

Fiolstræde 44, 1. th.
DK-1171 Copenhagen K
Phone +45 33 92 54 05
Dir. +45 33 92 73 16
Fax +45 33 92 50 75
www.dkuni.dk

19 May 2011
Ref. 2010-6330-09
AS
as@dkuni.dk

Application

Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries First Phase, 2011-13

Following our constructive dialogue in the initial stages of the initiative, please find below a presentation of the background, objectives and scope, organisation and budget lines for the Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries project. For a detailed presentation of the four thematic platforms, their partners, management structure, activities and detailed budget lines, please see annexes 1 - 4.

Background

Universities in Denmark have a long tradition for cooperation with universities in the developing countries. To develop and strengthen this cooperation, Universities Denmark's Rectors' Conference in 2009 appointed a working group that produced a report with a number of proposals on how the Danish university sector could contribute further to strengthening the capacity for research and tertiary education at the universities in the developing countries.

At the same time the Africa Commission published the report "Realising the Potential of Africa's Youth". The report's recommendations point at research and tertiary education, among others, as crucial factors for development. Similar statements are made in the recent strategy for the Danish development assistance, "Freedom from Poverty – Freedom to Change".

In October 2010, Universities Denmark's working group on the initiative published the report "Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries – Partnership for Change." The report outline a number of activities organised under four thematic platforms. The report also presents an organisational structure and a model for the funding of the initiative.

The thematic platforms are

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

Based on the proposals in the report a close dialogue was established with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The dialogue concluded in an agreement of 21 December 2010.

The agreement presents the guidelines for the design and scope of the present application, covering a two-year period as a first phase of the initiative. The guidelines include the criteria for the assessment of, and prioritising between, the proposals from the four thematic platforms. Furthermore, the agreement includes the expected overall budget frame for the BSU initiative, the distribution rate between North and South, the co-funding level from the partners, the overhead rate, and the funding of the central coordination of the initiative at the Universities Denmark secretariat.

The application is the result of a long, intensive planning process, involving the Danish universities and research institutions and a range of universities in our partner countries in the South.

The project is organised around four thematic platforms. For detailed platform descriptions, activity plans and budgets see the enclosed platform descriptions.

Objectives and outputs

The overall purpose of the Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries initiative is to strengthen universities and research institutions in developing countries through the formation of networks of excellence, i.e. partnerships between universities in developing countries and in Denmark.

The long-term objective is to make the participating institutions in the South stronger in the sense that they increasingly:

- contribute to the economic, social and political development of the societies in which they are located;
- function as nodes of innovation and knowledge production, providing solutions to local and global challenges;
- produce skilled and motivated graduates that can contribute to the further development of their societies and address the challenges they face.

The initiative has the immediate goal of strengthening the capacity of South-universities to undertake research, education and dissemination of research findings.

Based on this overall approach, the four platforms, in close collaboration with their partner institutions in the South, each have defined their development objective and immediate objectives addressing the specific challenges within their thematic and scientific area.

The platform objectives, outputs and indicators are described in detail in the attached platform descriptions.

Structure and organisation

Universities Denmark (DKUNI) is the applicant and holds the overall responsibility for the project and its implementation. The Rectors' Conference (Rektorkollegiet) is overall responsible for the implementation of the project and will monitor its progress systematically.

DKUNI's secretariat will undertake the central coordination of the project, including planning and reporting. Further, the central coordinator will initiate and facilitate joint initiatives, for instance on information and promotion of the project, as agreed upon with the platforms. After the first two years of implementation, DKUNI and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will jointly assess if there is still a need for central coordination of the initiative.

The four thematic platforms and their Danish Steering Committees have the responsibility for the implementation of the platforms' activities. Each of the platforms has a secretariat in Denmark and a platform coordinator. The Danish platform secretariat is located at the university, where the Steering Committee chairman is based. The Steering Committee is responsible for the production of activity plan and budget, for the financial management of the platform's activities, including audits, and for the narrative and financial reporting for their respective platform.

DKUNI has developed a standard *Memory of Understanding* (MoU) to be signed by DKUNI and each of the partner universities in the South. The MoU states the structure, the contents and the general guidelines for the co-operation, including the setting up of a Partnership Steering Committee (PSC).

The PSC will 1) provide leadership for the joint capacity-building activities of the parties; 2) accept responsibility for the scientific and financial integrity of the collaboration; 3) review the finances on an annual basis and ensure proper utilization of funds; 4) ensure coherence and coordination across platforms.

The MoU will be followed by a binding *Co-operation Agreement* (CA) between each of the four platforms and their respective co-operating partner institution in the South.

Those Danish universities that host a platform secretariat are responsible for the finalising and signing of the agreement by both parties and for its implementation. It is the intention to establish a co-ordination in such a way that there will be only one CA per South partner.

The Co-operation Agreement in detail states the terms, conditions and responsibilities for the cooperation, including the implementation of activities, the administration of funds, the audits and the financial and narrative reporting, among others.

Reporting and financial management

DKUNI will set up a separate project account from where it will transfer the funds to the Danish platform secretariats.

The platform secretariats are responsible for the compiling of consolidated annual reports on the platform activities. The consolidated reports shall be submitted to the DKUNI secretariat no later than 1 June the following year.

Similarly, the platform secretariats prepare annual accounts to be forwarded to the DKUNI secretariat not later than 1 June the following year.

At the end of the project period, completion reports and final accounts are submitted to DKUNI's secretariat, which will submit a consolidated narrative and financial report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Criteria and timeframe

The project application complies with the criteria and framework agreed upon with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2010.

1. Criteria and review

The platform descriptions have been reviewed, including interviews with platform representatives, by a Panel of International Experts on 10-12 May 2011. See annex 6. The process has been transparent, and the Panel's report with its recommendations and comments has been made public on DKUNI's website.

2. Timeframe

The four platform applications – developed in close dialogue with the South partners – were submitted on 29 April 2011. The project application is to be tabled before the Danida Board in June and – if approved – the implementation of the initiative can take place from August 2011.

The application for two years within the period 2011–2013 is considered a first phase of the initiative.

3. Networks and centres

DKUNI has discussed possible cooperation with the networks and centres currently supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. DKUNI has requested the four platforms to consider how to involve relevant competences from the networks and centres. The result can be seen from the platforms applications.

4. Distribution of funds between North and South

The distribution of funds provided by Danida between South and North institutions will be 50/50 %. In year three and four the distributions will be 55/45 % and 60/40 % respectively in favour of the South.

5. Co-funding

The Danish universities will co-fund the initiative “in-kind” 1:1 of the funding allocated to the Danish institutions. The co-funding will be verifiable.

The co-funding may include 1) salaries and emoluments for staff involved in the activities; 2) supervision of South PhDs; 3) participation in courses and use of facilities by visiting South partners; 4) funds from other external sources to the same institutions in the South and with similar objectives.

6. Overhead rates

Overhead rates will be 20 % for the Danish universities and 7 % for the South universities.

7. Central co-ordination at DKUNI

A central co-ordination of the initiative by a project manager based at the DKUNI secretariat will be established and funded by the Danish part of the project budget. At the end of the first phase, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Universities Denmark will jointly assess the needs for a continuation of the central co-ordination and decide upon the funding and organisation.

Regarding the *co-funding* by the Danish universities, it should be noted that at this stage the platform descriptions do not include detailed activity plans and budgets at university level in Denmark. Following the approval of the application the platforms will develop detailed activity plans and budgets, specifying the involvement of each institution, and the required approval of the co-funding by the involved Danish universities will take place.

It is envisaged that there will be an *inception phase* upon the approval of the initiative to finalise the partner agreements and develop the detailed activity plans and budgets.

Budget

The budget framework is based on the mentioned agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The allocations to the four platforms reflect the recommendations from the panel of international experts. See annex 6.

The panel concludes that

- all four platforms meet the minimum requirements to be financed;
- the platforms on Human Health and on Growth & Employment are more mature than the other two.

Based on these findings the panel recommends that for the next two years the platforms on Human Health and on Growth & Employment should each receive 20 mill. DKK and the platforms on Stability, Democracy & Rights and on Environment & Climate should each receive 8 mill. DKK.

The Rectors' Conference is grateful to the assistance provided by the panel of international experts. Our allocation of funds to the four platforms is in line with the recommendations from the panel.

Detailed budgets are included in the annexed platform descriptions.

In addition to the budget lines for the four platforms there is a budget line for the central co-ordination at the Universities Denmark's secretariat.

Table: Budget 2011-13. Mill. DKK

	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Platform on Environment and Climate	4	4	8
Platform on Growth and Employment	10	10	20
Platform on Human Health	10	10	20
Platform for Stability, Democracy and Rights	4	4	8
Central co-ordination	1,5	1,5	3
Unallocated	0,5	0,5	1
Total	30	30	60

The budget years are defined as 12-month periods and not calendar years.

Assumptions and risks

Detailed descriptions of the assumptions and risks related to each platform are included in the platform reports.

The platform descriptions have been developed under the assumption that the initial phase will be followed by substantial funding in later stages, since organisational capacity building in universities in the developing countries only makes sense as a medium or long activity.

Overall, it is a precondition for the BSU initiative in general that the agreement between Universities Denmark and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be consolidated and supported by the continued availability and commitment of the resource base at the Danish universities.

Finally, with the specific organisational setup of the initiative, and given the internal structures at the universities, it is vital that the budgeted co-funding is established without delay and that the universities in both North and South will make available the stipulated resources and researchers.