

African Academic Credit System (ACTS)

Report of the Policy Country Visit to EGYPT

(Cairo, 26th February 2025)

Date: Wednesday 26th February 2025 – 14.00 – 17.00

Location: Hilton Cairo Grand Nile, Cairo - Egypt

ACTS Experts who participated in the visit:

- Pablo Beneitone (Higher Education Expert of OBREAL)
- Youhansen Eid (ACTS Expert Team)

List of participants from Egypt are in the Annex 1

1. Purpose of the site visit

- Validation and enrichment of the data provided by the countries through the responses to the State of the Art Questionnaire, with a particular focus on data on Egypt.
- Presentation of ACTS initiative and its importance for international mobility and academic recognition.
- Discussion with participants for the identification of the main challenges for the implementation of ACTS at the national level.

2. Description of the visit

The visit focused on the presentation of the report based on the survey of the credit system being implemented in Egypt, as well as on gaining a better understanding of its implementation and the associated challenges. This document records the main aspects to be retained from the interactions that took place at the meeting and, in the end, presents the opinion of the members of the ACTS Technical Team on the possibilities and challenges of Egypt's participation in the implementation phase of ACTS. (see Programme of the Egypt National Visit in Annex 2)

The entire education system in Egypt is regulated by the Supreme Council of Universities (SCU) which sets the rules for the scientific sectors for all types of HEIs. It is supported in its work by the Sectors and the councils for private and non-profit universities. The SCU defines the minimum and maximum duration of the graduation and the hours that are required to be fulfilled. It also sets the tentative rules for transfer between universities and exchange students. Quality assurance is administered by the National Authority for Quality assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE).

3. Commitment of the policy authorities with the ACTS implementation phase

During the meeting, Prof. Mostafa Refaat expressed the Supreme Council of Universities's commitment to engage with HAQAA3. The discussion focused on what ACTS was all about and the processes undertaken and realized. He committed to being part of the implementation phase.

4. Systematisation and analysis of topic exchange during the visit

Dr. Alaa Ashmawy, President of National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) made a presentation of the current situation of higher education in Egypt. He focussed in particular in new developments of the National Qualification Framework.

The presentation of Pablo Beneitone was on key topics including the characteristics and challenges of credit systems and recognition processes across different regions. The presentation highlighted the transition from input-based, teacher-centered approaches to outcome-based, student-centered methodologies, emphasizing that recognition of studies requires a structured process reliant on credits and learning outcomes. It was presented preliminary findings on the state of the ACTS survey report in terms of the current situation regarding academic credits in higher education in African countries, and narrowed it down to Northern Africa and Egypt, with a view to gathering contributions for its validation and enrichment. Then, the key elements of ACTS proposal were introduced. The presentation focused on introducing and developing the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS) to standardize higher education across the continent. Key discussions highlighted the need to transition from a teacher-centered credit calculation approach, based on contact hours, to a learner-centered system emphasizing student workload and specific, measurable learning outcomes. The proposed ACTS aims to enhance student mobility, facilitate lifelong learning, and implement the recognition of academic credentials. Plans include conducting regional consultations, selecting pilot countries and universities, and creating an online course to educate about curriculum design and workload assessment. Action items established during the meeting include validating existing credit system reports, selecting pilot countries and institutions, and developing an ACTS user guide to aid in the transition towards competency-based curricula in African higher education.

After the presentations, participants began by reflecting on their existing experiences with credit systems within their universities. The conversation then shifted to the expected benefits and challenges of adopting ACTS at the national level. Among the most cited advantages were the possibilities for improving student mobility, enhancing transparency and comparability of academic programs, and aligning more closely with international standards. However, several challenges were also raised, including the diversity of institutional capacities, the need for regulatory adaptation, and the varying levels of awareness within academic community.

Participants identified several key conditions necessary for successful ACTS implementation, including clear political commitment and the development of new or revised regulations. Regarding the relevance and appropriateness of ACTS, many agreed that the system could be successfully introduced. In conclusion, participants agreed that ACTS implementation is feasible under certain conditions, particularly if supported by a comprehensive national strategy.

Finally, the ACTS Expert Team introduced the next steps to be followed in the implementation phase. It was explained that this visit was the last one. From this, the State of the Art report will be finalized and translated into four official African languages (French, English, Portuguese, and Arabic). ACTS Expert Team will make a preliminary assessment/recommendation for 10 pilot countries for ACTS implementation. The authorities of those countries will be asked to submit a proposal for participation in the pilot phase, accompanied by a national work plan that aligns to specific policy interests. Once approved, a cohort of universities will be selected to for the pilot phase, to accompany the national authority. The pilot phase will entail work at the level of study programs and learning outcome design, as well as intra-African mobility and recognition and broader training on the credit systems and their usage with respect to regional integration, recognition, mobility, lifelong learning, etc.

5. Opinion of the ACTS Technical Team on Egypt's participation in the implementation phase

In the opinion of the ACTS Expert Team, Egypt offers wide possibilities for participation in the implementation phase of ACTS. There is a political commitment of the country to the

operationalization of the African initiative, declared and demonstrated at the highest level, by the authorities of the Supreme Council of Universities who supervises higher education.