



INSTITUTE OF PROCUREMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STANDARDS (IPESS)

**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, MAKURDI (FUAM)
NOW KNOWN AS JOSEPH SARWUAN TARKA UNIVERSITY,
MAKURDI (JOSTUM)**



Excellence & Professionalism

MARCH, 2025

BULLETIN
Vol. 3, NUMBER 2

Dear Esteemed Reader,

Welcome to another special bulletin edition of the Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM). This Volume 3, Number 2, March 2025 edition highlights the programmes and progress recorded by the Institute from February through the end of March 2025.

Our unwavering commitment to building sustainable human capacity aimed at addressing critical societal challenges remains at the core of our mission. At IPESS JOSTUM, we continue to make significant strides in capacity development—focusing on bridging the skills and expertise gaps in procurement, environmental, and social standards. Through tailored training programmes, we empower both individuals and external stakeholders with the knowledge and tools necessary to thrive in their respective roles.

A major highlight in this edition is the successful hosting of a 3-day Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat for Principal Officers, Deans, Directors, and Heads of Departments of JOSTUM. In today's interconnected world, information is one of the most valuable assets. Our commitment to responsible information disclosure underpins our pursuit of transparency, accountability, and trust. IPESS JOSTUM has fully institutionalised information disclosure practices as a foundation for building fair, transparent, and effective systems.

In alignment with the guidelines of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project, the Institute underwent its 5th round of independent third-party verification, facilitated by the World Bank. We are proud to report that we successfully scaled through the exercise. The Team Lead of the Independent Third-Party Verification Agency (ITPVA), Professor Adenike Emeke, commended the unwavering dedication of our management and staff, noting our consistent drive for excellence. Having topped the rankings in the previous three verification rounds, we remain optimistic about retaining our number one position in the current round.

Collaboration continues to be a cornerstone of

our strategy. By partnering with like-minded institutions, we foster innovation, enhance our problem-solving capacity, and amplify our impact. In this spirit, our Centre Leader and Director, Professor Lami A. Nnamonu, recently led a delegation to the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) and the International Programmes Office of the University of Ghana. These visits are part of our efforts to establish and strengthen mutually beneficial international partnerships.

We are also pleased to report the successful migration of our short executive and advanced certificate courses to online platforms. This shift has sustained the delivery of our programmes and enabled us to train a growing number of participants in the core areas of procurement, environmental, and social standards.

Overall, IPESS JOSTUM's efforts in human capacity development reflect a holistic and strategic approach to addressing the pressing need for skilled professionals in our focus areas.

I invite you to carefully explore the pages of this bulletin and take full advantage of the information and visuals presented for your education and enrichment.

Kindly accept the assurances of my highest regards.



Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu, FICCON, FCSN, FSTAN, PMP
Center Leader & Director,
Institute of Procurement Environmental
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Dr. C.O. ECHE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, IPESS

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IPESS JOSTUM HOST UNIVERSITY HEADS TO A LEADERSHIP BOOTCAMP AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE EXERCISE

The institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS) Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM) recently organized a 3-day Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat for Principal Officers, Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments of the University to build capacity and update them of the progress made by the Institute.

The event held from 3rd-5th February 2025 at Rockview Hotel Classic Abuja.



JOSTUM Vice Chancellor, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo (2nd left) Presenting Certificate of Participation to the Registrar of JOSTUM, Dr John David (2nd right) during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja

The Vice Chancellor JOSTUM, Engr Professor Isaac N. Itodo while declaring the event open commended IPESS JOSTUM for the initiative and expressed satisfaction on the achievements recorded by the Institute. The Vice Chancellor stated that, IPESS is the most impactful programme of the University and pledged his administration's commitment to continuously support the programmes and initiatives of the institute for the attainment of greater heights. Engineer Professor Itodo enjoined participants to make the most out of the capacity building opportunity presented by IPESS JOSTUM and also contribute meaningfully to aspects that would advance the Institute.

The National Coordinator of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project, Dr Joshua Atah while explaining the structure of the SPESSE project stated that the project was designed to bridge the knowledge gap in the areas of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards. The SPESSE Coordinator who was represented by Peter Tobrise of the National Universities Commission (NUC) asserted that the World Bank funding marks a turning point for JOSTUM and IPESS is Performing excellently to contribute to Nigeria's development agenda. According to him, diversifying funding sources, leveraging technology, strengthening institutional capacity, and fostering partnerships will be key to achieving set goals. He called on the University management to own the project and see it as one of those external interventions that would boost the profile of the University if properly implemented.

Speaking on the progress, achievements, and path

forward of IPESS JOSTUM, the Center Leader and Director, Professor Lami A. Nnamonu reiterated the tremendous achievements of the Institute and its impact on the University as well as those who participated in her programmes. Professor Nnamonu stated that, IPESS JOSTUM has constantly stayed atop of the ranking ladder of Centers of excellence under the SPESSE project and is the only Center to have trained in all states of the domiciled geopolitical zone without reaches in Abuja, Jos, Keffi, Lafia, Minna, Ilorin and Lokoja. According to the Director, the institute has carried out massive human capacity building and physical infrastructural development at the University and as well engaged at least 18 international faculties across Procurement Standards (PS), Environmental Standards (ES) and Social Standards (SS) teaching tracks. She added that, ensuring the annual subscription of Nigerian research and Education Network (Ng-REN), acquisition of softwares, modernization of 10 classrooms and the establishment of state-of-the-art teaching and learning studios etc. are other significant achievements attained by the Institute.



IPESS Management Team, Deans and Directors at JOSTUM during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja

Professor Nnamonu pledged the Institute's commitment to intensify online facilitation with the launch of paid courses, work with JOSTUM administration to fast track the commencement of PhD programmes, host a Master Class and International Conference in Abuja, and as well continue onboarding more students from the sub-region. Other paths forward as outlined by the Center Director include, pursuing international accreditation, executing and formalizing key partnerships, facilitating stakeholders' engagement, alumni tracking and sustaining the activities of the project.

The Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure exercise featured presentations from both local and international resource persons on various topics of human interest for the professional growth of participants.

Cohort 2 graduands of online advanced certificate course (Track B) at the Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) have been charged to confidently showcase their certificates and apply the knowledge and skills gained to improve their respective workplaces and the society.



Dr C.O. Eche
Deputy Director, IPESS JOSTUM

The Center Leader and Director, Professor Lami A. Nnamonu gave the charge on 28th March 2025 during the online valedictory event to mark the end of the three weeks Track B training programme organized by IPESS JOSTUM.

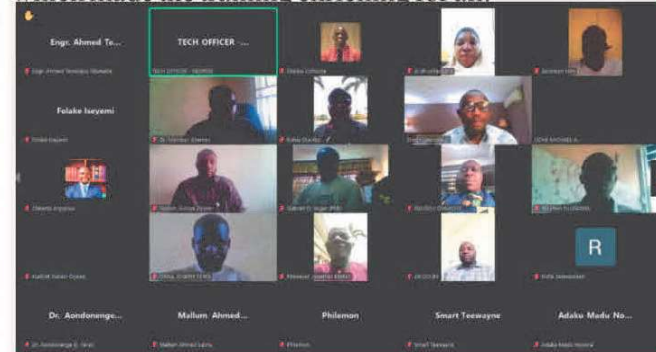
In a goodwill message, Professor Lami A. Nnamonu who was represented by the Deputy Director, IPESS, Dr Christopher Eche commended the IPESS team for making the training a hug success and the graduands for their hardwork and resilience that earned them the certificates. He stated that, the graduation event marked not only the completion of an intensive academic journey but also the beginning of a new chapter in their professional careers. He added that the certificates should remind graduands of the sacrifices they put in and the skills they have acquired and think of how they can deploy the skills to better the society. Dr Eche expressed confidence that, graduands were adequately equipped with the necessary skills and expertise to help them navigate the global landscape especially in public governance and economic development. The Deputy Director while inspiring the graduands to make indelible marks, further encouraged them to embrace new responsibilities that would come with their newfound skills, saying, they have the power to influence practices that will contribute to a just, equitable and sustainable world.

The Assistant Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Patricia Kuma in her presentation titled “Drivers of Change” encouraged graduands to courageously apply the knowledge and skills gained during the training to drive the needed positive change. She stated that as change agents, graduands were expected to be committed to promoting best practices by upholding integrity, professionalism, and patriotism. Kuma Patricia added that, improving the quality of life of the people, as well as contributing to reducing the

incidences of corruption and mismanagement of public resources, were other core responsibilities of the ordained agents of change. She called on the graduands to sustain the already established relationship and share the knowledge gained with their colleagues and on the other hand share success stories with the Institute saying, the training was the beginning of a symbiotic, lifelong journey.

Delivering the valedictory speech, Akanbi Esther Oluwaferanmi on behalf of the graduands stated that the training was fulfilling as it availed them the opportunity to acquire cutting edge skills in their respective fields of endeavour. According to her, they were taught dedication, self-discipline, teamwork, and the power of learning when it is made accessible and supportive. Akanbe Esther while appreciating the organizers, facilitators and the support staff of the programme further encourage the graduands to judiciously apply the knowledge acquired for the good of humanity. ” To my fellow participants - I celebrate every one of you. We didn't just sign up for a course, we committed to growth, and I pray we continue to apply the knowledge we've gained in our careers, our communities, and at various points where necessary for the betterment of the society.” Akanbi Esther said.

The examination Officer, Sustainable Social Development Dr Hephzibah Obekpa in a vote of thanks commended the graduands for their active engagement, insightful contributions, and dedication to learning which made the training enriching for all.



A snapshot of Track B participants during IPESS JOSTUM online Valedictory Event

She imagined the attendant challenges with starting and completing an online course and expressed appreciation for the time and effort invested by participants in exploring the critical aspects of procurement, environmental, and social standards. Dr Obekpa also encouraged the graduands to use the knowledge and skills acquired during the course to empower others and make a positive impact in their respective fields as well as contribute to creating a more sustainable and responsible future.

The team leader of the Independent Third-Party Verification Agency (ITPVA), Professor Adenike Emeke has lauded the unflinching quest for greater heights demonstrated by the management and staff of the Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM).



ITPVA Leader, Prof. Adenike Emeke (3rd left) Addressing the Vice Chancellor, JOSTUM during a Courtesy Visit.

The team leader made the Commendation on 10th March 2025 during a courtesy visit on the Vice Chancellor, JOSTUM, Engr Professor I.N. Itodo in his office prior to the commencement of the 5th round Independent Third-Party Verification exercise in IPESS, JOSTUM.

Professor Adenike stated that, as part of quality assurance, the team was in the University to verify acclaimed achievements presented by the institute and as well ensure that they are in line with the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standard Enhancement (SPESSE) project's guidelines and or standard best practice. She added that a post exercise report will be sent to the World Bank, National Universities Commissions (NUC) and all Centers of Excellence implementing the SPESSE project. The team leader further commended IPESS team for constantly making deliberate efforts to implement corrections and recommendations which has culminated to greater improvement at the institute and urged them to sustain the tempo.

A team from the Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS) Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) led by the Center Leader and Director, Professor Lami A. Nnamonu on March 3rd, 2025, paid a visit to Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) to foster collaboration ties.

Professor Lami Nnamonu who was accompanied by the Project Management Officer, Dr John I. Ona and JOSTUM Liaison Officer, Mrs Larai Gbum held fruitful discussions with the Director, Training and Consulting, Prof. Paul Rex Danquah at Legon, Ghana.

The advocacy visit was extended to the International Programmes Office of University of Ghana on 5th March 2025.

Draft of Memorandum of Understanding was sent to University of Ghana and GIMPA to strengthen the collaboration.



Center Leader and Director, Prof. L.A. Nnamonu (r), outgoing Director of International Programmes, Dr. Joseph Eeklu (M) and JOSTUM ULO, Mrs Larai Gbum.

HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING: IPESS JOSTUM LEADER SUES FOR COMMITMENT

The Center Leader and Director, Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS) Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM), Professor Lami A. Nnamonu has called on the freshly enrolled online participants of the Advanced certificate course (Track B) programme to remain committed and fulfil the necessary requirements for the award of certificates.



Dr John I. Ona, Project Management Officer, IPESS JOSTUM

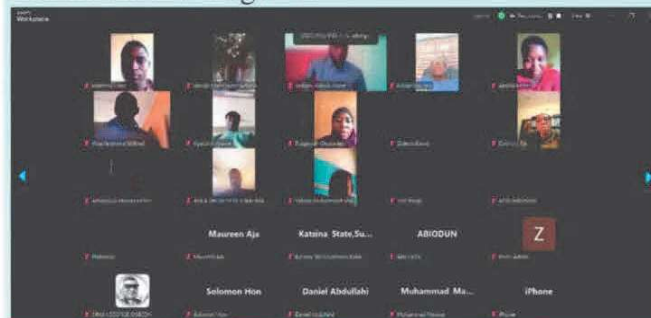
The Center Leader, represented by the Project Management Officer, Dr John I. Ona made the call on Monday 3rd March 2025 during an online orientation event organized by the institute to commence Track B training in the areas of

Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards. In a goodwill message, the Center Director commended the participants for electing to seek skills that will not only improve their workplaces but the society at large. She stated that the programme was designed to build the capacity of participants in the fields of Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards to enable them cope with new trends in the areas. The Center Leader encouraged participants to submit themselves and avoid distractions that will lead to non-issuance of their respective certificates.

Dr John I. Ona during a presentation titled “This is IPESS” stated that the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) Project is a World Bank funded project designed to cater for the deficiencies of critical skills in Procurement Standards (PS), Environmental Standards (ES) and Social Standards (SS) through training, professionalization and research. He added that the development of capacities and competencies in the three thematic areas anchored by the Institute is a key prerequisite to advancement in these sectors. Outlining the achievements of the Institute, Dr Ona maintained that IPESS JOSTUM came first during the first, second and third Independent Verification Exercise amongst the Six Centres of Excellence (Ces) on the SPESSE project and as well emerged as the only CE to have trained in all states in the domiciled geopolitical zone with

centres in Abuja, Jos, Keffi, Lafia, Minna, Ilorin and Lokoja. According to the Project Management Officer, the engagement of at least 18 International Faculty across PS, ES and SS and, the enrolment of regional students from the Gambia are other key achievements of the Institute.

The Monitoring and evaluation Officer, Professor Simon A. Shomkegh while speaking on the topic “IPESS Advanced Certificate Courses: Requirements and Obligations of Online Participants” emphasized that participants were to carefully read and understand all course materials posted on the Learning Management System (LMS) and respond to all course exercises as requested by the facilitators. Professor Shomkegh added that participants must obtain at least 50% in the end of course proficiency test to receive a course completion certificate. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer further encouraged them to share ideas/experiences by responding to posts from other participants and be respectful to course facilitators and co-participants as defaulters will be removed from the course after due diligence.



A snapshot of Track B participants during IPESS JOSTUM online Orientation Event

Speaking on “Navigating the Virtual Learning Environment” IPESS JOSTUM Information and Communications Technology Officer (ICTO), Engr Terngu Tingir stated that as a prerequisite, participants must have digital devices and strong internet connection for seamless participation. The ICTO who was represented by one of his Technical Assistant, Mr George Ugbeda called on the participants to commit a reasonable amount of time capped with an open mind for the successful completion of their courses.

In a vote of thanks, the Deputy Center Leader, Environmental Standards, Professor Rufus Sha-Ato thanked the Federal Government of Nigeria, the National Universities Commission and IPESS JOSTUM for initiating and implementing the project respectively. Professor Sha-Ato while commending participants' resolve to be part of the change initiative also encouraged them to maximally utilize the training opportunities provided by IPESS JOSTUM in their quest to becoming professionals and advancing their careers.



Center Leader and Director, Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu Delivering a Presentation during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Center Leader and Director, Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu (left) and University Liaison Officer, Larai Gbum during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



JOSTUM SIWES Coordinator, Prof. Bibiana Igbabul (left) Contributing during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Deputy Center Leader, Environmental Standards, Prof. Rufus Sha-Ato (left) adorning one of the Resource Persons from Kenya, Samson Raji with the Tiv Traditional Attire during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Director, Academic Planning Professor Simon Irtwange (right) Contributing during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Prof. Simon A Shomkegh Delivering a Presentation during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Research Team Lead, Social Standards, Prof. Simon Ejembi (left) and some Participants Paying Keen Attention to a Presentation during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



L-R (front row) Deputy Director, Dr C.O. Eche, Academic Programme Coordinator, Environmental Standards, Prof. E.J. Ekefan, and Center Leader & Director, Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu Paying Keen attention to a Presentation during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Facilitators and Participants on a Health Break during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



L-R, Center Leader and Director, Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu, Florence Guantai, JOSTUM VC, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo, and Samson Raiji during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Fanen Acho of Medleypark Limited, Lagos facilitating during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Deputy Vice chancellor Academics, Prof. Fidelis Ayatse (left), Contributing during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



JOSTUM Vice Chancellor, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo, Members of IPESSE JOSTUM Management Team and the Two Resource Persons from Kenya (2nd left and 3rd right) during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Prof. Adebayo Paul Adejola, Facilitating from the US during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



Samson Raiji from Kenya Facilitating during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



JOSTUM Vice Chancellor, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo, (left) Addressing Principal Officers of the University during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



IPESS JOSTUM Management, Facilitators and Heads of Departments during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja





Deputy Center Leader, Procurement Standards, Prof. Simon T. Kpelai Directing Proceedings during Leadership Bootcamp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja



ITPVA Leader, Prof. Adenike Emeke (3rd left) Addressing the Vice Chancellor, JOSTUM during a Courtesy Visit.



JOSTUM Management Team with ITPVA and Members of IPSS Management prior to the Commencement of the 5th Round Independent Third-Party Verification Exercise at IPSS JOSTUM



L-R: PMO, Dr John Ona, ULO, Mrs Larai Gbum, CL&D, Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu, Acting Dean of International Programs & Summer School Coordinator, Dr Cyrelene Amoah-Buampong and outgoing Director of International Programs, Dr Joseph Ecklu in Ghana.





Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Prof. Simon A. Shomkegh (right) and Assistant Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Kuma Patricia Tabe (2nd right) during the 5th Round Independent Third-Party Verification Exercise at IPSS JOSTUM



Independent Third-Party Verification Agents and Data Officers during the 5th Round Independent Third-Party Verification Exercise at IPSS JOSTUM



Data Officers, ICT Team and Independent Third-Party Verification Agents during the 5th Round Independent Third-Party Verification Exercise at IPSS JOSTUM

The Vice Chancellor, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM) Engr Prof. Isaac N. Itodo has charged Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments of the University to constantly execute their duties in conformity with accepted standards of conduct.

Engr Prof. Itodo gave the charge at Rockview Hotel Classic, Abuja on 4th February 2025 during a Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat organized by the Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS) for Principal Officers, Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments at JOSTUM.

In a brief statement, the Vice Chancellor commended the Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments for their unwavering dedication in the discharge of their duties for the growth of the University. Prof. Itodo however alleged and lamented unprofessional and unethical practices perpetrated in certain quarters in the University and urged perpetrators to desist from unwholesome practices capable of bringing the University to disrepute. The Vice Chancellor asserted that his administration would continue to do anything humanly possible to curb ill conduct orchestrated by the enemies of the University for the general good of all. He called on the participants to maximize the opportunity presented by IPESS JOSTUM to acquire valuable skills to improve their respective workplaces.

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L-R; Academic Programme Coordinator, Environmental Standards, Prof. E.J. Ekefan, JOSTUM VC, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo, and Deputy Center Leader, Environmental Standards, Prof. Rufus Sha-Ato during Leadership Boot camp and Information Disclosure Retreat in Abuja

Speaking on the theme “IPESS Journey So Far: Trainings and Expected Roles of SPESSE-Supported Departments and Programmes,” the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Professor Simon A. Shomkegh rolled out an appreciable number of trainees trained by the Institutes from inception to date and stated that,

the institute had done well especially in Short Executive (Track A), and Advanced Certificate (Track B) courses. Professor Shomkegh however lamented the deficit in the number of Postgraduate Diploma (Track C), and Master of Science degree (Track C) students and called on the Deans, Directors and Heads of Departments to intensify efforts where necessary to boost students' admissions in Tracks C and D for the actualization of project's set targets.

The Monitoring and evaluation Officer requested the Heads of Departments to permit qualified student willing to do a change of course to any of the institute's programmes as this would enable the Institute to win the race against its contemporaries. Professor Shomkegh noted that, SPESSE supported department are saddled with the responsibilities of Teaching, supporting student research and effective supervision, and ensuring timely examination processing and approvals. He further encouraged participant at the leadership boot camp to share the story of IPESS widely in the University and on social media to boost visibility of the Institute's programmes.

The Center Leader and Director in her presentation titled “Institutional Impact of SPESSE Project in JOSTUM,” stated that, the institute has facilitated human capacity building of staff of the University both locally and internationally and has carried out physical infrastructural development at the University. She added that, the institute has upgraded environmental laboratory, and soil testing laboratory and as well engaged at least 18 international faculties across Procurement Standards (PS), Environmental Standards (ES) and Social Standards' (SS) teaching tracks. The Center Director maintained that ensuring the annual subscription of Nigerian Research and Education Network (Ng-REN), acquisition of licenced software, modernization of classrooms and the establishment of a state-of-the-art teaching and learning studios are other profound impacts made by the Institute in the University.

Resource persons drawn from within and outside Nigeria including Florence Guantai and samson Raiji both of Excell Afric Development Center, Nairobi, Kenya, and Professor Adebayo P. Adejola as well as Fanen Acho of Medleypark Limited Lagos coached participants on Aligning Individual Objectives to University Objectives, Becoming a Strategic Leader, Financial Freedom after Leadership, and Personal and Professional Mastery respectively.

Corruption is a pervasive problem in many societies and organizations as it erodes confidence, obstructs progress, and distorts public administration. Although regulations and enforcement tactics are crucial in the battle against corruption, they sometimes take effect after harm has already been done. Training, educating and building capacity of people, particularly those in public service, commercial industry, and civil society does only equip people with knowledge of anti-corruption laws and ethical guidelines but serves as a more proactive, long-lasting, and transformative strategy in trimming the claws of corruption.

In Nigeria, a country with a population of more than 200 million and rich in natural and human resources, it is impossible to overstate the importance of building sustainable human capacity as Nigeria has a lot of unrealized potential that may be reached via focused investments in skills and expertise development. By putting the development and advancement of its people's human potential first, Nigeria can capitalize on its demographic dividend and drive growth and prosperity. Through the allocation of resources towards professional training and skills development, Nigeria can produce a highly trained workforce that can efficiently serve the ever-changing requirements of the global economy.



Center Leader and Director, Prof. L.A. Nnamonu Addressing Participants During IPESSE Track B Graduation Event in Abuja.

Therefore, the establishment of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project, dedicated to

building sustainable human capacity development in the areas of procurement, environmental and social standards is a commendable initiative by the Federal Government of Nigeria, World Bank and the National Universities Commission (NUC). This project is continuously paving the way for positive change and uninhibited growth of individuals in various spheres of life. Introduced in 2019 with implementing centers across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, the SPESSE project is arguably one of the most successful world bank supported projects to be implemented in Nigeria. This is justified by the laudable milestones occasioned by the project within its short period of implementation.

One notable component of the SPESSE project is its purposeful endeavour to shift focus from developing physical structures to human capacity building which is a crucial component of sustainable growth and advancement in any society.

As the hub for sustainable human capacity development in North Central Nigeria, Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESSE), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM) has over time empowered individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and opportunities by providing access to educational resources, training programmes, mentorship, and professional development opportunities.

In line with its mandate, IPESSE JOSTUM is committed to developing a large and highly skilled workforce that can effectively address important challenges in the areas of procurement, environmental, and social standards. This is in a bid to nurture a workforce that is not only competent but also adaptable and resilient in the face of an evolving society.

There is a complex and interdependent relationship between procurement, environment, and society that underscores the importance of responsible and sustainable practices. By integrating environmental and social considerations into the procurement process, organizations can drive positive change, minimize risk, and create long-term value for both their business and the world at large. However, owing to lack of skills and experts to manage these critical aspects of life, the SPESSE project is conceived on the need to bridge the gap between insufficient supply of quality professionals in the procurement, environmental and social sectors and develop academic programmes and curricular in these sectors in the Nigerian education system.

Presently, the strategic launch of the IPESS JOSTUM's Short Executive course (Track A), Advanced Certificate course (Track B), Postgraduate Diploma (Track C), Master of Science degree (Track D), and Bachelor of Science degree (Track E), the Institute has trained and issued certificates to thousands of participants to upscale their skills in the areas of procurement, environmental and social standards which is aimed at facilitating sustainable development. Participants are already harvesting the fruits of the programme as appreciable number of trainees have earned promotion, received job offers, appointments, recommendations, and are as well contributing positively to correct some of the ills resident in various spheres.



Deputy Center Leader, Social Standards, Professor Adolphus A. Naswem (right) Presenting Certificate of Participation to a Graduand during a Valedictory Event in Lafia.

To address constraints of tight work schedules, IPESS JOSTUM has fully migrated her short courses and advanced certificate courses to online delivery, making it possible for a wide spectrum of people to advance their knowledge and abilities as well as their professional journeys. The overwhelming testimonies of participants indicate that, apart from the advancement in moral principles and industry best practices in their workplaces, IPESS JOSTUM's programmes have advanced participants' professional growth and, as well opened doors to new career opportunities.

Due to IPESS's significant impact in JOSTUM, the National Universities Commission (NUC) was able to quickly start the process of establishing a Distance Learning Center (DLC) at JOSTUM. This historic achievement will allow everyone to take part in the Institute's successful programmes regardless of their busy schedules, which will facilitate the development of more individual capacity and raise the university's profile and ranking.

Fundamentally, building capacity through training provides a proactive approach that tackles the underlying causes of corruption, even though laws and enforcement are still essential. Training empowers people, fortifies institutions, and increases ethical

consciousness. Therefore, reducing corruption via training isn't just about avoiding wrongdoing - it's about developing a community that values and promotes honesty at every level. The goal of a transparent and responsible world becomes not only feasible but also attainable as more governments, institutions, and communities make investments in this strategy.

Ultimately, the Federal Government of Nigeria deserves commendations for initiating a project that does not only seek to address corruption or improve the present but is also designed to advance strategies towards curbing corruption and remodeling the future for the forthcoming generation.

Uche Michael Aondoheмба

Communications Officer, IPESS JOSTUM

IPESS JOSTUM SAILS THROUGH 5TH ROUND VERIFICATION EXERCISE

In line with the provisions of the Sustainable, Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project, the Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS) Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) on 14th March 2025 waltzed through the 5th round independent verification exercise powered by the World Bank.

The 5-day exercise which held from 10th to 14th March 2025 was conducted by a Third-Party Independent Verification Agency (ITPVA) and aimed at authenticating claims made by the Institute regarding her achievements.



Members of IPESS Management Team with Independent Third-Party Verification Agents after Debriefing the JOSTUM VC to Mark the Conclusion of the 5th Round Independent Third-Party Verification Exercise at IPESS JOSTUM

The painstaking efforts of management staff and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Department made the verification exercise seamless to the admiration of the verification agents.

PROMOTING ORGANIZATIONAL DIGITAL SAFETY: CYBERSECURITY TIPS FOR OFFICE WORK PROTECTING YOUR ORGANIZATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In today's highly connected world, organizations depend on digital tools and systems for efficiency, communication, and innovation. This includes IPRESS. However, with the increasing reliance on technology comes the growing threat of cyberattacks. From phishing scams to ransomware, the risks are real and can cause significant damage to an organization's finances, reputation, and data integrity. Promoting a culture of digital safety is no longer optional—it's a necessity. Here are some essential tips to strengthen cybersecurity in office environments and ensure a safe digital workspace for everyone.

Understanding Cybersecurity Risks in the Workplace

Cybersecurity threats are constantly evolving. Here are some common risks organizations and IPRESS face:

- i. **Phishing Attacks:** Fake emails or messages designed to steal sensitive information like passwords or financial details.
- ii. **Ransomware:** Malicious software that encrypts files, demanding a ransom for their release.
- iii. **Data Breaches:** Unauthorized access to sensitive organizational data.
- iv. **Weak Passwords:** Easily guessable passwords that provide an entry point for attackers.
- v. **Unsecured Devices and Networks:** Using public Wi-Fi or unprotected devices can expose data to cybercriminals.

Recognizing these risks is the first step toward addressing them effectively.

Cybersecurity Tips for Office Work

Whether working in an office or remotely, following these best practices can significantly reduce cybersecurity risks:

Use Strong and Unique Passwords

- i. Create passwords that combine uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters.
- ii. Avoid using the same password across multiple accounts.
- iii. Use a password manager to securely store and generate strong passwords.

Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

- i. MFA adds an extra layer of security by requiring a second form of verification, such as a code sent to your phone or email. A familiar example of MFA is the two step verification for Facebook and WhatsApp
- ii. This prevents unauthorized access, even if a password is compromised.

Be Vigilant Against Phishing Attempts

1. Verify the sender's email address before clicking on links or opening attachments, especially if it is from a random sender, or individuals outside your organization
2. Look for warning signs, such as urgent requests or unfamiliar links.
3. Report suspicious emails to your ICT team immediately.

Secure Your Devices

1. Always lock your computer or device when stepping away from your desk.
2. Install antivirus software and keep it updated.
3. Ensure your operating system and applications are regularly updated with the latest security patches. Set your computer on autoupdate if you tend to forget to check for updates.

Avoid Public Wi-Fi for Work

1. If you must use public Wi-Fi for work, connect via a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to encrypt your data if you have the skill to do so.
2. Avoid accessing sensitive information or systems while on unsecured networks.

Back Up Your Data Regularly

1. Schedule automatic backups of important files to secure cloud storage (google drive, one drive



e.t.c) or external devices (USB stick/drive, external hard drive.

2. In the event of a cyberattack, backups ensure you can recover your data without paying ransoms.

Limit Access to Sensitive Information

1. Only grant access to systems or data based on an employee's role and responsibilities.
2. Regularly review and update access permissions to prevent unauthorized use.

Practice Safe File Sharing

1. Use secure file-sharing platforms approved by your organization.
2. Avoid sharing sensitive information via unsecured email or personal messaging apps.

For ICT teams, create a Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan

1. Have a clear protocol in place for handling potential breaches or attacks.
2. Ensure employees know whom to contact and what steps to take in case of a cybersecurity incident.

The Role of Leadership in Cybersecurity

Leadership plays a critical role in fostering a culture of digital safety. Managers and executives must prioritize cybersecurity by:

- **Investing in IT Security:** Allocate resources for robust security systems, firewalls, and software.
- **Leading by Example:** Adhere to cybersecurity protocols and encourage team members to do the same.
- **Fostering Transparency:** Create an environment where employees feel comfortable reporting potential risks or breaches.

When leaders champion cybersecurity initiatives, employees are more likely to take the issue seriously and adopt safe practices.

Benefits of a Cybersecurity-First Approach

Promoting digital safety in the workplace offers several benefits, including:

- **Reduced Risk of Data Loss:** Protecting sensitive organizational and client data.
- **Improved Productivity:** Avoiding disruptions caused by cyberattacks or breaches.
- **Enhanced Reputation:** Demonstrating to clients and stakeholders that your organization values security.
- **Compliance with Regulations:** Meeting legal requirements for data protection and privacy.

Ultimately Cybersecurity is a shared responsibility. By staying vigilant and adopting best practices, individuals and organizations can significantly reduce the risk of cyber threats. In today's interconnected world, promoting digital safety is not just about protecting data—it's about safeguarding the trust, efficiency, and future of the organization.

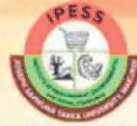
Let us all take proactive steps to ensure our workplace remains a secure and resilient space for innovation and collaboration.

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**INSTITUTE OF PROCUREMENT,
ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STANDARDS (IPESS)**

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