

Decision No. EI-2024-26 on the accreditation of the WASCAL Graduate Study Programme (PhD) on Climate Change Economics delivered by Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, Senegal

The President of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education,

Considering the Research Code, in particular Articles L. 114-3-1 to L. 114-3-6;

Considering the Board's deliberation of 29th September 2022 on the accreditation criteria for international study programmes (except doctorates/PhDs);

Considering the Decision No. 2023-9 of 16th March 2023 on the international accreditation procedure of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education;

Considering the agreement DEI_20220407 of 12th May 2022 - for the evaluation/accreditation of seven training courses, delivered by training and research centres affiliated to the WASCAL network in seven sub-Saharan African countries;

Considering the opinion issued by the Accreditation Commission on 25th April 2024;

Decides:

Article 1

Noting that the Graduate Study Programme on Climate Change Economics delivered by Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, in Senegal, meets the four accreditation criteria, voted by the Board of the High Council on 29th September 2022, as follows:

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 1: DOCTORAL POLICY

The Climate Change Economics Graduate Studies Programme (GSP) is consistent with the institution's overall training strategy. The team in charge of the programme proficiently delineates, elucidates, and substantiates the positioning of the doctorate within the scientific orientations and thematic priorities of the University and of the Wascal network. The GSP takes into account the social, economic, and environmental needs of the various partner countries. It is closely integrated with existing Master's programmes and appropriately positioned within local, national, or international training offerings. The GSP has established numerous international partnerships to ensure robust support from research laboratories. However, the relationships between the GSP and its research partners needs clearer definition, particularly regarding the supervision and monitoring of doctoral theses. The adequate level of the doctoral dissertations is attested by the excellent quality of the associated scientific output. The GSP provides students with an international platform through the organisation of conferences and study trips.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 2: TRAINING, HOSTING AND SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Doctoral students within the Climate Change Economics Graduate Studies Programme benefit from homogeneous, high-quality, and transparent recruitment conditions. The initial training programme provides them with multidisciplinary knowledge and skills, accommodating the diverse student batches through English and French language courses. However, the GSP lacks the input of socioeconomic partners and formal procedures to assessing the skills acquired by its students. The supervision conditions and hosting arrangements for PhD students within research laboratories need clearer definition to ensure interdisciplinarity. Doctoral students benefit from adequate material and financial conditions, thanks to the support from the WASCAL network, but with very little flexibility. Despite the existence of a Thesis Charter at UCAD level, the compliance rules and criteria for the final Ph.D. defence should be better defined.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 3: ATTRACTIVENESS, PERFORMANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

The Climate Change Economics Graduate Studies Programme benefits from a well-structured international network of partner universities, ensuring high-quality recruitment of PhD candidates through

clear admission procedures and regulations. The increasing number of applicants testifies to its attractiveness, although a qualitative analysis is lacking, and targeted promotion of the GSP could be enhanced. The programme features a remarkably high success rate for graduates (100%) and strictly adheres to the three-year target duration of PhD theses. The career path of CCE graduates is well monitored (on an internal basis), showing a strong focus on academia and a marginal impact on private or public decision-making bodies, thereby only partially aligning with the WASCAL network's objectives.

ACCREDITATION CRITERION 4: MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

The Climate Change Economics Graduate Studies Programme benefits from a well-formalised and documented framework for selecting, hosting, and supervising PhD candidates. Its organisational efficiency is supported by adequate financial means, human resources, and infrastructure. The support of the central WASCAL competence platform located in Ouagadougou is instrumental for capitalising on the data collected by PhD candidates and their fieldwork. However, the absence of an independent mediation body to address and resolve difficulties encountered by PhD students, whether related to course validation or thesis supervision, is a notable gap. While an institutional policy is in place for the training and capacity-building of lecturers or supervisors, there are no incentives to encourage university staff participation in the GSP. Although the programme's courses undergo thorough evaluation by students, with the results informing improvements to the training period, there is room for enhancing the efficiency and systematic nature of quality procedures.

Article 2

The WASCAL Graduate Study Programme (PhD) on Climate Change Economics delivered by Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar, in Senegal, is accredited for a period of 5 years from the date of this decision.

Article 3

The decision is accompanied by the following recommendations and comments:

- Adapt the training curriculum to accommodate the needs of public and private decision-makers regarding climate change, broaden the career prospects for graduates beyond academia, and leverage the impact of the CCE programme in addressing the outlined challenges.
- Increase the number of graduates by deploying a proactive partnership policy with relevant stakeholders (economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, or fisheries, regional/national authorities and governments, industry, and consultancies).
- Develop vocational training courses based on the programme's competences and expertise, as well as entrepreneurship training.
- Favour the immersion of French-speaking students in English-speaking countries during the initial language-training period by dispatching them over several locations/countries.
- Make the six-month initial academic training course modular to make room for advanced topics when necessary, based on students' background and research projects, and provide a diploma supplement to track this tailor-made curriculum.
- Structure and formalise partnerships with a selected group of recognised German institutions to enhance collaboration.
- Include external stakeholders in thesis supervision committees and ensure that the two main supervisors represent different disciplines to foster interdisciplinarity.
- Implement tools such as a dashboard to monitor the career path of alumni and provide feedback on the programme curriculum.

Article 4

This decision will be published on the Hcéres website.

Paris, 14th June 2024.

The acting President
signed
Stéphane Le Boulter