

Terms of reference
Review
of
“Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries”
Phase One

1. Background

“Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries” (BSU) programme by Universities Denmark (UD) is a partnership between research and higher education institutions in developing countries and in Denmark. BSU is organised in four thematic platforms based on an assessment of the Danish competencies and the priorities in the Danish development cooperation:

- Environment and Climate
- Growth and Employment
- Human Health
- Stability, Democracy and Rights

The themes are inter-linked and collaboration and interaction between platforms are strongly encouraged.

BSU comprises cooperation involving the eight universities in Denmark and selected universities in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Nepal. Focus is on institutional capacity building, including strengthening the capacity and quality of PhD education, strengthening the capacity to undertake research and disseminating research knowledge to stakeholders.

In 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)/Danida provided a two-year grant of 60 million DKK to BSU (Phase 1), and in 2012 a three-year grant of 19 million DKK was allocated for capacity building within research communication, dissemination and networking for the same partners.

In mid-2013 a new two year grant of 90 million DKK is planned to be allocated to BSU (Phase 2). A review of the current support will be undertaken to inform the planning of Phase 2.

The review will be a joint learning exercise between Universities Denmark (UD), MFA/Danida and the partners in the developing countries.

Both to Universities Denmark and MFA/Danida the BSU programme constitutes a unique initiative. While researchers at Danish universities have a long history of research activities in collaboration with researchers and institutes in the South, the BSU constitutes a new concept both in scope and organisational set-up.

Realising the importance of research and tertiary education as drivers of socio-economic development also in the developing countries, the Vice-Chancellors of the Danish universities in 2008 appointed a working group to outline recommendations as to how the Danish university sector could support capacity strengthening at universities in the developing countries in the most effective and constructive way.

In two reports the UD working group¹ presented the idea of the Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries programme. The reports made reference to the Danish initiated Africa Commission's main report from 2009 with a number of recommendations on how Denmark can help Africa benefit from globalisation, including reflections on the role of university based research and education.

After having approved the working groups' recommendations the UD Rectors' Conference in 2010 entered into negotiations with MFA/Danida on the conditions for an agreement for a long-term initiative on strengthening the capacities for research, education and dissemination at selected partner universities in the global South. In December 2010 an agreement on a set of core conditions for support from Danida was reached. There was a joint understanding that an initiative of this nature should be implemented as a medium to long-term programme.

In the Financial Act for 2012 a provision was made for an additional grant of DKK 19 Mio., earmarked to capacity building activities within research communication, dissemination, and networking. An application by DU for a 2½ year project period was approved by MFA/Danida in December 2012. (Se 7. Documentation) This project will commence on January 1. 2013.

To Universities Denmark the programme is seen as having special qualities and potentials as a joint sector initiative, where resources across all eight Danish universities are mobilised and coordinated in an effort to provide the most relevant and qualified support to the south partners within areas where Danish universities hold special competences. By coordinating the support from more platforms to the same partner universities, as well as between platforms and research activities supported by Danida through FFU² in BSU partner countries, the initiative strives to generate synergy that would otherwise not be achieved.

The initiative is closely monitored by a BSU working group under the Rectors' Conference. Besides, the Rectors' Conference is following the progress of the programme closely and provides support to the overall management of the programme.

The review will not include an assessment of the general agreement on BSU between UD and MFA/Danida, incl. overhead, cost-sharing between Denmark and partner countries, co-financing etc. as the points agreed on will also apply to phase 2 of the BSU programme.

Rather, the review will be an assessment of lessons learnt with a view to recommend adjustments of the organisational and managerial setup at different levels, of the focus for activities and of communication structures and procedures.

¹ The UD working group on the BSU initiative is advisory to the Rectors' Conference on BSU matters. It comprises one representative from each of the seven involved universities and the chairperson from each of the four platform steering committees.

² Development research projects funded by Danida.

2. Objective

The overall objective of the review is to assess the BSU programme's organisational structure and performance with a view to make recommendations for the second phase of the programme.

The specific objectives of the review are to assess the partnership between Universities Denmark and universities in the partner countries, the added value by BSU to the strengthening of the institutions in the South, and the governance structures of BSU at overall, platform and institutional level. The recommendations should be targeted adjustments with emphasis on ensuring a well-functioning and efficient structure (focus of activities, organisational setup and governance) as well as ideas for enhanced North-South-South collaboration across all 11 BSU partner universities and four platforms.

In addition, the review will to the extent possible assess the general performance of the programme with regard to preliminary *results, progress, challenges, developments in risk factors, need for adjustments, monitoring etc.*

3. Outputs and timing/reporting

A mission preparation note with the key questions and proposed focus areas will be drafted by the consultant before the field mission to Ghana and Tanzania.

Two short debriefings in Ghana and Tanzania before the departure.

Debriefings in Denmark with UD and MFA.

Draft and final review report by the consultant, not exceeding 25 pages excluding annexes, with the main findings, conclusion and recommendations.

The review will start mid-January with meetings in Copenhagen and Aarhus with the Universities Denmark stakeholders and MFA.

The mission preparation note by the consultant will be forwarded no later than January 21 and the draft report will be forwarded before February 15. Final report will be forwarded one week after receiving comments from MFA/Danida, UD and the partner institutions in the South.

4. Scope of Work

The scope of work will include, but not be limited to, the following assessments:

- *The value added by BSU:*
 - in the mechanisms for *donor coordination at institution level*;
 - *in the synergy* between activities of the BSU programme/platforms as well as with other development programmes supported at national level
- The quality and relevance of the *partnerships* between actors in Denmark and in partner countries and the interrelationship between the institutions in the partner countries, including how the partnerships unfolds in decision making, communication, selection of working areas etc.;

- The relevance and effectiveness of the *governance structures*, overall, platform and institutional level;
- The relevance, quality and effectiveness of the *communication structures* in Denmark and in partner countries;
- The progress and experience with *institutional capacity building* and possible linkages to other research supported activities, e.g. the Danish supported pilot and FFU-projects;
- The balance and relationship (relevance?) between support to general *capacity building* of the partner institutions (e.g. in financial management/administration) *and more targeted capacity building within research* (e.g. in accreditation, PhD-supervision, within academic areas of each platform);
- The adequacy of the *monitoring and supporting systems* and progress compared to plans and established indicators/targets;
- The assumptions and risks and the possible consequences for the activities of BSU
- The *disbursements* and possible need for reallocation between budget lines;
- The *programme management*, including financial management and procurement procedures;
- The relevance and effectiveness of the *administrative structures and procedures*, including challenges related to differences in the Danida given budget structure and procedures and the partner institutions' structures and procedures;
- Potential for increased *South-South cooperation*
- Need for possible *further analysis and capacity development initiatives*.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the review team will make recommendations as required and targeted the second phase of BSU.

5. Method of Work

The review will provide important input to the second phase of BSU and the method of work will focus on lessons learnt.

The team will, based on a review of documentation, initial consultations in Denmark (and possibly communication with (some) key stakeholders in the partner countries), draft a *mission preparation note*.

The note will be shared with all the stakeholders.

Based on the consultations the team will have two field missions – Ghana and Tanzania where three of the four platforms are active. All the relevant partners will be involved in the review e.g. joint meetings/workshop in Accra and Moshi respectively. The Platform for Stability, Democracy and Rights is active in Kenya, Uganda and Nepal and the partners will be invited to join the consultations in Moshi, in addition to consultations from Skype etc.

The draft findings, conclusions and recommendations will be presented to UD and MFA/Danida before being finalised.

6. Team

The team will consist of:

Mr Johan Helland, external consultant (team leader)

Mr David N. Manyanza, external consultant

The team will be supported by resource persons from MFA/Danida, Universities Denmark and partner universities in the five countries. Ms. Darriann Riber will participate in the field mission on behalf of MFA/Danida, and Mr Arne Skov Andersen will participate on behalf of UD.

7. Documentation

Application 2011 and 2012

Criteria for selection of platforms, assessment by int. team

Note for the Board of Danida (in Danish)

Agreement between MFA and BSU/DU

Inception reports

Progress reports

Financial reports

Newsletters

BSU-folders

BSU-MFA correspondence

Other relevant BSU documentation