt.

Prof. Akaranta then proceeded to give a brief history of the origin of the ACE Project in UniPort. He recalled that UniPort had initially submitted two proposals to the World Bank for Centers of Excellence in Agriculture and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). While the proposal for the Agriculture ACE was dropped, the proposal for a STEM ACE was approved in 2013 as the Africa Center of Excellence in Oilfield Chemicals Research (ACE-CEFOR), and became in effective in 2014. Under ACE I, ACE-CEFOR ran for 5 years and ended in March 2020.

He stated that based on the success of the ACE I Project, the World Bank called for fresh proposals for renewals of existing ACEs as well as new ACEs under the ACE Impact Project. UniPort submitted three new proposals for ACEs in Agriculture, Economics and Health, as well a renewal of the existing ACE-CEFOR. According to the ACE Project Coordinator, the proposal for the ACE in Agriculture was not considered, while those for the ACEs in Economics and Health scaled

	<p>through for sight visits by the World Bank and Association of African Universities (AAU). He recalled that the ACE in Health was selected while that for Economics was dropped. The Health ACE, the Africa Center of Excellence in Public Health and Toxicological Research (ACE-PUTOR), thus became the second ACE in UniPort in 2018, alongside ACE-CEFOR, which won its bid for renewal. Prof Akaranta stated that when ACE-PUTOR was established, the National Universities Commission (NUC), directed that the University management should appoint a Coordinator for the two ACEs, hence his appointment as the UniPort ACE Project Coordinator. Prior to this appointment, he had been the Deputy Center Leader of ACE-CEFOR.</p> <p>He also stated that ACE-CEFOR has attracted foreign students under the Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET), programme and that a Center for Innovative Eco-Systems had also been established in the University as a result of the ACE Project.</p> <p>The ACE Project Coordinator then called on the ACE Project Center Leaders to introduce the members of their Steering Committees and brief the Chairman on their Center’s activities.</p>	
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	<b>ACTION PARTY</b>
<b>ACE-CEFOR Center Leader’s Briefing</b>	<p>The Center Leader of the Africa Center of Excellence in Oilfield Chemicals Research (ACE-CEFOR), Prof. Ogbonna Joel, began his briefing by expressing his gratitude to the University Management for the support given to the ACE Project. He stated that the project was a results-based project which the university had not been used to before the ACE project, so at the beginning of the project, it was a new experience. He recalled that to achieve success, a Steering Committee was formed for the Center. He then proceeded to introduce the members of the ACE-CEFOR Steering Committee present at the meeting. He recalled that the World Bank had been specific about the category of staff required to occupy these positions. He stated that based on the Center’s performance during ACE I, ACE-CEFOR received a further One Million Dollars in addition to the initial grant allocated to the Center. This extra funding had been taken from under-performing ACEs and re-assigned to high-performing ACEs like ACE-CEFOR. He also stated</p>	ACE-CEFOR Center Leader

	<p>that he believed the establishment of ACE-PUTOR was influenced by the excellent performance of ACE-CEFOR. Prof. Joel stated that the second phase of the ACE Project, ACE Impact under which the two ACEs are currently operating is focused more on measuring the impact of the ACEs. He recalled that the impact of ACE-CEFOR had been felt in the university especially in the Faculty of Engineering, Graduate School and Senate Building, amongst others. He also stated that ACE-CEFOR had organized several trainings for university staff.</p>	
<b>ACE-PUTOR Center Leader's Briefing</b>	<p>In his own remarks, the Center Leader of the Africa Center of Excellence for Public Health and Toxicological Research (ACE-PUTOR), Dr. Daprim Ogaji, stated that the ACE Project is run on behalf of the University and thanked the Acting Vice Chancellor for the University's support. He noted that this meeting was the first joint meeting of the two ACEs in UniPort. Dr. Ogaji stated that his Center's Steering Committee is headed by the Vice Chancellor as the Chairman. He then proceeded to introduce the members of the ACE-PUTOR Steering Committee. He stated that the focus of ACE-PUTOR is on public health issues of the environmental ecosystem. He recalled that ACE-PUTOR started in November 2018 and hit the ground running, even though funds were not made available at project effectiveness.</p> <p>Dr. Ogaji stated that ACE-PUTOR had run for one year and the Center had given a report to all stakeholders. He stated that the next report would be submitted at the end of August 2020. He thanked the Acting Vice Chancellor for his prompt response to the challenge of a Procurement Officer which his Center had experienced, and appealed for more support from the University Management. Rounding up his briefing, Dr. Ogaji stated that other key issues of the Center would be presented in a report to be made to the Vice Chancellor.</p>	ACE-PUTOR Center Leader
<b>Vice Chancellor's Remarks</b>	<p>In his remarks, the Acting Vice Chancellor and Chairman, UniPort ACE Project Steering Committee, Prof. Stephen Okodudu, thanked Prof. Onyewuchi Akaranta for his creative work in the University of Port Harcourt. He also thanked the Center Leaders and the ACE Project Coordinator, who he said have been briefing him relentlessly on their activities on behalf of the University, through the ACEs.</p>	Acting Vice Chancellor

	<p>The Chairman stated that he is familiar with the World Bank as he consults on some World Bank projects. He recalled that when he learnt there had not been any Steering Committee meetings for a while, he became alarmed since he understood the implications with the World Bank. Furthermore, at a meeting organized by the NUC in Abuja, the previous week, he stated that he was accosted by a staff of NUC who claimed that UniPort ACEs were defaulting in documentation. He stated that he refuted the claim because he knew how efficient the UniPort ACEs are and asked the NUC staff to cross-check her records. Prof. Okodudu was happy to report to the Steering Committee meeting that the NUC staff came back to apologize after cross-checking her records and finding that UniPort ACE documentations were indeed up to date.</p> <p>The Chairman stated that he was happy with the collaboration between the ACEs and the University. He emphasized that Vice Chancellors are grant attractors and that UniPort is gradually beginning to accept the international best practice that Heads of Academic Institutions, are the ones who should do the grant attracting. He stated that the work done by the ACEs in the University would serve as a veritable template towards achieving this vision of Vice Chancellors as grant attractors.</p> <p>Prof. Okodudu thanked all Steering Committee members for their dedication and said he hopes the ACEs will influence the greater University. He also expressed the hope that the Steering Committee meetings would hold periodically as stated by the ACE Project Coordinator.</p>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	The ACE Project Coordinator, Prof. Onyewuchi Akaranta, stated that the date for the next meeting would be determined privately between himself and the Acting Vice Chancellor and shared with all members.	ACE Project Coordinator

<b>Closing</b>	In the absence of any other business, the vote of thanks was given by the ACE-CEFOR Deputy Center Leader, Prof. Ikechukwu Agbagwa, while the closing prayer was said by the ACE-PUTOR Project Accountant, Mrs. Nengi Isagua. The meeting came to an end by 2.40P.M.
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**Prof. S. Okodudu**  
Chairman

**Mr. Uduma Ikpa**  
Secretary