



Appendix 1

Annual Report Form

Annual Reporting Form for Platforms under the Building Stronger Universities programme.

For the year: 2012

1	Project			
	Name of Platform	Environment & Climate		
2	Institution			
	Name	Aarhus University, Faculty of Science & Technology, Department of Bioscience, Vejlsøvej 25, 8600 Silkeborg, Denmark		
3	Project Coordinator			
	Name	Susanne Lildal Amsinck		
	Address	Vejlsøvej 25, 8600 Silkeborg, Denmark		
	E-mail	sla@dmu.dk		
4	Time Frame			
	Project period (approved start and end date)	August 1 st 2011 – July 31 st 2013		
	Extension of project period, if any	NA		
5	Annual Expenditure			
	Original Annual Budget	4.705.394,87 DKK		
	Actual annual expenses (must correspond with the Annual Accounts)	2012	Original budget (DKK)	Actual expenses 2012 (DKK)
		Denmark	2,352,114,00	586.882,50
		UG	427.786,00	95.531,99
		KNUST	797.747,53	106.213,82
		SUA	330.000,01	321.155,00
		UDSM	797.747,33	169.340,85
		Total	4.705.394,87	1.279.124,16
		Deviation	3.426.270,71	
	Explanation of deviations from the original budget.	<p>The actual level of implementation was slower than originally expected for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> All modalities and templates had to be negotiated, agreed and developed within the relatively comprehensive governance structure of BSU (the Danish Steering Committee, the four African Platform Working Groups (PWGs), the four BSU platforms and the Secretariat of Universities Denmark, the latter two to ensure uniform modalities across BSU. Manning by Danish researchers for BSUEC activities was done by open announcements at websites and via e-mailing lists including resource members at the seven Danish universities (AAU, AU, CBS, DTU, KU, RUC, SDU) (matchmaking) in order to ensure a transparent and competitive process as well as to man the activities with the best qualified and motivated researchers. It took a considerable time before funds were transferred from 		

		<p>DANIDA/University of Southern Denmark/Secretariat of Universities Denmark to Aarhus University (Bioscience). Thus, the first instalment to Bioscience was transferred on 20th January 2012.</p> <p>d. Item (c) combined with the time required to open bank accounts at the partner universities in Africa delayed the transfer of the first instalment of funds to the African partners who, as a result, were unable to implement activities for the first three months of the reporting period.</p> <p>e. Lack of clarity about objectives and incentive structures among African researchers resulted in “no action” in a number of cases.</p> <p>f. Lack of clarity about division of responsibility (who was to take the first move) between African and Danish researchers/assignment holders resulted in “no action” in a number of situations.</p> <p>g. At times, slow and inadequate South-North communication mainly due to e) and f) inevitably delayed the planning and execution of activities.</p> <p>h. Attracting qualified candidates for PhD grants proved more difficult than expected. The platform received surprisingly few applications for PhD grants at all partner universities. At two African partner universities a second round of announcements was necessary to identify qualified candidates for the scholarships. Furthermore, the bottom-up procedure applied (where PhD students defined project ideas within the overall themes of the platform) complicated the subsequent matchmaking process to find Danish PhD co-supervisors, as some of the project ideas defined by the appointed PhD candidates were beyond the scientific fields comprised by the current Danish EC resource base. Thus, headhunting to find suitable Danish PhD co-supervisors for these projects was necessary.</p> <p>i. Converting the BSU budget formats (as defined across BSU platforms and Universities Denmark during the Inception Phase) to those of DFC caused difficulties and confusion at the African partner universities.</p>
6	Progress of the Project during the Year	
a	Describe the progress made towards the fulfilment of the approved objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Strengthening PhD courses within the field of Environment & Climate at UG, KNUST, UDSM and SUA</i> In the current reporting period one out of ten PhD short courses was implemented. Preparations were on-going in 2012 for the remaining courses, expecting actual implementation of courses in the first half of 2013. At UDSM curricula were developed for four PhD programmes at the colleges of IRA, CASS, COET and CONAS during spring - autumn 2012 and submitted for approval to the UDSM Senate during winter 2012. Yet, for the PhD short courses in general, the challenge lies in moving from producing outputs to reaching the objective of institutionalisation/accreditation. 2. <i>Increasing the number of academic staff at UG, KNUST, UDSM and SUA with PhD qualifications within the field of Environment & Climate</i> The PhD scholarships progresses according to plan, but with some delay due to the preparatory work needed (e.g. open announcements concerning applications for scholarships, evaluation of applications, interviews, appointment of local supervisors and Danish co-supervisors, revising PhD project proposals etc.) prior to the official enrolment of PhD students at the School of Graduate Studies/Study Administration of the African partner universities. All EC PhD students were enrolled by Aug 2012 except one student who was enrolled by Dec 2012 due to maternity leave. 3. <i>Strengthening research networking and collaboration</i> The preparatory work of the scientific writing courses at UG and SUA was initiated at the end of 2012. An Executive BSU Workshop was held in Denmark in Aug 2012 aiming at creating a common understanding of institutional capacity building within BSU in general and at developing future ideas for crosscutting BSU activities. The workshop allowed the lead BSU representatives from south partner countries and Denmark to meet for the first time. After the workshop, African lead representatives of the EC and GE platforms visited the seven Danish universities (RUC, KU, AU, AAU, SDU, DTU and CBS). The workshop and tour provided an efficient frame for strengthening the network and collaboration between African and Danish partners within and between platforms.

		<p>4. <i>Disseminating platform results, findings and news effectively to stakeholders</i> The Danish coordinator uses newsletters, e-mail lists and a continuously updated website to keep relevant university staff updated at partner universities in Africa and Denmark. In addition, announcement regarding calls for expression of interest for the Danish manning of PhD courses, PhD co-supervision and scientific writing courses have been posted at the website and distributed via the e-mail lists.</p> <p>5. <i>Platform activities effectively and efficiently managed and coordinated</i> The coordinator is in collaboration with the Danish chairman, the Danish coordinators and chairmen of the other BSU platforms, the project officers and PWG chairs at the African partner universities and the project manager at the Secretariat of Universities Denmark constantly working on improving, streamlining and cost-optimizing management, coordination and administration.</p>
B	Describe the progress made in reaching the outputs/results	<p>WP1 Strengthening PhD education</p> <p>This work package contains two key activities: 1) Development and implementation of PhD short courses (10 courses in total) and 2) development of PhD programmes (4 programmes in total).</p> <p><u>PhD short courses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PhD course instructors (both Danish and African) for all ten PhD courses were appointed during 2012. • In most cases instructor teams have initiated the development of curricula and course instruction manuals during 2012. Communication mainly through e-mail. • For some courses South – North communication has been slow or non-existing. The coordinator subsequently facilitated and established communication links between partners. • The PhD short course on ‘Simulation Modelling in the Environmental Sciences’ was fully developed and implemented during 17-28/10/12 (SUA) (18 participants) by a joint team of African and Danish instructors. • The EC PWG at KNUST decided to transfer the PhD course ‘Research Methodologies’ to the GE platform due to overlapping activities between platforms. The course was run during 22/10-2/11/12 by the GE Platform. <p><u>PhD programmes:</u></p> <p>At UDSM curricula for four PhD programmes were developed and further focused on target groups upon feedback by stakeholders at workshops and individual consultations by the colleges of IRA, CASS, COET and CONAS. At the end of 2012 the curricula of the four PhD programmes were submitted to the Senate at UDSM for approval. The PhD programmes are expected to be initiated in autumn 2013.</p> <p>WP2 Increasing the number of academic staff with PhD qualifications (PhD scholarships)</p> <p>This work package contains 8 PhD scholarships for African academic staff with up to a 10-month study stay in Denmark. The following tasks were accomplished during 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements of call for applications for PhD scholarships at the four African partner universities • Interviews held with qualified candidates within the framework of the PWGs • Selection and appointment of 8 PhD candidates • PhD project proposals refined by appointed candidates • African PhD supervisors and Danish co-supervisors appointed, the latter in an open, transparent and competitive process (matchmaking), and if no candidates emerged through headhunting. • All PhD students were linked to their local supervisor and Danish co-supervisors and their research is on-going. • Seminars were organized for PhD students allowing them to present their research proposals to obtain feedback and to monitor their progress at the African partner universities. <p>WP3 Strengthening research networking and collaboration</p>

This work package contains three key activities: 1) Scientific writing courses; 2) short-term scientific missions (e.g. study stays at Danish universities); and 3) supplementary training of African researchers (e.g. ToT PhD supervision, conference participation).

Scientific writing courses

Course instructors (both Danish and African) were appointed and subsequently teamed up to initiate the preparatory work for the scientific writing courses at UG and KNUST. Similar to the manning process for the Danish PhD course instructors, the Danish instructors of scientific writing courses were appointed after matchmaking.

Short-term scientific missions

Short-term scientific missions targeted at African researchers visiting Danish universities for study stays at Danish universities were not initiated during 2012. However, African lead representatives visited Denmark for an Executive BSU Workshop in Aug 2012 organized by a team including the Danish BSU coordinators and the project manager at the Secretariat of Universities Denmark. After the BSU Workshop, African lead representatives of the EC and GE platforms visited the seven Danish universities (RUC, KU, AU, AAU, SDU, DTU and CBS). The tour was organised by the coordinators of EC and GE. Special focus was directed at the structuring of MSc and PhD programmes in Denmark and at obtaining insight into on-going international initiatives at Danish universities. As a spin-off, the African representatives teamed up with Danish BSUEC and GE assignment holders during the visits, strengthening the partnerships and even creating new relationships with Danish researchers.

PhD supervision ToT courses

This activity was executed as a cross BSU platform activity jointly planned and developed by the EC, GE and HH platforms. All BSU partners in Tanzania/Zanzibar and Ghana participated. The facilitators were from Denmark, Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania.

Two staff upgrading courses in PhD supervision (ToT) (first module) were held in:

- Ghana during 1st–5th October (in total 43 participants from EC 10 from KNUST; 4 from UG);
- Tanzania during 5th–7th November (in total 32 participants from EC 5 from SUA; 3 from UDSM)

Conference participation and research dissemination/collaboration/networking

At SUA an open stakeholder workshop was held on 21st August 2012 at which the BSU programme in general and the current status of the EC and GE platforms were presented.

At SUA the EC project provided support for conference participation to two faculty staff members allowing them to present their papers at the COP18 in Doha, Qatar, in Nov 2012. In addition, draft papers on climate and environment, REDD+ and incentives for local communities to participate in natural resource management have been prepared jointly by SUA and Danish researchers.

WP4 Disseminating research knowledge and communication

- A shared BSU website system was developed, domain sites with specific acronyms for each platform were purchased and a BSU logo designed on the initiative of the Danish coordinators and the project manager at Universities Denmark, aiming at promoting a uniform communication image for the BSU programme.
- Two workshops targeted at website design and development were held in March and May 2012 at Aarhus University and at the Secretariat of Universities Denmark, respectively. The new websites were launched in June 2012.
- A joint BSU assignment holder meeting was held at University of Copenhagen in November 2012 for all interested BSU assignment holders from Danish universities. The workshop was organised by the Danish BSU coordinators.

		<p>WP5 Platform Governance and Management</p> <p>This work package relates to key managerial and administrative issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the period under review, formal contracts (Letter of Agreement) with all African partner institutions were signed for the project to take off in early 2012. • Local project officers responsible for effective and efficient local administration and coordination of EC activities have been appointed at UDSM, KNUST and SUA. At UG a staff member of the Office of Research, Innovation and Development acts as project officer. • Platform Working Groups (PWGs), also serving as backup for the local project officer/administrator, have been set up at each African partner university. A PWG consists of four members from the South partner university (including the chair) and 2 members from Danish universities (the Danish chair and coordinator). • BSUEC Newsletters and Announcements have been posted frequently at the platform website and by e-mail to the Danish and African platform partners by the Danish coordinator to ensure open, transparent and efficient communication. • The EC partners in Ghana and Tanzania have used their respective university homepages extensively for information dissemination and as the main media for advising calls for expression of interest and announcements. • Face-to-face and virtual meetings (video conferencing and Skype) within the framework of each PWG have been frequently held in order to ensure coordinated concept development between the EC partner universities and smooth implementation and follow-up on activities at each African partner university. • Frequent face-to-face meetings between the Danish coordinators, chairs and the BSU project manager at Universities Denmark have been held in order to align BSU cross-cutting activities, management and procedures and discuss future strategies and activities. An overview of meetings held during 2012 is available at: http://bsuec.org/meetings/ • Frequent face-to-face and virtual meetings within the framework of the Danish steering committee have been held in order to ensure approval of activity plans and strategic development as well as evaluation of applications for empowering EC activities with the best qualified Danish researchers. • Day-to-day correspondence primarily by e-mail, phone and Skype meetings with BSUEC assignment holders, platform members, African PWGs and project officers, and the Danish steering committee and additional stakeholders have been held by the Danish coordinator in addition to continuous website development and updating, financial management of the grant, writing-up of minutes, announcements and semi-annual and annual reports etc. • Financial Management Workshops led by the BSU Platform on Human Health were held during January - March 2012 for all four African partner universities targeted at BSU accountants and project officers across the four BSU platforms. Prior to the workshops templates for the financial management of the BSU grant had been developed by the four BSU coordinators and the project manager at Universities Denmark. A one-day workshop targeted at the Danish BSU platform coordinators and accountants was subsequently held in Copenhagen in April 2012.
c	Describe the progress in terms of institutional and research capacity building	<p>It is premature to evaluate and judge outcome/impact based on the activities implemented in 2012. Below are a few positive statements selected from the narrative reports and feed-back by partners received during 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PhD course at SUA on ‘Simulation Modelling in the Environmental Sciences’ was very well attended and received positive feedback from all participants. Similarly, the joint teaching team expressed full satisfaction with the collaboration and goals achieved. New ideas for course improvement and even for developing a course extension (module 2) were formulated as a spin-off. • The PhD supervision training courses (module 1) received positive feedback from both the participants and the instructor team in Ghana and Tanzania. • The Executive BSU workshop and succeeding tour to Danish universities received positive feedback from the African partners, especially regarding strengthening of the common understanding of the

		<p>BSU programme, improving the insight into Danish universities, and strengthening the network and collaboration as well as knowledge sharing across BSU platforms and partner institutions/countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The matchmaking concept applied for manning EC activities by Danish researchers received positive feedback from Danish partners. Especially the fair, open and transparent frame for engagement in the BSU programme was praised. • PhD scholarships have been awarded to faculty staff members (assistant lecturers and teaching assistants), which will raise the profile of their various faculties once completed.
d	Describe the status of the project management and partnership	<p><u>Management:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daily project management, coordination, concept development and administration of the EC platform in Denmark are streamlined as much as possible by the manning of only one person (the Danish coordinator). The EC coordinator serves as the operational key node for linking all stakeholders within the platform. This may work efficiently in the initial phase as uniform processes can be implemented and run at the platform partner institutions. Yet, in the long run this may prove to be a vulnerable design, especially considering the considerable work (over-)load and continuous tight deadlines that have characterized the working conditions during the first year of the BSU programme. • The African partner universities project administration functions satisfactorily with a division of labour between the project officer and the PWG chairman. • Especially at SUA and KNUST, coordination between the EC and GE platforms has been well-organised by frequent joint meetings. • Similarly, the communication flow between the SUA, KNUST and Danish Partners has functioned smoothly and satisfactorily. <p><u>Partnership:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of partnership, the South-North relationships are gradually being expanded with the implementation of activities.
e	Describe the progress made of the communication activities during the year	See point 6b WP4 and WP5.
7	Substantive Changes	
	Have any of the responsible persons been changed? If so, please list the changes, the actions taken and consequences.	At UG the chair of the PWG withdrew in May 2012 and was shortly hereafter replaced by Prof. Yankson.
	List any new factors possibly affecting the achievement of the objectives in the future and describe how the project will address them.	<p><u>DK and African partners</u></p> <p>Issues such as incentive structures, co-financing, activity fragmentation and South-North communication have been widely discussed during 2012 and also addressed in the review of BSU Phase I carried out in early 2013.</p> <p><u>All African partner institutions:</u></p> <p>Financial administration, handling of cash flow and accounting of the BSU grant have been a challenge for all partner institutions. At the end of 2012 a Danish financial controller highly experienced in handling DANIDA grants was appointed by the EC platform to assist in the financial management and accounting and to ensure timely delivery of half-yearly and annual financial reports at the four partner institutions. Assistance to handling disbursements and cash flow has also been provided by the controller. This underlines the absolute imperative for strengthening the capacity building within general financial administration and accounting at the partner institutions. These capacity building activities will be included in Phase II and combined with mentoring and assistance to timely meet the deadlines of the future deliverables as well as to facilitate S-S networking within the BSU financial management field.</p> <p><u>UG:</u></p> <p>Development of a clear-cut policy on how to motivate UG supervisors of the BSU PhD candidates seems to be a challenge. International conference participation together with the PhD student has been suggested by the PWG to improve the</p>

		<p>motivation of local supervisors of the BSU PhD candidates.</p> <p>UG has introduced changes to their PhD programmes, which are no longer research-only studies, but includes a year of coursework. Consequently, students will take four years (instead of three) to complete their PhD programmes. While the bulk of new applicants are to start in either Jan or Aug 2013, the platform obtained special dispensation from the UG vice chancellor enabling enrolment of the scholarship recipients in Aug 2012. It is as yet unclear how the new curriculum will affect the completion of the BSU/EC candidates' PhD programmes. However, the four-year programme allows students to complete their courses within minimum 3 years. EC PWG is working closely together with the School of Graduate Studies to ensure that the BSU/EC students can follow the guidelines of the 3-year system used.</p> <p><u>Partner Universities:</u></p> <p>Slow and inadequate North and South communication, and in some cases even communication breakdown between partners, has delayed the collaboration, planning and execution of activities. The coordinator is aware of this challenge and is working closely together with the project officers and PWG chairs on establishing a satisfactory communication flow between the N-S assignments holders. Partners have been asked to contact and copy their correspondence to the coordinator when communication problems arise, and partners have been asked to acknowledge receipt as standard procedure when receiving mail.</p>
8	Statements and Permits	
	<p>Affirm that the required research permits, approvals and authorizations were in place before the start of the activities. List any new approvals/ authorizations obtained during the year and explain the status for any documents still not obtained.</p>	<p>All EC partner universities and researchers have the necessary permission to carry out research, and this is mostly carried out by local researchers and PhD students.</p>
9	Lessons learnt	
	<p>Describe lessons learnt, including positive experiences or solutions of interest for other projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of EC in 2012 has initially occurred at a slower pace than was anticipated, but has gradually gained pace. It is expected that progress in 2013 and beyond will be faster. This underlines the fact that partnerships take time to develop as they build on shared decision power, transparency, trust and mutual understanding. Yet, once they are properly established, experience shows that collaboration and implementation will run smoothly, efficiently and effectively. Face-to-face meetings are essential for initiating North-South collaboration, both for the management boards (PWGs) and assignment holders. This has not, however, been sufficiently supported by the budget of EC Phase I. The budgeting relied on the key assumption that e-mailing and virtual correspondences were adequate tools for establishing an efficient communication flow between partners as from day one. However, feedback from assignment holders during 2012 proves this assumption to be too optimistic, and more travels involving face-to-face meetings between N-S partners to initiate collaboration must be incorporated in the future planning. • A general "lesson learnt" from 2012 is that EC activities have been too small and fragmented. In EC Phase II activities should be more coherent, with fewer and consequently more comprehensive activities. • Related to the above, the very broad scientific/technical scope of the platform – environment & climate – remains a challenge and adds to the tendency of small and scattered activities. Hence, there is a strong need for focus and priority setting. These priorities should obviously be made based on the needs of SUA, UDSM, UG and KNUST. • Some general, cross-cutting capacity building assignments (such as generic activities) are, in terms of time and financial resources, cost effective when organized jointly by more than one BSU platform at the same institution.

		<p>This strengthens the importance for close collaboration between the different platform PWGs at the partner institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a joint communication/PR strategy for the entire BSU programme would improve the outreach, branding and exposure of BSU in general and at the same time provide a possible recruitment track for new researchers to become engaged with the BSU programme. It might as well potentially attract new donors.
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Attachments:

1. List of publications, proceedings etc. produced by the project during the year, with links when available. <http://bsuec.org/>
2. Overview of the progress of the PhD courses within the project

The Project Coordinator and the institution herewith confirm that the information given in the annual report is correct:

Date: 27/5-2013 **Printed name:** Susanne Lildal Amsinck **Signature:** 
 (Platform coordinator)

Date: _____ **Printed name:** Jørgen Eivind Olesen **Signature:** 
 (Chairperson of Danish Steering Committee)