Initial Project Information Document (PID)

Report No: AB156

Project Name	INDIA-Agricultural Higher Education Reforms Project
Region	South Asia Regional Office
Sector	Tertiary education (60%); Agricultural extension and research (40%)
Theme	Education for the knowledge economy (P); Rural services and infrastructure (S)
Project	P078536
Borrower(s)	GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
Implementing Agency(ies)	INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH Education Division Address: Education Division, ICAR, Krishi Anusandhan Bhavan-II, Pusa, New Delhi 110012 Contact Person: Dr. J.C. Katyal, Deputy Director General (Education) Tel: 91-11-25747760 Fax: 91-11-25810403 Email: jckatyal@icar1.nic.in
Environment Category	B (Partial Assessment)
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Bank Approval Date	March 30, 2004

1. Country and Sector Background

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for over 80% of the rural poor in India. Although, it employs about 59% of the labor force, it contributes to only 25% of GDP and 14% of all exports. Rural women, who constitute 30% of the agricultural work force, are amongst the least paid workers. Any effort of poverty reduction and economic development must address the problems being faced by the agricultural sector and turn the challenges into economic opportunities for the poor.

The Bank's Country Assistance Strategy for India aims at accelerating pro-poor rural development through investments and reforms in rural infrastructure and agricultural support services. It supports agricultural research and extension due to their large impact on rural poverty reduction and productivity growth. It also supports agricultural deregulation, and development of competitive and efficient agricultural markets with increased private sector participation.

Human resource development is critical in India for modernization of its agricultural sector, increasing productivity and competitiveness - and is crucial to underpin GOI/Bank plans for ongoing and future reforms of research and extension systems. Agricultural universities engaged primarily in producing professionals trained to ensure food security to the masses have not given due attention to the emerging realities. As a result, new agricultural graduates are not well equipped to meet the needs of farmers or the private sector. Today, a fewer number of better quality agricultural graduates, trained in a wider range of disciplines to be in demand from the private sector, are needed. While agricultural science graduates are still needed; so are agricultural economists capable of addressing agricultural policy issues (WTO, etc) and formulating development projects, and trained in farmer organization, post harvest handling,

marketing, and agribusiness. The system also needs to produce agricultural graduates with knowledge, skills, ability and confidence for successful entrepreneurship to provide a class of village-based services such as diagnostic laboratories, advisories on new innovations, markets and avenues of development assistance for corporate and contract farming. The involvement of industry through close collaboration with universities is essential if industry is to obtain well-trained agricultural professionals in cutting edge technologies for international competitiveness.

The proposed Agricultural Higher Education Reforms Project would help to implement strategic reforms in the existing system in India to produce the required professionals. The reforms, based on the National Agriculture Policy, focus on governance and financing of institutions, promotion of excellence, openness and linkages, and improved services to stakeholders. The Project would increase the opportunities for public-private partnership in agricuktural higher education. The project design will benefit from a parallel analysis of the issues facing Indian agriculture and agricultural higher education.

2. Objectives

The agricultural higher education system achieves excellence, enhanced relevance, and high efficiency; and agricultural universities offer enhanced services to benefit farmers and rural women.

3. Rationale for Bank's Involvement

Rural development and human development are priority sectors both for the Government of India and the Bank. Over the past 10 years, the Bank has funded a number of successful projects in these sectors making it a major partner in development. The Bank can bring valuable global knowledge and expertise in systemic reforms in the areas of tertiary education in India. The Bank's support can also accelerate the system-wide reforms that have been proposed but would otherwise take much longer due to resource limitations.

4. Description

The project as proposed would focus on major reforms in institutional governance, financing, academic quality and relevance. Governance and financial reforms will aim at providing greater freedom to universities resulting in improved efficiency, accountability and private-public partnership. *Academic reforms* will concentrate primarily on (a) consolidation and modernization of existing undergraduate programs for greater relevance and reorientation towards the knowledge, skills and attitude demanded by the changing business climate, and (b) promotion of excellence in selected critical/emerging areas at the postgraduate education and research levels. Extension services would be strengthened for enhanced outreach to farmers, unemployed youth and rural women, and transferring skills to them that would increase their earning capacity. Considerable emphasis will be placed on forging closer linkages among institutions, industry and R&D organizations. *Systemic reforms* would focus on improved manpower planning, global technology watch, continued curriculum upgradation to meet emerging needs, strengthening management capacity, improving quality assurance mechanisms, increasing systemic efficiency, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation capacity at different levels.

Efforts will be made to increase public-private partnership in agricultural education through (a) the increased role of the private sector in curriculum design, research and development and institute governance, and (b) providing a window for direct project support to private sector initiatives related to training opportunities for agricultural graduates.

To achieve a system-wide impact with potential multiplier effect, the project would use *selective funding* as a strategic vehicle for reforms. This is expected to trigger innovative thinking and greater ownership at the level of institutions. The process is also expected to result in a significant level of stakeholder and beneficiary consultations and ownership.

5. Financing

Source (Total (US$m))

BORROWER ($40.00)
IBRD ($80.00)
IDA ($80.00)
Total Project Cost: $200.00

6. Implementation

At the national level, the project would be guided, directed and coordinated by a Central Project Management Committee (CPMC) under the Chairmanship of the Director General, ICAR. The Deputy Director General (Education) in ICAR, in his capacity as the Central Project Director (CPD), would have the overall responsibility for project implementation, coordination and monitoring. The CPD would be assisted in discharging his/her functions by a Central Project Implementation Unit (CPIU). At the institutional level, the project would be coordinated and monitored by an Institutional Project Implementation Unit (IPIU) under the charge of a full-time Institutional Project Coordinator (IPC). Stakeholders and private sector sector would be represented in advisory committees at the national level as well as at institutional level. Their roles and responsibilities will be worked out during project preparation.

7. Sustainability

The project would initiate a carefully selected set of reforms in the agricultural higher education system. These reforms would need to have demonstrative impact to be sustained and expanded to cover the whole sector in due course. The project would cause significant increase and change in institutional activities, addition of substantial new equipment and establishment of a system for regular training of faculty and staff. New programs in critical/emerging areas will also be introduced. On the other hand, the project would also result in significant savings due to consolidation of programs and faculties/units, better utilization of existing facilities, optimized student:faculty:staff ratio and closer linkages with the private sector. The long-term sustainability of reforms will be analyzed during project preparation.

8. Lessons learned from past operations in the country/sector

The project design would take into account the lessons learned from the Bank's international experience in supporting agricultural education and the recently completed India:Agricultural Human Resource Development project (AHRDP), as well as the projects in Technical Education in India.

9. Environment Aspects (including any public consultation)

Issues : Environmental issues in the project would include construction-related, site-specific impacts whenever buildings are constructed or refurbished; use of pesticides in university farms; and the management of hazardous wastes on the SAU/DU campuses. No acquisition of land or major construction activity is planned. Only minor extensions or refurbishment of existing university buildings would be supported. Further, construction-related impacts would be mitigated or managed by use of specific guidelines or code of environmental practice, and careful management of the building activities. The waste management practices from university laboratories and work stations would be clearly assessed, and based on the results from these quick assessments, strategies for better waste management in the project could be worked out. In a similar fashion, ICAR would need to undertake a quick assessment of the pattern and scale of the use of different pesticides on the campuses.

10. List of factual technical documents:

1. Revised Concept Note on Agricultural Human Resource Development Project, Phase II, Feb 2003, Indian Council of Agricultural Research
2. Agricultural Human Resource Development Project, Implementation Completion Report, Number 24287, June 2002, the World Bank
3. 50 Years of Agricultural Education in India, December 1999, Indian Council of Agricultural Research
4. Scientific and Technical Manpower in India, Report Number 20416-IN, August 2000, The World Bank
5. India: Technical/Engineering Education Quality Improvement Project, Project Appraisal Report, No. 24239, Sept 2002, The World Bank
6. Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education, Directions in Development Document, 2002, The World Bank
7. Linkage between government spending, growth, and poverty in rural India, by Fan, Hazell and Thorat., Research Report 110, 1999, IFPRI
8. Investing in Science for Food Security in the 21st Century, Discussion paper, Rural Development Department, The World Bank
9. Assessment of National Manpower Needs in Agriculture and Allied Sectors (In India), Report prepared for ICAR, October 2001, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi,

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Note: This is information on an evolving project. Certain components may not be necessarily included in the final project.