

## WORKING PAPER

### Implementation of PC-1

on

### Academic Collaboration under CPEC Consortium of Universities

#### 1. Background

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship program of Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. It is aimed at socio-economic development in Pakistan, and is considered a game-changer for Pakistan due to its all-encompassing scope, covering a wide range of projects from infrastructure to energy, industrial parks to poverty alleviation, and food security to energy security. The Corridor is expected to be functional by 2025 and fully completed by 2030. Mindful of its role and responsibility to support the national effort under CPEC umbrella, the Higher Education Commission established a CPEC Academic Research and Development Unit in December 2016 to support CPEC initiatives by preparing requisite human resource for CPEC projects, in order to promote people-to-people contacts for civilizational harmony, undertake research to learn from Chinese experience, and develop own institutions to solve regional and national issues.

In order to support and sustain this historic project, it was decided to create a formal platform to connect with Chinese universities for training high-tech human resource and strengthening cultural ties between the two countries. Consequently, “CPEC Consortium of Business School”’s was founded in Islamabad on 28-29 August 2017 as a precursor to the “CPEC Consortium of Universities”. Its scope was expanded in the follow-up meeting held in Fudan University to encompass other areas in the domain of higher education and the alliance was renamed as “CPEC Consortium of Universities”. Its Articles of Association were adopted to promote its objectives. Within three years, the number of member universities more than doubled and academic collaboration expanded accordingly, besides strengthen friendly ties between the two academic communities.

The Consortium serves as a platform for consultations among the stakeholders and an exchange mechanism for collaborative initiatives. Its annual meetings are held alternately in China and Pakistan. The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual conference, was held in Islamabad on 18-19 November 2019 to review progress, hold focused discussions and realign efforts for achievements of professed objectives. It was attended by 45 Pakistani universities. The 4<sup>th</sup> exchange meeting had to be postponed due to CORONA-pandemic.

## **2. Need for Joint Initiatives**

With more than fifty universities on board, there was an air of expectation and a need was felt to give impetus to the on-going momentum in the wake of successful exchange mechanism meeting in Islamabad in November 2019. Foregoing in view, a project proposal in the form of a PC-1 was submitted to the Planning Commission in March 2020, which was approved in November after due process. The PC-1 is to be executed in three and aims at providing financial support for joint initiatives among member universities of the two counties.

## **3. Objectives of PC-1**

The objectives of the Project are as under:

- a. Study the geo-strategic and geo-economic dimensions of the Chinese Belt and Road initiative and CPEC to understand their long-term impact on Pakistan.
- b. Develop mechanisms to fully exploit the opportunities arising out of the China's appetite for global talent, and facilitate absorption of their graduates by Pakistani economy.
- c. Support higher education institutions (HEIs) in the development of human resource to implement CPEC Long Term Plan.

- d. Develop capacity of Pakistani universities for providing policy inputs to the government on the challenges emerging in the wake of implementation of CPEC Long Term Plan.
- e. Develop an understanding of Chinese history, culture and governance system that has created the Chinese miracle, while drawing lessons for own development.

#### 4. Implementation Strategies

There are basically four initiatives designed to achieve the objectives of CPEC Consortium of Universities as under:

- a. **Joint Research:** An initiative in the form of **Pak-China Research Partnership** will be launched to support researchers from both sides to undertake joint research on selected themes and issues related to CPEC.
  - (1) **Scope:** Keeping in view the foreseeable impact of CPEC, this initiative will go a long way in supporting collaborative research proposals, addressing problems and issues pertaining to Pakistan's socio-economic development under CPEC Initiatives. Priority thematic areas include: Sustainable Agriculture, Health and Wellbeing, Clean Water and Sanitation, Poverty Alleviation, Science and Technology for Sustainable Development, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Cultural Harmony between Pakistan and China, Sustainable Energy, Sustainable Infrastructure.
  - (2) **Mechanism:** Research themes for joint research along with call for proposals will be given soon through HEC R&D Division. Faculty members interested in joint research may start contacting their partner research faculty in China. The grants of Rs50 – 200m will be awarded to joint Pakistan-China Research teams through a transparent and competitive process as already in place for

other similar initiatives. Research proposals will be invited, scrutinized and evaluated by committees of experts for award of projects.

**b. Talent Cultivation and Training:** Talented faculty and students constitute the best resource to establish long-term partnerships and promote civilizational harmony

(1) **Scope:** This Project will focus on the following four mechanisms for talent cultivation and training to explore possibilities of initiating a larger and more substantive China-Pakistan academic and intellectual relationship in subsequent years. Selected talents will be provided economy-class return airfare and a living allowance for the duration of stay / training. As many as 435 talented faculty members/students will be trained under this program. Apart from training in China, courses / workshops will be organized in Pakistan, on regional basis, for the benefit of the local HEIs.

(2) **Mechanisms**

(a) **Study Abroad/ Placements:** This is an exchange program where 60 Pakistani and 120 Chinese candidates will be afforded opportunities for six months study abroad / placement option. The exchange students can be promising undergraduate students (of final year), or graduate students in research phase. Both Pakistani and Chinese students will be funded by HEC, Pakistan. However, universities will select partner universities that are willing to wave off tuition fee and provide free hostel accommodation. Pakistani universities can accept two Chinese students against every exchange student of their own. The funding support will cover economy class return air ticket, living allowance and health insurance.

- b. Post-doc Training:** The Project will support 15 Pakistani post-doc scholars and 15 Chinese scholars for research in Pakistani universities. Pakistani member universities will send their requests to CPEC Unit in HEC, while Chinese universities will route their requests through CAHE. The funding support will cover economy class return air ticket, living allowance and health insurance. Host universities will be requested for fee waiver and free accommodation.
- (c) Short-Term Trainings:** HEC will fund short trainings (1-2 weeks) of 150 Pakistani faculty and staff in China. A detailed program of short training will be announced later. Likewise, 20 Chinese resource persons will be invited to Pakistan to conduct short trainings for university faculty and staff. The subjects and program of these trainings will also be shared later. Pakistani universities may share their proposals in this regard with HEC.
- (d) Dual Degree Programs with Chinese Universities:** This initiative will be launched on experimental basis to explore its efficacy for expansion. The Project will support 10 BS and 20 MS students. Hence the universities have to compete to win it. They need to select and get commitment from leading Chinese partner universities. Universities with strong quality culture and good international ranking are encouraged to participate in the competitive bids.

**b. Conferences, workshops and seminars.**

- (1) Scope:** It aims at supporting Pakistani universities to organize conferences, workshops and seminars. As many as twelve conferences / workshops / seminars will be organized in the next three years to devise strategies and action plans to achieve the objectives of the CPEC Consortium and share

knowledge / conclusions of research with Consortium partners. They will be organized primarily to design and develop curricula of new academic programs, formulate research themes, and share research outcomes. These workshops and conferences will help determine the course of action to support CPEC across the length and breadth of Pakistan. Some thematic areas are listed below:

- a. Sustainable infrastructure and digital connectivity
- b. Sustainable energy infrastructure, energy economics and management.
- c. Sustainable agriculture and poverty alleviation.
- d. Industrial parks and special economic zones.
- e. People to people contacts and civilizational harmony.
- f. Tourism, coastal development and ocean economy.
- g. Financial cooperation and border management.

(2) **Mechanism:** Pakistani member universities may submit their proposals for events planned during the next three years.. Proposals will be formally evaluated / peer reviewed for award of funding.

**d. Establishment of China Study Centers:** Six centers will be established in the areas where there are no Confucius Centers. Five provinces, including Gilgit Baltistan, will have one Center each, while Azad Jammu and Kashmir will have one.

(1) **Scope:** A total of six (6) centers are planned to be established. Five provinces, including Gilgit-Baltistan will have one centre each, while Azad Jammu and Kashmir will have one. The Centres will help understand Chinese miracle of rising as a great power in such a short time, and their concept of Socialism with

Chinese Characteristics to sustain their growth as a super power. They will undertake the following activities:

- Organize Chinese language classes for the faculty and students.
- Organize activities to promote understanding of China system and culture.
- Undertake translations of Chinese literary pieces to promote understanding of Chinese cultural traditions.
- Act as a think tank / area Study Centre on China.
- Promote / coordinate CPEC-focused research.

(2) **Mechanism:** HEC will cover the cost of employment of an Associate Professor, an Assistant Professor, a Lecturer/ Research Associate and an Assistant Librarian for three years. Each Center will be provided a total of PKR. 22.815 Million to cover the HR related cost and another PKR. 6.00 Million for library and study material.

### 3. Expression of Interest

Pakistani members of China-Pakistan Consortium of Universities that are interested to participate in this initiatives are requested to send in their bids / proposals regarding talent cultivation covering post-doc training options for their faculty, student exchange with the names of partner universities, and dual degree options with the names of Chinese partners.

- a. Qualification profile of faculty and staff educated and trained in China.
- b. Existing linkages with Chinese universities.
- c. Participation in joint research with Chinese universities
- d. Student/ faculty exchanges undertaken so far.
- e. Hostel facilities / guest houses for exchange students and faculty.

The universities bidding for China Study Centre will provide the following information as part of their Expression of Interest:

- a. Is a China Study Centre (in any form) already functioning in the University?
- b. What human resource is dedicated to the Centre?
- c. What facilities are available? List facilities with room sizes, equipment, furniture, teaching / study material, etc.
- d. Does it have Internet connectivity? Give bandwidth.
- e. Does it have a dedicated budget? Give Annual budget.
- f. What activities were organized during the last two years? Achievements, if any?
- g. Does it have any publications to its credit? Give details.