Charter of the Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology

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1. Introduction

1.1. This document, the Charter of the Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET), sets out the goals, principles, norms and governing structure of the Partnership. It is intended to promote transparency, accountability, and effective guidance for PASET’s leadership and members.

1.2. Founded in 2013 by African governments, PASET addresses a long-standing challenge in the socioeconomic transformation of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): the dearth of African capacity and knowledge in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (ASET) fields. PASET is envisaged as a partnership of key stakeholders, including SSA governments, African and other private sector companies operating in Africa, education and training institutions, and new and traditional development partners. It focuses on building a continuum of ASET skills from the technical-vocational level to the postgraduate/research level, for sectors that have potential for growth and employment generation, and for the structural transformation of SSA countries. PASET also focuses on building relationships with countries from Asia and Latin America that have successfully built their technical-scientific capacity to support their socio-economic development, through knowledge-sharing, technical assistance and financial support.

1.3. The overall goals of PASET, which focus on fostering high quality ASET programs from the technical vocational level to the postgraduate level, are laid out in Annex 1 of this Charter.

PASET strives to achieve its goals through three main areas of work at the regional and country levels:

- Mobilizing finances for flagship, transformative regional initiatives in higher education and technical-vocation education
- Providing an effective platform for leveraging technical assistance for countries to develop and implement plans
- Facilitating knowledge-sharing between African countries and other regions of the world

1.4. PASET’s key regional initiatives include the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF); Regional Benchmarking Initiative for SSA Universities; and Regional Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Initiative. In addition to its regional initiatives, PASET also supports SSA countries to develop results-oriented, operational Country ASET Action Plans (CAAPs) to increase the number and quality of technical-scientific graduates, help prioritize their interventions and mobilize and align funding from domestic sources, private sector and new as well as traditional Partners. PASET Forums are organized periodically in order encourage knowledge-sharing between African countries and bring together different stakeholders and partners.

1.5. Among the above initiatives, the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund is one of the flagship programs of PASET, focused on developing competent scientists, engineers and entrepreneurs to address Africa’s development challenges. Launched in Johannesburg in June 2015 by His Excellency Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and supported by the heads of state of Rwanda and Ethiopia, it is seeded through financial commitments primarily from African governments. The RSIF has three windows: (i) scholarships for PhD training which aims to support training of 10,000 PhDs in ASET disciplines in the next 10 years by building capacity in SSA Universities for delivering world-class PhD programs. Priority would be given to faculty without PhDs and to women students; (ii) research grant window and (iii) innovation grant window.
1.6. The Regional TVET Initiative is PASET’s flagship program focused on developing technical-vocational skills for new industries and services, as well as for modernizing agriculture. The initiative aims to support the development of highly specialized TVET programs at the diploma and degree levels for training of technicians and TVET faculty, as well as industry-recognized short-term training for regional priority sectors.

1.7. PASET’s core principles are laid out in Box 1.

**Box 1: Core Principles of PASET**

1. Ownership and leadership by African governments and African private sector, reflected in concrete financial and organizational commitments
2. Partner commitment to provide technical and financial assistance
3. Undertake activities clearly linked to PASET goals
4. Focus on results, lower transaction costs, and return on investment
5. Efficient decision-making, combined with consensus-building
6. Financial transparency
7. Mutual accountability
8. Broad consultation with stakeholders

II. JOINING PASET

2.1 Any SSA government, private sector group or development partner (or its designated agency) may join PASET and be represented on the PASET governance structure if it:

- Agrees with the PASET Charter
- Contributes to PASET’s regional initiatives, specifically the RSIF and the Regional TVET Initiative
- Commits to participate in meetings of PASET governance bodies if nominated to serve on them
- Agrees to mobilizing support and funds for PASET activities

2.2 SSA governments, donors and private sector groups including businesses and industry who wish to join PASET may do so in one of two ways: (i) Make a minimum initial contribution of $US2 million to the flagship RSIF; (ii) Participate in the Regional TVET Initiative, which is currently being financed through a credit from the World Bank to participating countries. Membership renewal will be determined at the discretion of PASET governing bodies.

2.3 Knowledge-sharing and other events, such as the PASET Forum, workshops shall be open to all SSA countries, private sector, development partners, universities, TVET institutions and other stakeholders who show commitment to the PASET Charter, irrespective of membership.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF PASET INITIATIVES

3.1 PASET implements its regional initiatives through various organizations that are selected for their institutional and governance strengths and capacity for delivering the initiative. All country-specific
initiatives are implemented through the governments of participating countries using their national mechanisms.

3.2 Technical assistance activities, facilitation of PASET meetings and events, and other interim secretariat functions are currently implemented through the World Bank.

IV. PASET GOVERNANCE

Governance Overview

4.1 PASET adheres to the principles of good governance, drawn from international best practices. Specifically, it abides by the highest international governance standards, ensuring transparency and accountability for all operations, and adhering to equity and fairness in representation and risk mitigation associated with conflicts of interest.

4.2 The PASET governance structure aims to be effective, efficient and responsive, with streamlined decision-making and reporting. All PASET partners share the objective of minimizing the costs of administration while ensuring appropriate financial controls, reporting and accounting in order to ensure that the maximum proportion of the mobilized funds are utilized for the intended beneficiaries.

4.3 Membership of PASET governance bodies (Governing Council and Executive Board) are restricted to members and contributors as defined in clause 2.1.

4.4 Members of the PASET governance and advisory bodies are nominated for having demonstrated high standards of integrity, commitment to PASET principles and goals, and technical expertise in a designated area. They will not receive any remuneration for carrying out these routine functions. They will however be reimbursed for travel and any special additional tasks as requested by the concerned governance bodies.

4.5 Specialized functions that may need to be carried out from time to time, such as audit, third-party verification or legal advice, will be contracted out as agreed by the PASET governing bodies.

4.6 The PASET governance, advisory and implementation mechanisms are laid out below.
4.7 The Governing Council provides strategic orientation and thought leadership for PASET, taking major policy decisions and setting overall direction. As a global champion for PASET’s goals, it mobilizes funding and support for the Partnership. Its membership is drawn from PASET Contributors.

4.8 Composition: The Council comprises of Ministers in charge of higher education (if the country contributes to the RSIF) or TVET (if the country participates in the Regional TVET Initiative) of SSA governments that have contributed in full to the PASET RSIF and/or Regional TVET Initiative. If a country contributes to both the RSIF and the Regional TVET Initiative, it may be represented by either or both Ministers on the Council. The Council will also comprise of a World Bank Senior Director, representatives of donating partner countries or partner organizations that have contributed to PASET as well as up to two eminent civil society representatives. The Executive Director of the Executive Board will be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Governing Council. The education manager of the institution hosting the Secretariat who is on the Executive Board will also be an ex-officio member of the Governing Council, also non-voting. The Council will have two co-Chairs: a rotating Ministerial co-Chair position drawn from the Ministers representing contributing SSA countries and an independent, part-time co-Chair drawn from academia or business, who convenes the meetings in consultation with the Ministerial co-Chair and supports the good governance of the Council. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Consultative Advisory Group will be non-voting, observer members of the Governing Council.

4.9 Roles and Responsibilities: The Council shall set the direction and provide thought leadership for PASET. The Council shall meet once a year. It will ratify by-laws specifying: criteria and nominating
procedures for Council membership; meetings of the Council; protocols for decision-making, communication and operations; voting procedures; and other critical Council functions. The Council may invite specialists/experts to attend portions of Council meetings to provide advice, including other members of the Executive Board and CAG as well as eminent persons and stakeholders who can promote the objectives of PASET.

4.10 Co-Chairs of the Council: The Council shall select a rotating Ministerial Co-Chair drawn from the participating African Ministers and an independent part-time Co-Chair drawn from academia or business who can help convene and facilitate Council meetings and business. The Co-Chairs represent the Council and, with the Executive Director of the Executive Board, the Partnership as a whole. The Co-Chairs shall act without prejudice in fulfilling his/her responsibilities. The Co-Chairs will be selected based on demonstrated commitment to PASET principles and goals, and display action-oriented willingness to address upcoming tasks, particularly to grow the Partnership. He/she will also demonstrate the ability to work closely with and be accessible to the Executive Director of the Executive Board. The Ministerial co-Chair shall serve for a period of 3 years. The independent co-Chair shall also serve a 3-year term potentially renewable.

4.11 Vice-Chair of the Council: The Council shall select a Vice-Chair drawn from the participating African Ministers who will take over the responsibilities of the Ministerial co-Chair in his/her absence or as needed.

Executive Board (EB)

4.12 The EB serves as PASET’s managing body, responsible for carrying out the mandate of PASET as established by the Governing Council. The EB makes the day-to-day decisions to implement PASET initiatives. The EB meets virtually on a quarterly basis to carry out its functions.

4.13 Composition: The EB consists of fully contributing SSA country government representatives, education manager of the institution hosting the Secretariat, and donors. Depending on the SSA government’s contribution to the RSIF or the Regional TVET Initiative, it will be represented on the EB by a senior government official for higher education or TVET respectively. If a SSA government participates in both initiatives, the government can choose one senior government official to be represented on the EB. In order to provide stability and continuity to PASET activities, the term of the EB members shall be for two years. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Consultative Advisory Group will be invited to join the EB as observer members.

4.14 Roles and Responsibilities: The EB has delegated authority from the Governing Council to execute decisions to implement PASET’s initiatives. It monitors implementation of agreements with the implementing agencies. It has specific responsibility for oversight of the RSIF and the RSIF Implementation Unit. It shall also facilitate government and donor participation and help develop key new and existing initiatives. It works in close collaboration with the Governing Council, PASET Secretariat, and Consultative Advisory Group.

4.15 Executive Director of the Executive Board: The Executive Director is a widely respected leader with demonstrated commitment to PASET and the time and experience to lead the Executive Board. He/she may be a government or non-government representative and serves in a personal capacity. The Executive Director is also an ex-officio member of the Governing Council, and has the authority to make
decisions as required in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Council. The Executive Director works closely with the PASET Secretariat. In the absence of the Executive Director, an elected Vice-Chair can convene and lead meetings on his/her behalf.

Secretariat

4.16 The institution hosting the Secretariat shall be well-established, and have the capacity and experience to provide a governance institutional setting that is well suited to support communication and learning. Existing operations in Africa are an essential requirement for the Secretariat.

4.17 Composition: The composition and structure of the Secretariat, as well as its oversight, will be proposed by the host institution and agreed to by the Executive Board.

4.18 Roles and Responsibilities: The Secretariat shall execute the technical assistance functions of PASET and organize its Regional Forums and other workshops. It will also supervise the implementation of RSIF by the RSIF Implementation Unit in coordination with the Executive Board. It shall house communications, recording, and monitoring and evaluation functions to provide ongoing quality control. Working closely with the Executive Director of the Executive Board, it shall organize meetings of the Governing Council, Executive Board and Consultative Advisory Group.

RSIF Implementation Unit

4.19 Composition: The RSIF will be hosted and implemented by a qualified African institution. The RSIF Implementation Unit will be established to manage the three windows of the RSIF: scholarships, research grants and innovation grants. The composition and structure of the RSIF Implementation Unit will be proposed by the hosting institution and agreed to by the Executive Board.

4.20 Roles and responsibilities: The RSIF Implementation Unit will seek to implement, manage, monitor and grow the RSIF in line with terms of the Agreement between PASET and the institution hosting the RSIF Implementation Unit, as amended from time to time. It will carry out tasks for the RSIF under the strategic direction of the PASET Governing Council and guidance of the PASET Executive Board, with technical inputs from the PASET Consultative Advisory Group, as required. The RSIF Implementation Unit works closely in coordination with the PASET Secretariat.

Third Party Verification

4.21 A Third Party Verification (or Ombudsman Office) offers PASET's governance structure both internal and external protections and mechanisms to utilize best practices for good governance. These include clear procedures for registering and addressing conflicts of interest, mismanagement of program funds, disputes and other concerns. At the request of the Executive Board, it shall respond to governance issues arising in the course of implementing the RSIF and other PASET programs. Its initial focus would be on ensuring good governance of the RSIF.

4.22 This function shall be contracted out on a part-time basis to an experienced, proven private company, law firm, NGO or an individual. The Secretariat shall contract the required expertise under Terms of Reference agreed with the Executive Director of the Executive Board.
V. CONSULTATIVE ADVISORY GROUP (CAG)

5.1 The Consultative Advisory Group (CAG) is appointed by and serves at the discretion of the Executive Board as a volunteer body with a balanced membership representing a spectrum of legitimate advisory stakeholders in PASET. The Executive Board shall have responsibility for constituting the CAG and CAG members serve in their personal capacities.

5.2 Composition: The CAG will be composed of African scientists, academics, representatives of technical/vocational Education, private sector representatives, representatives of academic associations/institutions from international partner countries and internal agencies. The CAG may include representation from the Executive Board and the Secretariat in order to facilitate communication of priorities and decisions. The CAG will have two subcommittees, one on higher education, the other on TVET, each with subcommittee chairs, to provide targeted support and advice to the Executive Board. The sub-committee chairs will also serve as the Chair and Vice Chair of the CAG.

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities: The CAG would offer demand-driven expertise and specific advisory services to the Governing Council and Executive Board based on PASET’s emerging needs, as well as offer innovative, operational solutions for realizing PASET goals. It will provide a visible platform for sharing best practices, lessons learned, publications and regional experiences in ASET skill development. Members of the CAG may be requested by the Executive Board to attend special sessions of the Executive Board to offer advice on specific topics.

5.4 Chair of the CAG: The CAG Chair would be an eminent African academic or institutional leader. He/she will be elected from among the sub-committee chairs for higher education and TVET and will work closely with the Vice-Chair of the CAG (the other sub-committee Chair), the Governing Council co-Chairs, the Executive Director of the Executive Board and the PASET Secretariat.

VI. PASET REGIONAL FORUMS

6.1 PASET’s Regional Forums will be organized periodically in order to share knowledge and experiences in implementing PASET initiatives, and to mobilize support for PASET among SSA governments, private sector and partner countries and agencies, including among non-members. Decisions regarding the forums will be taken by the EB, in consultation with the Chair of the Governing Council.

VII. AMENDMENT

7.1 This document may be amended as and when approved by the Governing Council.
Annex 1
Overall goals of PASET
(Dakar Call to Action, June 2014)

Training at least 10,000 new PhD holders in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology programs;

Establishing a Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) regional-wide post graduate scholarship program in ASET fields;

Doubling the number of students in ASET programs in at least 10 SSA countries;

The emergence of at least 5 additional universities in SSA with high quality Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (ASET) programs, and centers of postgraduate studies & applied research in ASET disciplines;

At least 5 regional Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers of excellence for training faculty of TVET institutions, to enable resource sharing, quality assurance and specialized training in emerging areas;

The development of a regional quality assurance mechanism for ASET programs, benchmarked to comparable systems globally;

Establishment of high quality data systems and benchmarking of ASET programs and institutions in at least 10 SSA countries