

African Academic Credit System (ACTS)

Report of the Policy Country Visit to NIGERIA

(Abuja, 22nd October 2024)

Date: Tuesday 22nd October 2024 – 11.00 – 13.30

Location: National University Commission, 26 Aguiyi Ironsi St, Wuse, Abuja 904101, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

ACTS Experts who participated in the visit:

- Pablo Beneitone (Higher Education Expert of OBREAL)
- Senghane Mbodji (Higher Education Expert of Senegal)
- Adewale Obadina (AAU)

List of participants from Nigeria are in the Appendix

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 Nigeria.
- 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. Brief Description of the main Higher Education Policy Development at the National Level in different fields

The National Universities Commission was established in 1962 as an advisory agency in the Cabinet Office. However, in 1974, it became a statutory body and the first Executive Secretary, in the person of Prof. Jibril Aminu, was then appointed. The National Universities Commission (NUC) is a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Education (FME). The Commission has a Governing Council, its Acting Executive Secretary is Mr. Chris Maiyaki, who assumed the duty of overseeing the activities of the Commission on June 30, 2023. Over the years, the Commission has transformed from a small office in the cabinet office to an important arm of government in the area of development and management of university education in Nigeria.

3. Description of the visit

The visit focused on the presentation of the report from the survey on the Credit System being implemented in Nigeria and also on getting an understanding of how the credit system is being implemented and the related 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 Nigeria's participation in the implementation phase of ACTS.

The official opening was done by Dr. Biodun Noel Saliu, Deputy Executive Secretary of, the National University Commission. He mentioned the primary mandate of the commission which is to ensure the quality, relevance, and accessibility of university education across the country.

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

The discussion focused on what ACTS was all about and the processes undertaken and realized. NUC comfortably committed to being part of the implementation phase. They requested to know whether ACTS will affect the newly developed CCMAS in Nigeria. Nigeria is more ready to join the phase and also requested for involvement of more Universities in the country than the ten (10) mentioned during the presentation.

5. Systematisation and analysis of topic exchange during the visit

The discussions focused on issues surrounding the Credit System. Dr. Saliu mentioned that the issue of credit is covered in the **Basic Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS)** a framework developed by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to ensure that universities maintain a minimum standard in the quality of education they provide. BMAS outlines the essential requirements for academic programs, including curriculum content, instructional materials, faculty qualifications, and facilities. They also observed that there is an increase in the number of public and private Universities in Nigeria.

The following points were also discussed:

- How to overcome the challenges of diversity in language within the Western African Countries
- Uniformity in time allocation for different courses with or without practicals.
- The notional learning time for achieving the specified learning outcomes was defined, as it applies equally to all forms of learning – face-to-face, project-based, blended, online and distance learning. The same set of specified learning outcomes has an equal volume of learning, i.e. the same number of NCVTS credits.

Finally, the ACTS Expert Team introduced the next steps to be followed in the implementation phase. It was explained that between November 2024 and March 2025. HAQAA3 is organizing a regional workshop in Senegal (28th October) with strategic partners in Africa, to share the findings of the state-of-the-art study and compile recommendations for the next steps of ACTS endorsement and implementation in Africa. Regional workshops (developed in Mauritius in August for Southren region and Kenia in September for Eastern region) were complemented by national policy visits, similar to the one that NUC is receiving, to explore in more depth the interests, concerns, and priorities of national authorities. 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.

6. Opinion of the ACTS Technical Team on Nigeria's participation in the implementation phase

In the opinion of the ACTS Expert Team, Nigeria 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 NUC who supervises higher education.