Summary of recommendations of the appraisal

Title of (Country) Programme	Building Stronger Universities, Phase III, 2017-2021
File number/F2 reference	2016-45640
Appraisal report date	3 July 2017
Council for Development Policy meeting date	5 September 2017
Summary of possible recommendations not followed **The appraisal mission submitted 16 recommendations at programme level and 21 recommendations for the six partnership proposals. The Evaluation and Research Department (EVAL) has adjusted the Programme Document in accordance with the recommendations and instructed the six African partner universities to amend their partnership proposals in accordance with the appraisal recommendations. The partner universities have fully accepted all recommendations and amended the project proposals as well as possible. In the programme inception phase, further work on detailing the activity plans, the budget and the results framework will be undertaken, and approved by EVAL during an inception review.**	

Overall conclusion of the appraisal

The proposed programme is recommended for presentation to the Council for Development Policy taking the recommendations of this report into consideration.

The appraisal identified a total of 16 pertinent recommendations at the overall programme level with additional 21 at the level of the six university partnerships.

The draft Programme Document (PD) was generally well written and provided much of the overview required for the programme. However, the final PD would benefit from a more succinct theory of change that articulates the role that research activities play in relation to the programme's capacity development objectives. Against the background of BSU 3 potentially being the last phase of the programme, there is need to further outline sustainability and exit. The actual role of the Danish partner institutions is not sufficiently described in the draft PD. This should also be addressed, ensuring that there is clarity amongst both sets of partners regarding their roles. With a view to align the PD even more with Danish policies and guidelines, youth and gender equality concerns should be even more explicit. The appraisal also contains pertinent observations and recommendations regarding the results framework and budget.

Separate formal Development Engagement Documents (DEDs) for the six university partnerships have not been prepared. The appraisal team considers, however, that the individual university partnership proposals are sufficient for this purpose provided that they are strengthened in line with the outlined recommendations.

Recommendations by the appraisal team	Follow up by the responsible unit
Programme Level: Building Stronger Universities, Phase III, 2017-2021	
Programme documentation	
1. Make reference to the necessary procurement of technical assistance (TA) to support the inception phase.	The inception phase and inception review are described in section 3.6.
2. Adjust the programme document (PD) in line with the comments made in the appraisal report, in particular relating to the theory of change, assumptions and risks, programme management, and sustainability and exit (the latter to be a new section that needs to be developed in the PD).	The Programme Document has been adjusted accordingly. See details below in relation to the specific recommendations.
3. In the programme document include a short (10 line) outline per partnership of content of main work packages. In practice, this means extending the current descriptions by 3-4 lines. Wording from appraisal report's section 2.1. could inspire.	A short description of the partnership activities planned for BSU Phase 3 and examples of important achievements in BSU Phase 2 have been included in section 3.3.

4. Adjust the partnership proposals in line with overall programme as well as individual proposal related recommendations.	The partnership universities have amended their proposals in accordance with the recommendations. In some cases, EVAL still finds that clarity of presentation on log-frame consistency could be improved. This will be addressed in the inception review.
Policy and strategy frameworks	
5. Highlight youth and gender equality in the programme document (PD). The appraisal team notes that relevant indicators are gender sensitive.	With its focus on tertiary education, young people will especially benefit from BSU, which has been described in the PD. Gender targeting has been included and described in section 2.2.
Theory of change, objectives and results framework	
6. Strengthen the Theory of Change (TOC) in the programme document emphasizing a) how research based training and individual capacity building in the form of PhDs and Post Docs contribute to institutional research capacity, b) how the feedback loops are between (pilot) research and capacity building c) how they mutually strengthen each other. A short summary TOC would be useful (as in the original Concept Note).	The ToC has been clarified in section 3.2 and further rationale for outcome areas has been included in section 3.1.
7. Use the definition of outcome areas provided by the original Concept Note in the programme document (PD). Refine outputs and outcomes at partner level in accordance with this intervention logic. Sharpen outcome and output statements in line with Danida guidelines. Add baselines to the partnership results frameworks once the implementation plans are clear. Arrange for consultancy support to assist this.	Section 3.1 on outputs and outcomes has been reformulated. The results framework has been revised accordingly.
8. Include a matrix illustrating how the individual outputs in each partnership proposal relate to the programme outcomes. Summarize in an annex to the programme document (PD). This matrix will provide a primary vehicle for overall programme monitoring.	Annex 3 indicates the distribution of partnership outputs in relation to programme level outcomes. This has been the basis for preparing the results framework attached to the programme document as annex 1.

Choice of partners and modalities	
9. Include – both in the programme document (PD) and the individual partnership proposals - more information on the partnering arrangements so that it is easier to understand the role of the Danish partners.	Further description of the contribution by the Danish university partners has been included in the partnership proposals and in the programme document, section 3.3.
Programme management, reporting and monitoring	
10. Undertake annual BSU country-wise progress review meetings with involvement of embassies, FFU research projects and national regulatory university institutions.	Section 3.6 describes programme management, monitoring and reporting. The suggested annual meetings have been included.
11. Clarify division of labour between DFC and EVAL including clarification of responsibility for monitoring and mitigation of programme level risks.	As indicated in section 3.6, this has been clarified by delegating the implementation responsibility to Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will have an oversight role, approve annual work plans and budgets, participate in the annual visits and undertake a mid-term review.
12. During the inception phase, DFC (under EVAL's oversight) to develop a programme implementation manual which minimum outlines procedures and formats for annual activity plan, budgets and reporting.	This has been agreed with Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) and is indicated in section 3.6 of the programme document.
Budget, financial management and flow of funds	
13. Harmonize programme budget with the original CN outcomes and outline the split between South and the North.	The budgets have been organised according to programme level outcome areas and the budget division between Danish and African partners, which is 50/50, has been indicated in section 3.7
Risk management framework	
14. The assessment of risks and risk mitigation in the programme document (PD) and at partnership level should be reviewed and strengthened.	The risk management framework and the description of mitigating measures have been amended.
Sustainability and continuation/exit scenarios	
15. In the programme document (PD) include a section elaborating exit and sustainability concerns and scenarios.	A new section 3.4 on sustainability aspects has been included based on input from the partnership proposals.

16. Each of the partnership proposals to include a new section on sustainability showing how the partnership will lead to sustainable results, e.g. in terms of research practices, training and education that are likely to exist beyond the lifetime of BSU 3.	Each partnership proposal has included a short section on sustainability issues, and are underlining the importance of African ownership, long-lasting partnerships and alignment to university priorities as important sustainability factors.
Engagement Level: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana	
17. Elaborate coordination and management mechanisms. If this aligns with university mechanisms, outline how.	The partnership proposal now indicates responsibilities for coordination and management and a figure is indicating BSU III management structure.
18. Align KNUST's Theory of Change (TOC) and outcome-hierarchy with that of the original CN.	The ToC and output-outcome description has been reorganised accordingly.
Engagement Level: University of Ghana, Ghana	
19. Focus the theory of change on how capacity for research will be strengthened, including the role that research groups, pilot projects, PhDs etc. play in this.	The ToC has been improved by emphasising the institutional capacity aspects of BSU Phase 3 activities.
20. In the results framework provide clearer linkages to the outcomes in original Concept Note. Utilise shorter outcome statement for work packages to ensure that the individual outputs relate as directly as possible to one of the outcome areas in the Concept Note.	Output and outcome statements have been reformulated and provide a clear description of what is intended in BSU Phase 3.
21. Consider additional risks and mitigating measures e.g. that PhDs will leave.	The risk of PhDs discontinuing their employment at UG after their PhD graduation is now mentioned, but the risk is considered minor due to arrangements made by UG to maintain PhD graduates for a certain number of years after graduation.
22. Explicitly outline management, partnership and coordination arrangements (section 5), both at UG and with the university partners in the North (i.e. who will do what and how will it be coordinated?)	Additional description of the management arrangements. The implementation manual will outline responsibilities more precisely.

Engagement Level: Gulu University (GU), Uganda	
23. Clarify the description of the work packages. The two overall thematic areas of work package 2 and 3 are described in a very general manner in the proposal. Some examples could be mentioned and the proposal should indicate the process whereby these specific issues will be selected and perhaps how many such groups would be running concurrently. It could be considered to include output 2.2. (researching the implementation of Problem Based Learning (PBL) and e-learning at GU) as one of the topics under output 2.3 instead of having it as a separate topic.	Gulu University proposal has been completely revised and improved. The intended work packages, outcomes and outputs are now presented in a clear and consistent manner.
24. Further indicate how overlap will be avoided and coordination enhanced with other forthcoming donor investments (such as the planned programme on e-learning with the University of New South Wales, the infrastructure investments by AfDB and the Swedish support).	BSU programme coordination now involves the Institute for Research and Graduate Studies (IRGS) and the office of planning and development at Gulu University, which is coordinating donor support at the university.
25. Strengthen the formulation of outputs clarifying their content by adding lines under each output indicating intended activity areas.	The output description has been revised.
26. Rebalance the proposal by adjusting the emphasis on pilot research activities in a downward direction, as indicated above, and enhancing emphasis on outputs which are a continuation and consolidation of BSU 2 achievements.	The proposal now puts more emphasis on the consolidation and further development of BSU Phase 2 activities, although still incorporating new types of activities in relation to action-research and outreach. The proposal is considered well balanced between consolidation and innovation.
Engagement Level: Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College (KCMUC), Tanzania	
27. Shorten and refocus the Theory of Change (ToC) so that focus on how capacity for research will be strengthened is clearer and to reduce overlap. The ToC could be reduced to a single paragraph that is linked to the results logic and explains why the expected results will occur and what the pre-conditions for this might be.	The ToC has been reformulated and shortened. A figure illustrating the ToC has been inserted in the proposal.

28. Simplify and rephrase outcome and output statements as results. Include a clearer indication of how the outputs will be produced. Including some indicative activities as examples would be one way of helping this.	The revised proposal includes a clearer description of activities and outputs, although there remains some inconsistency in relation to the numbering of outputs and organisation of outputs vs. outcomes. This will be addressed in the inception phase.
29. Consider additional risks, e.g. that PhDs and/or Post Docs will leave.	Additional risks and mitigating measures have been described.
30. As part of the section on partnership management, set out more explicitly the partnership arrangements envisaged (i.e. who will do what?)	Partnership coordination function is outlined and the contribution of Danish university partners is indicated (joint course development, joint pilot research project formulation and planning, support to PhDs).
Engagement Level: State University of Zanzibar (SUZA), Tanzania	
31. Outline management and decision making structure at SUZA as well as coordination measures between SUZA and DK university partners.	Management and coordination responsibilities have now been outlined in a figure indicating the involved entities and persons for each project component.
32. Make further support to the laboratory (output 3.5) contingent on either a) proof of full functionability and commissioning e.g. with MFA or embassy involvement or b) a process action plan (PAP) adequately securing this.	BSU Phase 3 will not provide laboratory support, but when the laboratory is fully functioning BSU will provide support to laboratory management capacity and staff training. Furthermore, possibilities for offering SUZA laboratory services on the private market will be explored.
Engagement Level: Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Tanzania	
33. Reconsider whether the budget allocated for PhDs can be justified in light of the emphasis on institutional, rather than individual, capacity strengthening.	The budget allocated for PhDs has been reduced from DKK 1.7 million to DKK 0.8 million.
34. Undertake budget changes in relation to infrastructure cost and coordination cost at Danish side.	The budget has been corrected accordingly.

35. Include consideration of additional risks and how they are mitigated.	Additional risks and mitigating measures have been described in the revised proposal (section 4). They include among other things procurement procedures, difficulties in coordinating calendars for research from DK and Tanzania and insufficient recruitment / poor competencies of PhD students identified.
36. Outline management arrangements and partnership oversight more explicitly.	The description of management arrangements has been improved. It is envisaged to include the Director of Research and Postgraduate Studies in the BSU technical committee, which will enhance management anchoring at SUA.
37. Strengthen the formulation of outputs clarifying their content by adding some lines under each output with a brief outline of intended activity areas.	The output descriptions have been clarified in the revised proposal.

I hereby confirm that the above-mentioned issues have been addressed properly as part of the appraisal and that the appraisal team has provided the recommendations stated above.

Signed in Copenhagen on 3 July 2017: **Henrik Vistisen (signed)**

Appraisal Team leader/TQS representative

I hereby confirm that the responsible unit has undertaken the follow-up activities stated above. In cases where recommendations have not been accepted, reasons for this are given either in the table or in the notes enclosed.

Signed in Copenhagen on the 16 August: Nanna Hvidt, Head of the Evaluation Department