



Project Proposal

PROJECT	Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries (BSU) – Phase II		
INSTITUTION	University of Ghana		
GRANT AMOUNT	2014	5.3 million DKK	= 15 million DKK (≈ US\$2,76 million)
	2015	5.3 million DKK	
	2016	4.4 million DKK	
PROJECT PERIOD	1 st January 2014 – 1 st November, 2016 (34 months)		

I. INTRODUCTION

BSU Phase I was in many aspects a learning process. The project had a slow start, as the entire BSU structure had to develop functional procedures and precedence. Once the project got underway, many of the targets were achieved within the time allocated. Nonetheless, a 5-month no-cost extension was deemed necessary in order to complete some tasks, and also leave ample time for the planning of the second Phase. Overall, it has been agreed by the University of Ghana and all its Danish partners involved in the project that Phase I was largely successful.

Main Achievements under BSU I

- 10 PhD students were enrolled into PhD programmes and their training is being supported by BSU. These students were all selected from current university faculty members and staff who upon completion of their training will serve as faculty members at the University of Ghana.
- PhD courses were developed through partnerships between Ghanaian and Danish partners and these courses were run for Ghanaian PhD students.
- Training in grant writing and proposal development was done for PhD students and junior faculty members. Feedback from participants indicated that the content of the course was useful and would improve their future proposals.
- Faculty members were trained in the use of research databases to support their research
- Faculty pilot research projects were funded.
- Grants for faculty manuscript and proposal development were funded.
- University administrative officers in the Platform on Human Health were trained in research and finance administration.
- Administrative assistants in the Platform on Human Health were trained in creation of publication databases. Research publications of faculty were retrieved and organised into a database on the university website.

BSU Phase I produced excellent partnerships between University of Ghana and Danish faculty. Faculty members had their ability to supervise students improved through these partnerships, and the quality of courses designed for PhD students also improved. We realised the need to strengthen local administrative capacity to identify calls for research proposals and to prepare and submit these proposals. The exchange of visits of faculty and students between Ghana and Denmark was found to be crucial in improving the quality of student learning and faculty output. These lessons learnt have been gathered, analysed and understood, and have been factored into the design of the second phase.

II. JUSTIFICATION FOR BSU II

The need for a Phase II of BSU is underpinned by two major developments at UG.

- **Restructuring of the PhD Programme, and increasing the number of PhD students**

In November 2011, the Business and Executive Committee (BEC) of the University's Academic Board approved a new structure for PhD programmes at the University of Ghana. The new PhD curriculum is a four-year programme with the first year dedicated to coursework, the second year to an experiential and a practical internship with a comprehensive qualifying examination. The third and fourth years will be used to complete the thesis research. (*Attached: copy of document: UG PhD Restructuring Implementation guidelines – BEC Approved vrs May 02, 2013*)

- **University of Ghana Research Themes**

The University of Ghana has set a current goal of working to become a key research institution in Africa. As part of that goal, the University has identified four main research focus areas, to be developed as Centres of Excellence as follows:

- Malaria Research
- Trans-disciplinary Research into Climate Change Adaptation
- Enhancing Food Production and Processing
- Development Policy and Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation

This initiative has been launched, with each having a coordinating team managing its activities. (*News Item: <http://leciad.ug.edu.gh/index.php/news-and-events/6-example-pages-and-menu-links>*)

With these centres and the increased need for quality input into PhD training, the University of Ghana will need support to improve the research capacity of faculty members as well as their ability to attract grants. There is also the need to support junior faculty members who do not yet have PhD degrees to attain these degrees in programmes that are designed in such a way that they can be supported by seasoned researchers.

III. FOCUS AREAS FOR BSUII PARTNERSHIPS

The main focus areas for BSU II at UG will be as follows:

Work Package 1: Strengthening Institutional Capacity for PhD Delivery

In order to achieve the objective of enhancing the quality of PhD education and also increasing the number of PhD students/graduates, the need and importance of having protected funds for PhD students to use for their research cannot be overstated. Additionally, it will be important to improve all supporting functions. This work package will, therefore, be implemented in a series of sub-packages to be delivered as follows: *Strengthening the Quality of PhD coursework, PhD Scholarships for Faculty Members, Strengthening Faculty Research Capacity, Database for Improved Tracking of Doctoral Thesis, and Enhanced Capacity for the Communication of Research.*

Work Package 2: Strengthening Capacity to Attract Appropriate Funding for the UG Central Research Themes

Developing the Centres of Excellence will involve a significant amount of funding. The objective of this work package is to capacitate faculty in their abilities to source for grants, as well as provide seed funds to facilitate the designing of research and development proposals toward attracting large-scale funding for the development of the UG Centres of Excellence.

Work Package 3: Institutional Capacity Building

An essential part of establishing a research university is availability of a good Research Administration and Financial Management System that can manage research funds well. The third focus area for BSU II will, therefore, have the following sub-categories: *Strengthening of Research Administrative Capacity, Strengthening of financial administration capacity, Strengthening of Research Support Capacity.*

IV. ENVISAGED OUTPUT AREAS

WORK PACKAGE 1: STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR PHD DELIVERY

i. Strengthening the Quality of PhD coursework

This will enhance the new first year of the PhD programme, which involves coursework, by building on the work already done under BSU Phase I. In addition, 2 PhD courses will be developed that will provide cross-cutting expertise to all PhD students in UG, e.g.: *Research Methodology, Proposal Writing, Thesis Writing, Scientific Writing, Statistics for the Non-statisticians, training of UG PhD students in production of doctoral thesis* etc. These will be courses that are not included in the current PhD course curriculum. We will develop additional PhD courses tailored to the university's research focus areas: i.e. 2 related to *Malaria* and Human Health, 2 courses specific to issues of *Climate Change Adaption*, 2 related to *Enhancing Food Production and Processing*, and 2 in *Development Policy and Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation*. The implementation would cover staff exchanges, joint curriculum development and delivery of basic courses with the contents and materials eventually becoming formal parts of the overall PhD curriculum.

ii. PhD Scholarships for Faculty Members

This activity would support the University of Ghana's drive for faculty development and enforcement of the requirement of a PhD/other terminal degree as the basic entry qualification for lectureship appointment in the University. These scholarships would, therefore, be restricted to faculty members of UG with a valid employment contract, who are entitled to a tuition waiver. The scholarships would be tenable at the University of Ghana with co-supervision between Ghana and Danish partners. The scholarship will also include a sandwich component, allowing students to undertake the internship requirement of their programmes (i.e. Year 2) in Denmark.

Four (4) scholarships would be awarded and would be tied into UG's four areas of research focus. The following distribution will be used:

- One (1) scholarship would go to students with proposals on *Malaria Research*
- One (1) scholarship would go to students conducting *Trans-disciplinary Research into Climate Change Adaptation*
- One (1) scholarship would be awarded for research related to *Enhancing Food Production and Processing*.
- One (1) scholarship would be awarded for research in the area of *Development Policy, and Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation*.

iii. Database for Improved Tracking of Doctoral Thesis

A key challenge of the PhD process today is the lack of systems and procedures for managing the final approval process of the doctoral theses, which has resulted in unnecessary delays in the process. Assisting the Graduate School with the requisite infrastructure, or capacity to acquire such infrastructure e.g. appropriate computer software etc., would enable a more transparent and real-time tracking, which will allow the various stakeholders, including graduate students themselves, to monitor progress. The system would be managed by the Graduate School, and should be equipped to raise red flags (and/or allow users to do so) when the process goes off track, allowing the Graduate School to take corrective measures. As the University expands the number of PhD students trained, this issue is gaining greater importance.

iv. Enhanced Capacity for the Communication of Research

It has been recognised that there are failings in the design of research and in how research is communicated to the lay audience. This activity will train researchers on techniques of adaptive research including co-design of projects with stakeholders. At the end of the project cycle, there is a need to pass the research information on. This activity will fund the preparation and publication of Eight University of Ghana Readers, two in each of the four University of Ghana Research Themes: *Malaria Research*, *Trans-disciplinary Research into Climate Change Adaptation*, and *Enhancing Food Production and Processing*. In addition, outreach seminars would be organised for stakeholders in the community to interact with researchers and for dissemination of relevant research outputs.

WORK PACKAGE 2: STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR THE UG CENTRAL RESEARCH THEMES

i. Strengthening Faculty Research Capacity

This activity will upgrade staff skills in areas of Grant Proposal Writing, Research Dissemination, Fundraising etc., through workshops aimed at equipping key faculty with skills to continue training other faculty. There will be additional seminars where already trained faculty will also train others to ensure that the acquired skills are sustained beyond the life of the project. This activity can be carried out jointly with (or with participation from) in-country South partners to promote South-South partnerships and networks. A key aspect of this activity would be to capacitate researchers in the UG research focus areas.

ii. Designing of Research and Development Proposals for UG Centres of Excellence

This activity will be in the form of a block grant to support the coordinating teams set up for each of the four centres of excellence. This grant will allow the coordinating teams to source Danish university expertise and experience in preparing and presenting large-scale funding proposals to international funders. Up to 10 percent of the total budget (924,000 DKK) will be earmarked for this activity. A call for proposals will be announced during the first quarter of 2015, and funds allocated to centres of excellence based on the quality of proposals received. Therefore, only strong applications will receive funding from BSU.

WORK PACKAGE 3: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

i. Strengthening of Research Administrative Capacity

This activity will support ongoing efforts to enhance capacity of the Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID), whose mission includes promotion, coordination and facilitation of research activities in the university, and also leading the development of the university's strategic plans. Activities to be undertaken include: working visits to Denmark by Research Administrators to learn first-hand best practices in research management and adapting them to the UG environment, training workshops to be implemented locally for research assistants at ORID, as well as acquisition of grant/research management software to improve the management and tracking of grants.

ii. Strengthening of financial administration capacity

Project finance differs from regular accounting. There is, therefore, the need to train financial administration staff in project financial management through training workshops for the entire finance team, acquisition of software to manage project finances, and possible working visits to Danish partner institutions by key staff in financial management.

iii. Strengthening of Research Support Capacity

The second intermediate objective of BSU II allows up to 10% of the project funding to be spent on investment costs. Output indicator 2.2 specifically targets “standards and capacity of research laboratory facilities”. Under this activity, it is proposed that part of the 10% capitalisation allotment be used for the following activities:

- Refurbishment and purchase of equipment for the *Ecological laboratory*, a unit of the Institute for Environment and Sanitation Studies (IESS). Additionally, Laboratory Management training courses will be held for senior, principal and chief technicians at this facility aimed at ISO level laboratory operation.
- Rehabilitation/Re-modeling of 3 or 4 PhD rooms into state-of-the-art *Graduate Commons* to serve research purposes in particular Departments of Schools

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	EXPECTED IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES
Work Package 1: Strengthening Institutional Capacity for PhD Delivery		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strengthening the Quality of PhD coursework</i> • <i>Strengthening Faculty Research Capacity</i> • <i>PhD Scholarships for Faculty Members</i> • <i>Database for Improved Tracking of Doctoral Thesis</i> • <i>Enhanced Capacity for the Communication of Research</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 PhD courses developed and implemented. • At least 100 PhD students trained • Process initiated to institutionalise courses for implementation by UG faculty • At least 3 staff training courses developed and implemented • 4 faculty awarded PhD Scholarships and pursuing PhD courses in UG research focus areas • Database for tracking Doctoral theses purchased/developed and launched • 8 UG Readers produced • At least 2 outreach seminars held to engage stakeholders • PhD graduates and staff proficient in competing for grants in the global arena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased research capacity enabling cutting-edge research that address development challenges • Enhanced ability to compete for more resources to drive research • Enhanced visibility of the University’s research and faculty output, leading to increased collaborations • Increased potential of proposed courses to positively impact and strengthen new PhD curriculum • Non-academic stakeholders educated on research results
Work Package 2: Strengthening Capacity to Attract Appropriate Funding for the UG Central Research Themes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Designing of Research and Development Proposals for</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 grants awarded to UG Centres of Excellence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased evidence-based research outcomes,

<i>UG Centres of Excellence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large-scale grant won for at least one Centre of Excellence • Critical mass of researchers capacitated to conduct research in targeted research areas 	addressing issues in the areas of health, climate change and food security to improve the life of the marginalised and the poor.
Work Package 3: Institutional Capacity Building		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strengthening of Research Administrative Capacity</i> • <i>Strengthening of financial administration capacity</i> • <i>Strengthening of Research Support Capacity</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practices for grant administration implemented • Grant administration documents and policies finalised and adopted • Best practices for financial management of grants being implemented • Training in result-based management towards grant administration and financial management for ORID staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result-based management approach towards grant administration and financial management instituted at ORID.

V. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP, INCLUDING KEY STAFF

The BSU II programme in University of Ghana will be managed by the Office for Research Innovation and Development (ORID), which is under a Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Development). There will be a central BSU Management Team that will oversee the whole programme. Given the success of the thematic platform structure from BSU I in fostering a sense ownership and greater implementation efficiency, it is proposed that the local platform structure be maintained for BSU II. Therefore, the central management team will comprise of two or three representatives from each of the three BSU I Platforms.

The Management Team will be headed by a BSU II Project Coordinator in the person of the Director of Research at ORID, who will have the overall responsibility to ensure the implementation of activities and timely delivery of technical and financial reports. The BSU II Project Coordinator will be assisted by a local Project Administrator stationed at ORID who will coordinate activities and support the Management Team.

VI. KEY EXPECTATION TO PARTNERS, OTHER CONCERNS AND RISKS

Key Expectations

Prospective Danish Partners are expected to lend their expertise to co-develop and implement PhD and Staff training courses as well as co-supervise PhD students. It is expected that facilities and library resources at Danish Universities will be easily accessible to PhD students and UG researchers on the project for the completion of activities to be undertaken. In developing a database for improved tracking of doctoral thesis, as well as the acquisition of research management and financial management software, it will be necessary to use Danish university expertise and experience in identifying or developing suitable software. Additionally,

the implementation of BSU II is expected to establish new partnerships and build on already established partnerships between University of Ghana and Danish faculty. This will forge long-term networks for future collaborations beyond the life of the project.

Concerns and possible risks envisaged, and possible mitigating measures

Concerns and Possible Risks	Possible Mitigating Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unavailability of top-up funds for the completion of PhD programmes given that UG's PhD programme is a four-year programme while project period is 34 months. • Finding suitable expertise and interest for co-supervision from Danish universities e.g. Malaria research • Availability of suitable software as indentified above (tracking doctoral theses, research administration and financial management) to address local needs. • Cost implication in designing custom software, where no suitable software is readily available for purchase. • Sufficient institutional and UG senior managerial support throughout grant period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-cost Extension for completion of initiated PhD programmes based on already approved budget framework • Seeking expertise and collaboration in areas with close commonalities with UG research focus areas • Co-developing and co-implementing projects in multi-disciplinary research areas • Custom-tailoring already available software to include elements that of interest to UG • Seeking expertise of local software developers who will also be readily available to provide administrative and training support • Current managerial staff have contract agreements with UG that go beyond the lifespan of project • Potential to build on current university research/faculty profile

VII. PROCESS ACTION PLAN FOR A THREE-MONTH INCEPTION PHASE

ACTIVITY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Networking event (seminar-style) with key partners after match—making process to define detailed action steps, roles and responsibilities, develop indicators for monitoring and evaluation.			
Draft Document developed detailing activities, key indicators for monitoring and evaluation			
Initial revision by all key stakeholders			
Consolidation and finalisation document for implementation			
Submit final inception report			

VIII. INDICATIVE BUDGET

Total Budget: 15 Million DKK
South/North ratio: 60/40
UG Share: 9,000,000 DKK

No	ACTIVITY	UG	DK
1	WP 1: Strengthening institutional capacity for PhD Delivery	3,720,000	2,480,000
1.1	Strengthening the Quality of PhD Coursework	56,560	
1.2	PhD Scholarships for Faculty Members	2,900,000	
1.3	Strengthening Faculty Research Capacity	113,440	
1.4	Database for Improved Tracking of Doctoral Thesis	150,000	
1.5	Enhanced Capacity for the Communication of Research	500,000	
2	WP 2: Strengthening Capacity to attract appropriate funding for the UG Central Research Themes	948,000	632,000
2.1	Designing of Research and Development Proposals for UG Centres of Excellence	948,000	
3	WP 3: Institutional Capacity Building	1,872,000	1,248,000
3.1	Strengthening of Research Administrative Capacity	636,000	
3.2	Strengthening of financial administration capacity	636,000	
3.3	Strengthening of Research Support Capacity	600,000	
4	Capital Costs	900,000	600,000
5	External Audit	60,000	40,000
SUB-TOTALS		7,500,000	5,000,000
6	Coordination (8%)	600,000	
7	Overheads (South @12%; DK @20%)	900,000	1,000,000
South/North Totals		<u>9,000,000</u>	<u>6,000,000</u>
TOTAL BUDGET		<u>15,000,000</u>	

IX. ANNEX: OVERVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Ghana's current vision and strategy focuses on promoting academic excellence through enhanced teaching and learning and leadership training; and through significantly expanded and relevant research and extension, with emphasis on graduate training. UG places particular emphasis on PhD training, with a special focus on development of younger faculty who do not hold terminal degrees. UG's aspiration is to become a research university with greater emphasis on delivery of graduate programmes, aiming for a 40% graduate proportion in the total student recruitment. To attain this goal, UG is pursuing a number of strategic approaches including diversification of its graduate programmes to include options that address national development needs, intensive faculty development, and forging strategic partnerships with Ghanaians in the Diaspora, as well as partner universities abroad to enhance its faculty strength and research output in terms of quality and productivity.

UG's current strategic priorities are:

1. **RESEARCH:** Create a vibrant intellectual climate that stimulates relevant cutting edge research and Community engagement
2. **TEACHING & LEARNING:** Promote academic excellence using the highest international standards of teaching, learning and leadership development.
3. **INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:** Provide an environment that will ensure fulfilling experiences for internal stakeholders
4. **GENDER & DIVERSITY:** Create the best environment for equal opportunity in gender and diversity
5. **INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES:** Overhaul all governance arrangements to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency
6. **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:** Enhance the mobilization and management of resources at unit and central administration levels
7. **ASSET MANAGEMENT:** Strengthen the management of the University's assets and facilities
8. **MONITORING & EVALUATION:** Mainstream and enforce structures and processes for system-wide monitoring and evaluation
9. Build **STAKEHOLDER CONFIDENCE** in the capabilities of the university.

Website: <http://www.ug.edu.gh/>

X. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

- **Annex 1:** UG PhD Restructuring Implementation guidelines – BEC Approved vrs May 02, 2013
- **Annex II:** UG Strategic Priorities