

Preparation of Partnership Proposals for the Building Stronger Universities Phase II

1. Introduction

This is an invitation to Danish universities to submit *Partnership Proposals* for the subsequent match-making with seven Southern universities that have prepared *Project Outlines* available on request from Danida Fellowship Centre at research@dfcentre.dk.

The implications of the current dialogue with the government of Uganda for the research cooperation has not yet been decided. Hence, the future role of Gulu University in the Building Stronger Universities programme is not yet clear.

Partnership Proposals must be submitted to Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) at research@dfcentre.dk **before April 9, 2014, at 12.00** named "Partnership Proposal BSUII – [Name of Southern Partner University]".

The overall approach to the partnerships is outlined in the approved Programme Document for the Building Stronger Universities Phase II (<http://dfcentre.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BSU-phase-II-PD-document.pdf>). The sections below specify the programme document in further detail and should be adhered to in the preparation of Partnership Proposals.

Section 2 details the *formal requirements of partners*, specifying who can make a proposal.

Section 3 outlines the *format for the Partnership Proposal*. The length of the proposal excluding annexes must not exceed 15 pages.

The Southern partners will select the Danish partners based on a set of proposed *evaluation criteria* listed in section 4.

Finally, section 5 details the next steps following the match-making, including the expected timeline.

[Annex 1](#) contains a note outlining the expenditure categories eligible for support. The list has been shared with the Southern partners for their preparation of project outlines.

At the time of deadline for submission of the Partnership Proposals a template Trilateral Agreement (that will be entered between the Southern University, the Danish university/ies and DFC who is administering the BSUII on behalf of Danida) as well as General Conditions for Grants under the BSUII will be available.

Queries to the Call and the match-making process can be directed in writing to research@dfcentre.dk. Both questions and answers will be posted on DFC's web site.

2. Requirements of Danish Partners

Institutes at the following Danish universities can submit proposals, individually or in consortia:

- Aalborg University
- Aarhus University
- Copenhagen Business School
- IT University of Copenhagen
- Roskilde University
- Technical University of Denmark
- University of Copenhagen
- University of Southern Denmark

The Danish Partnership Proposals can include consortia of institutes, a single or several institutes as well as individual researchers from one university or across several of the universities mentioned above. In addition, up to 25% of the funds assigned to the Danish partners in each partnership can be used for support from institutions, companies or individuals outside of the 8 universities.

In case of consortia there must be a Lead Institute submitting and signing the proposal. Endorsement by faculty or university level management is not required unless the regulations of the university require such endorsement.

Institutes and individual researchers can participate in different Partnership Proposals responding to more than one Project Outline. They can also participate in more than one proposal responding to the same Project Outline. An institute can be Lead Institute of proposals responding to different Project Outlines, but cannot be Lead Institute in multiple proposals responding to the same Project Outline.

A Partnership Proposal must respond to the entire Project Outline from one Southern Partner University, and to this Project Outline only.

The submission of a Partnership Proposal cannot be made contingent on the award of another Partnership Agreement.

3. Format for the Partnership Proposal

The Partnership Proposals aim at enabling the Southern partners to identify and select the partnership which most relevantly, efficiently and effectively allow them to achieve the objectives of the BSUII and the specific objectives identified by the Southern Universities. The Partnership Proposals must include the following:

1. Presentations of the Danish applicant(s): The participating institutes/researchers, the Lead Institute, and name of the designated BSU anchor.
2. Overall appreciation and possible comments to the Project Outline to which the response is being made, in particular how the Danish applicant(s) sees the opportunities for the collaboration to create new knowledge capable of alleviating development problems.
3. Outline of methodology and approach regarding how the Danish applicant(s) will help deliver the outputs requested by the Southern university, and how a multi-disciplinary approach will be applied as relevant.

4. Outline of how the Danish applicant(s) will work with the partner to apply a human right based approach and attention to gender equality as per the Danish Development Strategy “Right to a better life”.
5. Description of the management set-up envisaged by the Danish applicant(s), including suggested relation-building activities and communication principles.
6. Capacity statement of the Lead Institute, demonstrating that the Danish applicant(s) covers all requested thematic areas, as well as research capacity development and other areas demanded by the partners, including ability to support monitoring following Results Based Management principles.
7. Overview of previous experience with similar activities by the Danish applicant(s), including possible participation in BSU I. Mention relevant networks in the country or region that might foster synergies and enable South-South cooperation, as relevant.
8. Overview of key personnel to be engaged, including proposed role and availability (full CV in annex).
9. Suggestions and comments to the Process Action Plan included in the Southern Partner’s Project Outline, including confirmation that the Danish applicant(s) can adapt to and meet the main requirements in the three months inception period.
10. A specific confirmation that the Danish Partner will be available to participate in a dedicated workshop on monitoring and indicator development for the BSUII with the Southern Partner during the first two months of the inception phase.
11. Comments to the draft outline budget included in the Project Outline.
12. Other comments.
13. Signatures by the Head of the Lead Institute on behalf of the Danish applicant(s).

4. Evaluation Criteria

Based on the responses submitted by the Danish universities, the universities in the South will each select one Danish partner or consortium of partners as their match for the BSUII implementation. Before the selection, the Partnership Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria by the Process Consultant assisting the Southern partners:

- The overall responsiveness of the proposal to the Project Outline.
- The realism, relevance and practicality of the proposed methodology, including its reflection of keep good practice principles for capacity development support.
- Relevance and effectiveness of the human rights based approach and attention to gender equality that the Danish partner(s) will apply.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the proposed management and relation set-up.
- The strengths and possible limitations of the Danish partners’ capacity to deliver the proposed partnership activities.
- Experience with similar activities. Already existing relations to the South partners through BSUI or through other research collaboration are considered an advantage.
- Experience of the key personnel that will participate, including their thematic relevance, experience with research capacity issues, and their experience from developing countries.
- The ability to meet the main requirements of the three months inception phase as outlined by the partner, including availability to participate in a dedicated workshop on monitoring and indicator development for the BSUII with the Southern Partner during the first two months of the inception phase.

The final selection will be made by the university in the South based on their assessment of the best match to their Project Outline, and presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for approval through the DFC.

The university will document the basis for their assessment and make it available to DFC. The assessments of individual proposals will be made available to the respective Danish partners. In cases where there are competing proposals, the documentation made available to DFC will include a matrix comparing the various proposals according to the selection criteria.

5. Next Steps Following the Match-Making

Selection and Approval of Matches

The Southern partners will conclude this process not later than May 15th 2014. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will if applicable approve the selection not later than May 20th 2014.

Trilateral Agreements and Initiation of Disbursements

The partnership agreements between the Southern Partner, the Danish Partner and DFC will be signed not later than May 30th 2014. Upon signature by all parties, disbursement of funds can take place with immediate effect. A set of General Conditions for the management of the funds will be issued and will be part of the Trilateral Agreement.

Inception Phase

The three months inception phase starting when the agreement is signed will allow the partners to:

- Initiate substantive collaboration as relevant.
- Engage in a detailed planning process resulting in activity plans and detailed budgets.
- Develop detailed success criteria and indicators for monitoring, including through a joint workshop with the partners facilitated by a monitoring consultant recruited by Danida, to take place during the first two months of the inception phase.
- Establish the baseline values of the selected indicators.
- Prepare an Inception Report containing the activity plans, budgets, indicator frameworks and baseline values. The Inception Report must be submitted to DFC by the Southern Partner. The content outline for the Inception Report will be provided in due time by Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs will formally approve the budgets and in addition provide comments to the Inception Reports. It is expected that the partnerships will take due notice of the comments provided.

Preparation of Indicators

To ensure a similar approach and quality across partnerships as relevant Danida will provide the assistance of a monitoring consultant. The consultant will facilitate a joint workshop with the Southern and Danish Partner during the two first months of the inception phase. The monitoring consultant is furthermore available to coach all parties during the ongoing process of indicator development through the inception phase.

Annex 1

What can be funded under the BSUII Programme?

This note outlines the key eligible expenditure categories under the Building Stronger Universities Phase II programme, as well as costs that are not eligible. The note will, with some further technical details added, serve as reference for the audits required under the programme. It will form part of the formal agreements governing the cooperation.

Overall principles

- All funding provided by Danida is for research capacity development activities enabling the participating universities to contribute to poverty alleviation and promotion of human rights and equality, including gender equality, in line with Danida's strategy "Right to a Better Life"
- The thematic focus of research activities around which capacity is developed is thus expected to be of direct relevance and application in society to address development challenges. The thematic foci are expected to build on the collaboration in Phase I and to provide substantive focus of the BSUII partnerships.
- The budget for each partnership, both the part allocated to the South partner university (60%) and to the Danish partner (40%) is exclusively for use on *partnership activities* between the partners, in line with the objectives and output areas described in the BSUII programme document.
- The budget for the respective partners will cover the costs of the activities carried out by each partner, respectively.
- Up to 10% of the total budget can be used for small scale investment cost and equipment needed to achieve partnership objectives, as further specified below.
- Participants in programme activities (research preparation, curricula development, workshops, exchange visits etc.) are expected to contribute as part of their core duties as university staff, with no additional compensation to be funded by the programme. The overhead and coordination budgets included in the programme are available to fund possible compensations for the performance of activities linked to the BSUII which are beyond the normal duties of staff, as regulated by university policies and procedures.

Overhead and coordination costs

- *Overhead, Southern Partner University:* Max. 12% of the total direct expenditures of the Southern Partner can be charged as general overhead for which no specific accounting is required.¹
- *Coordination costs, Southern Partner University:* Max. 8% of the total direct expenditures of the Southern partner can be used to cover specified expenditures of the Southern partner's coordination tasks in relation to the BSUII (covering e.g. salaries or part salaries for staff that perform significant coordination functions to make the BSUII work, as well as associated direct expenses). These expenditures should be documented and accounted for.
- *Overhead, Danish Partners:* The Danish partners may charge a maximum of 20% overhead of their direct expenditures. General administration costs are considered to fall under the scope of overhead contributions. This means that there can be no separate budget lines for general administration

¹ Overhead and the 8 % of the coordination expenses cannot be charged on expenses effectuated by DFC on behalf of the Southern partner relating to study periods in Denmark of PhD students and/or staff.

costs in the budget. The general administration costs include – but are not necessarily limited to – the following type:

- Office expenses (rent, cleaning, stationery, transport, electricity and water, support staff and other operating expenses).
- Expenses relating to staff carrying out general administrative assignments, including budget and accounting tasks.
- The institute director's involvement in the cooperation.

No additional funds can be allocated to the project administration and coordination over and above the overhead contribution.

Staff exchanges in the partnership

- *Travel cost and per diem.* The travel costs must be in accordance with the national or institutional regulations in the respective partner country (i.e. regulations of the Southern partner country or university for researchers from the South; and the current applicable Danish Ministry of Finance tariff regulations for official business travel in Denmark and travel by Danish researchers (including daily allowances and hotel expenses)). The cheapest air fare, economy class, must be applied, also even if regulations should allow higher class.

Training/workshop costs

- *Training/workshop costs:* Direct costs in relation to conducting training/workshops (i.e. stationary, refreshments, minor sundries)
- *Workshop and conference facilities:* Facilities for workshops are expected to be at the participating universities, thus rental of facilities is not foreseen.
- *No allowances for participation:* In no occasion shall participants residing at, studying at or being employed by a participating university be paid any kind of allowances for attending training/workshops.

PhD degrees for younger academic staff

- *Funding of PhD* are eligible if the Southern Partner University is facing an aging of staff situation where younger staff with no post-graduate degrees will soon be required to fill positions which will be vacated by retiring colleagues. The topic of the PhD must be within the prioritized thematic areas identified by the Southern Partner University and focus on issues relevant to local development challenges, and the research must be of a character that can be replicated and expanded within the means (laboratory facilities, equipment etc.) available at the Southern Partner University.
- *Regulations of the Southern Partner University:* Funding of PhDs shall be granted as per the policies and regulations of the Southern university. Permanently employed academic staff under 40 is eligible.
- *Enrolment in home country or region:* PhD candidates must seek enrolment at the Southern Partner University or a university in the partner country, alternatively at a university in the region of the partner country. Enrolment in Denmark can only be considered, if enrolment in the partner country or the partner country region is not possible and if sufficient justification for this is provided in the inception report. In cases where study periods in Denmark are found necessary, this must be under a “sandwich” programme with studies at the Danish institution for a limited period of time (usually a maximum of three semesters).
- *Double degrees:* Double or multiple PhD degrees i.e. a PhD degree from a Danish university in addition to a degree from a Southern partner country university or a university in the region, can be

awarded provided that the requirements of the Danish Ministry of Education, Executive Order no 1039 of 27/08/2013 are fulfilled, and that the possible payment of taximeter fee at the Danish university at maximum is set according to the period of stay at the university².

Technical assistance to strengthen financial and administrative systems related to research capacities of the Southern Partner

- *Assistance from national sources:* In areas where support from Danish partners would be too costly and/or not within their core competency, other sources of consultancy support from national providers can be included. This could e.g. be in the field of basic accountancy capacity development.
- *Support from Danish sources outside the universities:* Up to 25% of the funds available for Danish partner expenditures can be spent by the Danish partner, as decided by the partnership and outlined in the Inception Report, on buying additional assistance in areas where they do not have the required skills and where a provision of services from a Danish source is justified.

Audit costs

- *Audits:* Annual and special external audits of the Danish contribution can be funded under the programme. The regular external auditors used by the partner universities are eligible. The South partner accounts are to be externally audited annually³, while the Danish partners' final accounts, only, are to be externally audited.
- The Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) may, as part of its oversight responsibilities, request that additional audits including forensic audits are carried out, and can select other auditors for this purpose.

Dissemination and publication costs

- *Dissemination and publication:* Includes dissemination related to the BSUII partnerships and to the research capacity development of the Southern Partner University.

Salaries for replacement of academic research staff, possible compensation for undertaking additional tasks and responsibilities, other salary costs

- *Replacement costs:* Costs, corresponding to the actual salary level of the person to be replaced, can be charged to the BSUII funds to enable the contracting of replacement research or teaching staff while regular staff is working on BSUII activities. The replacement cost can be charged against documentation of the specific activities and time spent (in work weeks) by the staff member for whom replacement costs are charged.
- *Regulations of the university must be applied:* Salaries of researchers and other staff indirectly or directly funded by BSUII funds must follow the tariffs, rates and regulations of the university.
- *Stipend for PhD students:* Stipends for PhD students in addition to their staff salary (for books etc.) included in the project must follow the tariffs for PhD students in the Southern partner university/country. The normal salary of the PhD student (who must be a permanent staff member) cannot be charged to the programme.
- *Coordination functions:* Salary for Southern Partner University staff with major coordination tasks of the BSUII can be charged within the limit of 8% for coordination costs, as described above.

² It is up to the Danish partner to ensure that these Danish regulations are adhered to.

³ A maximum amount permitted for audits will be included in the trilateral agreement governing the partnerships.

- *Compensation honorariums:* Permanent staff at the participating universities in the South is expected to assume tasks related to BSUII as part of their normal duties. In cases where a university has a policy allowing for addition of smaller compensations acknowledging that staff is assuming tasks in addition to their regular duties to ensure that the BSUII partnerships proceed as envisaged, such honorarium can be also be charged against the 8% coordination budget and the 12% overhead budget. The level of remuneration and approval process must be in line with university regulations. Compensations, honorariums or additional allowances cannot be charged to any other budget lines except the 8% coordination budget for which documentation is required, and the 12% general overhead budget for which no specific documentation is required.
- *Research assistants:* Salaries for e.g. research assistants or other necessary functions contracted for research preparation and baseline studies can be funded under the programme.

Peer learning activities

- *Peer exchange in the region:* Travel and per diem for peer learning exchanges with relevant institutions in the region regarding research capacity development are eligible.
- *Scientific conferences:* Costs related to scientific conferences regarding a specific research theme are eligible if the theme is of direct relevance to the research capacity development (e.g. with direct impact on curriculum development, or on key courses in research methodologies).

Research materials, journal subscriptions etc.

- *Consumables:* Consumables necessary for research preparation in the thematic areas selected for the partnerships (materials, minor tools, transportation services etc.) .
- *Subscriptions, books:* Acquisition of books and subscription on scientific journals and databases within the thematic focus areas chosen.
- *Other minor costs:* Other minor sundry costs related to curriculum development or other specific activities (observing that the general overhead of 12% and 20% respectively will cover basic office supplies etc. as specified above).

Small scale investments and major equipment (max. 10% of the total partnership budget)

- *Buildings, furniture:* Rehabilitation/remodeling, or in exceptional cases construction costs for buildings/rooms which serve research purposes (laboratories, libraries) within the chosen thematic areas. Cost related to general purpose class rooms or auditoriums are not eligible.
- *Equipment:* Other capital costs relevant to the BSU II activities. Capital costs are understood as items with a minimum of three years depreciation horizon. Service contract and maintenance costs are to be included as part of the capital costs.
- *Vehicles are not eligible:* Acquisition of or repair/maintenance of vehicles is not eligible, and normal transport costs are deemed covered by the general overhead allowance. Payment for transport for specific research preparation activities can be covered.

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