

Building Stronger Universities (BSU III)
Midterm Review Report

Ministry of Foreign Affairs / DANIDA

July 2021

F2 2016-45640

Table of content

Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
Executive Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Background and Context.....	6
3. Overall programme progress and performance	8
3.1 Progress on BSU III programme level.....	8
3.2. Status for progress and achievements BSU III project level.....	10
3.3. Capacity development and sustainability	11
3.4. Identified Lessons learned	12
4. Programme and Financial Management	14
5. Overall status for the BSU III program.....	14
6. Recommendations	15
Annex A - Terms of Reference	16
Annex B – Summary of Danish Partners meeting March 2020	23
Annex C - List of People Interviewed	25
Annex D – Partner Report Summaries.....	27
BSUIII-GU MTR meeting report.	27
BSUIII-KCMUC MTR meeting report.....	31
BSUIII-KNUST MTR meeting report.....	35
BSUIII-SUA MTR meeting report.	39
BSUIII-SUZA MTR meeting report.	42
BSUIII-UG MTR meeting report.	45
Annex E - Expenditure Report.....	48

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BSU	Building Stronger Universities
DDD	Doing Development Differently
DFC	Danida Fellowship Centre
DKK	Danish kroner
ELK/ELQ	Department of Learning, Evaluation and Quality at the MFA.
EU	The European Union
FFU	The Danida Consultative Research Committee for Development Research
GU	Gulu University
ICT	Information and communications technology
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
KCMUCo	Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MFA	The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOODLE	Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment
MTR	Mid Term Review
NCE	No-Cost Extension
NIMR	National Institute for Medical Research, Tanzania
PBL	Problem Based Learning
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
S-S-N	South-South-North (collaboration)
SUA	Sokoine University of Agriculture
SUZA	State university of Zanzibar
ToC	Theory of change
UG	University of Ghana
WP	Work Package

Executive Summary

It is the overall assessment of the MTR that BSU III - to a large extent - is fit for purpose. BSU III does allow for the management level and structures at the involved universities to be targeted and developed at a pace that seems appropriate and sustainable. The nature of the program could potentially face challenges if it would try to work its way into the university structures at a too hasty pace. Ownership across various university levels and functions is the keyword for success.

Improving efficiency and introducing automated processes across the administrative structures does not happen overnight and it does affect the people involved in the processes. Yet, transformational challenges within the BSU III have been dealt with professionally at the involved institutions through a strong project ownership and commitment from the senior management level (Vice-Chancellors and Provosts). This eventually leads to sustainable and improved research capacity development at all involved partner universities.

Several sources point to BSU as a highly relevant and unique way of integrating capacity development of both administrative systems and research. The relevance of the BSU III design in this regard must be emphasized, as many of the mentioned improved capacities has been brought about through the mentorships provided by the Danish partners.

Especially at the smaller and “younger” universities, the involvement of administrative systems and staff in the development process has improved the internal procedures and benefitted the researchers as well. E.g. the improved registration of publications at KNUST, which has led to more visibility of output by and among researchers, allowed them to position themselves in new ways in terms of networks and funding opportunities, both regionally and internationally.

University wide administrative systems are crucial for the universities in their pursuit of increasing their capability to produce research and teaching at a higher quality level. The BSU III design is in this regard unique, as it allows for prioritization of such administrative systems to be an integrated part of the implementation plan with a high level of S-S-N triangulation/collaboration and exchange embedded. In terms of research structures and improving the research quality level, the BSU III has contributed to the establishment of several research Centers of Excellence.

The BSU III shows significant impact on the capacity and quality of lectures in teaching and research aspects, as well as external funding opportunities on which the universities are heavily dependent.

Based upon this assessment the MTR recommends that the BSU III project period is extended up to the end of 2022 to secure ample time to finalize the planned activities which were affected and delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also provides sufficient time to consider and eventually formulate a follow-up phase to the BSU programme starting from 2023, if so desired.

1. Introduction

This mid-term review (MTR) of the Building Stronger University Program (BSU III) 2017-2021 was undertaken by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) Department for Evaluation, Learning and Quality Assurance (ELQ) in collaboration with the Research Department at The Danida Fellowship Center (DFC).

The BSU III program consists of six partnerships between universities in Denmark and universities in Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana respectively. The strategic objective of BSU III is that African universities will enhance their role as providers of education and research and their outreach to society, while the thematic objectives is that BSU III will contribute to i) enhanced learning and graduation, ii) more and better organised research, and iii) more university interaction with the private and public sector. The BSU III budget 2017-2021 amounts to DKK 90 million.

The main objective of the MTR was to assess the program performance with regard to outcome and results, progress, challenges, developments in risk factors, possible need for adjustments, and issues around program management. The intention is that the findings and recommendations of the review be used to inform decisions regarding finalization of the BSU.

The MTR took place from October 2020 to May 2021. A number of interviews and meetings were held with major stakeholders (see Annex 2), all done remotely through video and telephone calls due to the restrictions for physical meeting caused by the covid-19 pandemic. Planned physical MTR assessments in African partner countries were in the end cancelled despite the attempt to delay the MTR process to accommodate a possible release of travel restrictions in spring 2021 that did not happen. These circumstances have limited the quality and intensity of the MTR, but virtual and written communication and general results reporting form BSU III have provided information to support a fairly thorough assessment of the status of the program.

The review team (RT)¹ would like to take this opportunity to thank University partners in Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana, as well as in Denmark, for an open and constructive engagement in the review process. The team did seek to ensure that a broad representation of stakeholders, including academia outside the six university partnerships and the Danish research community in general, were covered. Special thanks go to the Danida Research Council for Development Research (FFU) for inputs during several discussions on the BSU programme and its positioning within the overall Danida approach to development research².

¹ The MTR was conducted by Chief Adviser, Henning Nøhr, ELQ, as overall team leader and in close collaboration with Ida Arendal Jørgensen and Lars Arne Jensen, the Research Department, Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC).

² See e.g. Evaluation of Danida Support to Development Research (2008-2018). [Evaluation of Danida Support to Development Research \(um.dk\)](#)

2. Background and Context

Initially, 11 universities in Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya and Nepal were part of the BSU program first phase (BSU I), running from 2011 to 2014. Its aim was to increase the research and teaching capacity of universities in selected Danida priority countries. The focus therefore mainly was on PhD studies and administrative structures at university level.

In the second phase BSU II from 2014 – 2017, the scope widened. The focus became the establishment and improvement of the administrative frameworks in order to lay the foundation for improved research capacity at university level.

During the first two phases of BSU, first Kenya then Nepal were phased out in line with changing Danida country priorities, while the remaining six universities from Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania continued into a third phase (BSU III).

The six African universities involved in BSU III are:

- State University of Zanzibar (Zanzibar, Tanzania)
- Sokoine University of Agriculture (Morogoro, Tanzania)
- Kilimajaro Christian Medical University College (Moshi, Tanzania)
- Gulu University (Gulu, Uganda)
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Kumasi, Ghana)
- University of Ghana (Accra, Ghana)

In short, the programme objectives for the current BSU III are that by 2021, the six BSU-supported universities have achieved (for individually selected thematic areas)

- i) effective and research-based learning and timely graduation of an increasing number of post-graduate students,
- ii) more and better organised research producing research proposals and broadcasting research results, increasingly in regional and international networks;
- iii) applied research addressing immediate societal challenges carried out in close collaboration with external stakeholders.

The theory of change for BSU III is that *if* the administrative framework, the organisation and systems and the practices and networks for university research are strengthened, *then* the participating universities will enhance their research quality, education and outreach and hence provide a more significant contribution to social and economic development.

At the next level of causality, the capacities (including incentives) to organise and embark on research, and to support teaching and research (facilities, administrative and financial systems etc.), will determine the actual quantity and quality of learning and research.

Researchers in both North and South gain merits by winning research grants and publishing, and they have to teach as part of their normal duties, but it is the assessment that the BSU approach in general will only function if the incentives include a perspective of research proper, even if BSU is a research capacity programme and not a research programme. It is thus also part of the Theory of Change that relations with BSU already built through parallel previous or ongoing research projects are a crucial asset in the BSU partnerships.

Based on previous experiences, the design of BSU III assumes that research and outreach capacity is most effectively developed when kept together by a thematically focused joint effort that involves e.g. PhD (or master) students, post-docs and senior researchers from both the African and Danish partners around preparatory, pilot and thesis research work. This demands a strong focus on the specific, lasting results and on how these are adopted by other stakeholders. This integrated approach does imply that outputs (and outcomes) will in most cases be the effect of work which is structured and managed by thematic work packages, rather than by separate activities aimed e.g. only at teaching, or only at outreach.

BSU III is a relatively modest programme in financial terms, implemented over four years. The focused activities should be combined with systematic efforts to broaden lessons and enable – but not assume full responsibility for – university-wide upscaling. The longer implementation period (compared to BSU Phase II) combined with the stronger focus and the funding level should also ensure that BSU Phase III implementation pace can adapt to the partnership capacity in both South and North, including in particular the absorptive capacity in the South and the delivery capacity in the North.

3. Overall programme progress and performance

3.1 Progress on BSU III programme level.

Regarding relevance of BSU III, several sources point to BSU as a highly relevant, and rather unique, way of integrating capacity development of both administrative systems and research. Often it seems to have worked very well for all involved institutions, as it has resulted in e.g. increased co-publishing and book chapter writings, as well as an increasing percentage of university staff to take up collaborative research (especially noted at GU). The relevance of the BSU III design in this regard cannot be stressed enough as many of the mentioned improved capacities has been brought about through the mentorships provided by the Danish partners.

Especially at the smaller and “younger” universities, the involvement of administrative systems and staff in the development process has improved the internal procedures and benefitted the researchers as well. E.g. the improved registration of publications at KNUST, which has led to more visibility of output by and among researchers, allowed them to position themselves in new ways in terms of networks and funding opportunities both regionally and internationally)

Another example of administrative improvement is the implementation of various tools concerning the university administrative structures like university wide research policies, electronic document systems (at SUA), grants management offices and policies, financial management systems as well as plagiarism software (at GU and SUZA) in relation to quality control of the produced articles and submission of thesis etc. Such systems are crucial for the universities in their pursuit of increasing their capability to produce research and teaching at a higher quality level than previous. The BSU III design is in this regard also unique, as it allows for prioritization of such administrative systems to be an integrated part of the implementation plan with a high level of S-S-N triangulation/collaboration and exchange embedded. This is contrasting many other donor modalities and programs on research capacity development.

The BSU III shows significant impact on the capacity and quality of lectures in teaching and research aspects (e.g. supervision skills/quality and co-publishing and book chapter writing) due to the mentorship setup with the partners. The mentorship also accounts for an improved knowledge and experience with regards to development of applications for external funding, on which the universities are heavily dependent.

In terms of research structures and improving the research quality level, the BSU III has contributed to the establishment of several research Centers of Excellence, both at Gulu University, University of Ghana and Sokoine University of Agriculture within various of their respective themes of prioritization.

It is the overall assessment of MTR that BSU III - to a large extent - is fit for purpose. BSU III does allow for the management level and structures at the involved universities to be targeted and developed at a pace, which seems appropriate and sustainable. The nature of the program could potentially face challenges if it would try to work its way into the university structures at a too hasty pace. Ownership across various university levels and functions is the keyword for

success. This ownership is rather evident from all of the six partnerships and can to a large extent be attributed to the S-S-N triangular mentorship setup enhancing both the sharing of common knowledge as well as paving the way for capacity development both at institutional and individual levels.

The good fit with development needs of the involved South universities can most likely also be attributed to the planning stage of the BSU III, in which the six Southern partners were invited to plan their activities to meet their respective focus areas, and this rarely to be significantly questioned by the Danish partners/consortia. This approach seems to be unique, when comparing to other likeminded donor approaches in terms of research collaboration, and an approach that caters for senior management ownership and support. Such senior engagement is crucial for the long-term success for the BSU objectives.

It is also important to acknowledge that institutional change does not happen overnight, especially at universities, when the envisioned change is centered around developing and improving administrative capacity, systems and power structures. It should not be underestimated that improving efficiency and introducing automated processes across the administrative structures does affect the people involved in the processes that the new structures are replacing. As an example, an automated electronic documentation system, which previously was done manually and created job opportunities to a larger extent than the automated system, may challenge the BSU III image and acceptance locally. Yet, such transformational challenges have in most cases been dealt with professionally at the involved institutions through a strong project ownership and commitment from the senior management level (Vice-Chancellors and Provosts).

As a program oriented towards developing the research capacity at institutional level, the BSU III is by nature centered on curriculum development not only for PhD studies, but also for M.Sc. studies. This is in particular important for the smaller and younger universities such as SUZ and GU, as these two only started 15-20 years ago and therefore have modest experiences with regard to the M.Sc. level. Thus, it is crucial that the time and space is given to develop curricula also for the level that forms the base and provides the majority of subsequent PhD candidates. Curriculum development, at PhD and M.Sc. level, functions as catalysts for the collaborative research relations, which is a result of the activities in the projects. The S-S-N triangulation and mentorship approach, and thus taking the term 'collaborative research activities' to the highest peak, paves the way for meeting and building relations which simply functions as the basis to create a trickle-down effect and thereby reaching a very large number of people at the involved universities.

The design of BSU III as effected by the universities in Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania, has allowed for ownership of the initiatives at the involved universities, and for efforts being used as a catalyst in relation to existing activities and other donors. Both SUA, SUZA, KNUST and KCMC report an increase in funding opportunities from other donors as a spin off from BSU III. However, it has also been challenging for many of the involved universities to balance and navigate the intersections between different donors.

The issue of navigating the donor landscape was also highlighted in the evaluation of Danish support to development research 2008-2019 conducted in 2020³, in which the BSU program formed part of the dataset. Both the evaluation report and several of the BSU partnerships suggest a design that allows for “gap filling” or at least some degree of flexibility for the involved institutions to align with other donors within BSU III – leaving the coordination efforts more up to BSU partnerships, rather than the donors themselves (in this instance Danida).

3.2. Status for progress and achievements BSU III project level

The individual status for the six individual BSU III partnerships are reflected in annex E. Overall, the status for achievements is that the BSU III projects are well under way and at an implementation stage, where they are entering the final year of activities to a large extent in accordance with work plans.

The impact of COVID-19 has especially been tough for the activities added under the un-allocated funds, as the majority of these involved some kind of human interaction and face-to-face meetings, which COVID-19 put a full stop to. Yet the BSU III projects have done what was feasible via online solutions to make progress and to prepare as far as possible to re-launch the activities once it again is an option to meet face-to-face.

Apart from this, delays have been experienced with regard to PhD studies, as well as other activities/outputs that requires partners to physically meet in terms of study stays and visits. It is evident that the S-S exchange has been very successful through the various study visits that have been done, and to a lesser extent has the mentoring been preferred.

Building relations and linkages between BSU III and FFU research projects are obvious as we to a significant extend see the same person gallery participating in various FFU projects and in BSU III interventions. However, the overlapping person gallery do not guarantee that the linkages will be pursued. This may not only be attributed to the BSU setup, as the two modalities are very different if their approach. The FFU projects are assessed and granted on basis of scientific quality and potential, whereas the BSU are mainly focused on the administrative and learning structures across universities. Thus it is fair to say that the FFU projects will benefit in the long run from the administrative structures which the BSU program is promoting, however, it is not by default the case the other way around. This is something that future modalities could look into, namely how best to combine the best features of the two modalities, as it goes without saying that it is difficult to perform quality research if the administrative structures are not in place, and this is what the BSU program offers.

³ Evaluation of Danida Support to Development Research (2008-2018). Evaluation of Danida Support to Development Research (um.dk)

3.3. Capacity development and sustainability

Generally, some interventions repeated across most BSU III projects are working distinctively well with respect to build capacity: cross disciplinary approach, room for piloting of research development and parallel administrative support. There are other examples, but one lesson to draw might be that the very design of BSU III, allowing for different types of capacity development depending on the institution, has worked exceptionally well with respect to address the capacity development agenda.

What has also worked well is the development of educational programs (M.Sc. and even B.Sc. level) as the BSU III approach has provided ample time to work out these programs through exchange visits and discussions, allowing for partners to meet and develop to a larger extent than other more traditionally oriented research modalities allows for. Through this, the real exchange and learning from each other emerge, building mutual respect and trust which is so important in terms of building the foundation for long term and sustainable capacity development.

Regarding the PhD students, it should be stressed that at all of the six BSU III South partners, a PhD study period is four years. This is due to the PhD curricula in the South universities include a mandatory first year of preparatory and introductory courses before the actual PhD study starts. For a four years project it is quite natural that a PhD study will be delayed somewhat beyond the four year project period, as the open recruitment process and enrollment procedure only starts when the project starts, often resulting in a need to extend the project period if this is to include the finalization of the PhD students. It is highly recommended to accept this, as there is a potential risk to lose PhD students in case the project ends before the PhD thesis is completed, leaving no financial means to cater for the completion of studies and defense of thesis.

Several BSU III partnerships show significant progress on use of e-learning and blended learning, which have strong perspectives for outreach on learning opportunities in Africa, within countries and on regional level. The focus on e-learning was already a part of several BSU III partnerships before the COVID-19 pandemic, but the travel and social restrictions have underlined the strong potential for e-learning courses within countries but also regionally in Africa.

E-learning is without doubt a modality for higher-level education and learning which will become more relevant in the future in terms of mobilizing teaching and research resources. Not only locally and internally at the universities where an increased resource base in terms of students and research uptake could prove quite significant, but also and in terms of attracting external and international research funds as research collaboration, uptake and knowledge exchange to a constantly increasing level will be available via and linked through e-learning opportunities.

3.4. Identified Lessons learned

A number of lessons learned are observed by the MTR across the partnerships in BSU III:

- The focus on leadership by the South partners builds strong capacity in managing grants and identifying activities relevant to the university needs.
- The original planned period of four years for the BSU III program seems to be suitable for achieving sustainable results that have impacts beyond the BSU III period. Yet it should be mentioned that a four year project does imply significant challenges with regard to PhD studies.
- The S-S collaboration enhances sharing of common knowledge, and the S-N collaboration enhances mentorship and capacity building.
- Curriculum development, at PhD and M.Sc. level, functions as catalysts for the collaborative research relations, which is a result of the activities in the BSU III projects.
- All of the six BSU III projects are in various ways interlinked with FFU projects, either North or South led FFU projects. The thematic areas of the BSU III projects are relevant in a FFU context, yet linkages between the two modalities may be strengthened.
- In relation to the gender balance and inclusion of female students and researchers, all the six projects have included gender-sensitive targets where suitable in their respective logframes. It seems that the BSU approach is suitable in relation to meet the set targets as an increased number of female students and PhD's/researchers are involved and participating over the years since project start, thereby proving to be fit for purpose in relation to have a positive impact on the gender balance (see fact box below).

Fact box - gender balance

- Three research groups of 10 members each (KCMUCo) – 5 female and 5 male.
- Six female and eleven male researchers attended the bioinformatics and HIV Sequencing course (KCMUCo).
- 64 staff (31 female and 33 male) trained in new pedagogical approaches (KCMUCo).
- Small research grants to seven (4 female and 3 male) faculty members (KNUST).
- Three research teams in Agroecology established with 7 female and 17 male researchers (SUA).
- Three female and three male admin staff trained, and one female and one male PhD student recruited (SUZA).
- Two female and one male PostDoc fellows recruited (UG).

For more information, please see the DFC website <https://dfcentre.com/research/> and the Danida Research Portal <http://drp.dfcentre.com/>.

- Increased collaboration and local uptake also seems to be benefitting from the BSUIII program. It is evident from the MTR that both local and international collaboration are positively affected, not only in terms of establishing research networks and in terms of creating synergies with other internationally funded projects, but also with regard to dissemination and outreach to local non-academia environment (see fact box below).

Fact box – increased collaboration and local uptake

- A large number of initiatives of dissemination to non-academia has been conducted in the forms of various articles in newspapers and newsletters, and also via Radio talk show (interactive live talk show), workshop/seminars with non-academic stakeholders and practitioners, through community engagement, and finally blogs by individuals (e.g. <https://agathalidri.blogspot.com/>) (GU).
- SUA has been established as the focal university for an AgroEcology Hub, involving institutions in Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi, funded by McKnight Foundation.
- New networks have been established through Swiss Aid and RUFORUM (SUA).
- Improved interaction with external stakeholders in terms of stakeholder meetings and industry internships (SUA).
- Synergies exist between BSU and the EDCTP (EU-funded) program on clinical trial (IPTp with DP and azithromycin for malaria, sexually transmitted and reproductive tract infections in pregnancy in high SP resistance areas in Kenya, Malawi, and Tanzania (2017-21)). This involves partners in both Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Denmark and Norway.
- The SeqAfrica Project (2019-2021) funded by the Flemming Fund involves partners in Denmark, Nigeria and South Africa.
- Research proposal in collaboration with Gulu University on a bioequivalence study, to be funded by the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) in East Africa, is through to stage 2.
- Overall, the regional and international collaboration for KCMUCo has to a very large extent been positively affected and strengthened by the involvement of BSUIII.

4. Programme and Financial Management

The overall picture of the financial status halfway through the BSU III (financial years 2018-2019) is that out of the total program budget of DKK 90 million approximately one third (DKK 32 million) remains in the DFC program account yet to be disbursed to the BSU III projects.

In general, the COVID-19 has had some negative impacts on the planned activities as the majority of these include staff mobility that not possible to compensate through online communication solutions. Consequently, the expenditure rate has been impacted negatively since the pandemic started early 2020.

Especially the activities planned under the unallocated funds, which were granted in November 2019, has been severely challenged by the COVID-19 restrictions. The majority of activities under these funds are of a nature that requires personal contact, i.e. S-S exchange visits and workshops across the projects and disciplines, as well as laboratory equipment procurement and mentoring/operating procedures, which are not really feasible to complete through online virtual solutions.

Seen in this light, the BSU III projects will benefit from an extended project period up to at least the end of 2022, offering the opportunity to finalize all activities at a realistic pace to pave the way for good impacts of the program activities as well as allowing the involved PhD students to finalize their studies.

Regarding the DFC administration of the program, up to now the process has been running without any significant challenges or setbacks. DFC keeps a very close contact and relation to the six BSU III partnerships, and annual meetings are normally held in the months of October/November. The annual meetings are used to discuss progress and challenges, as well as to guide the project on any needed adjustments. However, as a natural consequence of the COVID-19 travel restrictions it has been impossible to visit the projects in 2020, meaning that DFC has not met physically with the projects since Oct/Nov 2019. Still it has been possible through online solutions to maintain a high level of interaction with the projects, though it is impossible to extract the same level of understanding as the physical meetings provides.

5. Overall status for the BSU III program

The overall picture of the key findings of the MTR is that the BSU III design and objectives are well on track and largely benefitting the participating universities in their pursuit of developing research administrative structures and quality research capacity.

The inclusion of pilot research projects and research network activities in the BSU III have worked out successfully and should be continued and even strengthened as it is challenging for Danish partners to engage further into capacity development activities without a strong

research component. Here e.g. joint publications are important for Danish partners to engage in the program.

There are still good experiences working with younger and less consolidated universities within BSU III and the charter for further focus on emerging and regional universities in future BSU programs.

6. Recommendations

Based upon assessments of the MTR the following recommendations for the continuation and finalization of BSU III are identified and to this, some observations on an optional next BSU program are presented:

1. **The current BSU III program to be extended to the end of 2022.**

All six BSU III partnerships are more or less in need of a no-cost extension beyond the planned program termination by end 2021. This is mainly due to the impact, of the COVID-19 pandemic and its restriction. DFC will assess the individual needs for budget adjustments within the current budgets of the six partnership and grant administrative extension of activities until 31 December 2022.

2. **The planning for a new BSU program to start 2023 will be initiated by Danida**

Danida will in close dialogue with DFC and current BSU III partnerships, initiate an identification and formulation process with the perspective of preparing a new African University capacity development program by 2023. The program will build on experiences from BSU I-III and in general the overall BSU objective and modality is expected to be continued, but with a number of issues open for consideration, including:

- The need for securing a financial frame for a new program in the Danish development assistance budget 2023, ideally covering a four years programme.
- The need for more flexibility and coherency in a new African University capacity development program, e.g. with reference to Doing Development Differently (DDD) principles and better results and impact tracing.
- Considerations of continuing current BSU III partnerships within a new program, with respect to strengthening S-S and S-S-N collaborations and ensuring geographically (country/regional focus) and thematic focus (fragility/resilience) of a new program aligned with the new Danish Strategy for Development Policy – “The World We Share”.
- The balance in focus on research/higher education/administrative capacity.
- Pursuing stronger relations between Danida Development Research (FFU) and a new program to strengthening outcomes for building research capacity.
- Seek coordination with other international donors for university and research capacity in Africa, e.g. other Nordic development organisations.

Terms of Reference

Mid-Term Review of Building Stronger Universities (BSU) Programme Phase III

Background

Universities in developing countries are important players for sustainable national development. They train students to the highest levels of formal qualifications, with emphasis on science and research principles and methodologies. Research from developing countries is a part of the global knowledge pool, and research-based, contextualised knowledge is necessary to address existing and emerging local, national, regional and global development challenges, to support social as well as technological innovation, and to provide evidence for better political decision-making.

To play their role, universities need both teaching, research and outreach capabilities. Based on considerations of what other actors are doing, other Danish funding mechanisms (e.g. research grants) and the comparative strengths of Danish universities, MFA and Danish Universities embarked on the BSU programme in 2011, with a deliberate focus on strengthening research *capacities* at partner universities in the South. That is, the programme is not focused directly on tertiary education or on research, but concentrates on supporting the development of research capacities that will, when applied, strengthen the research-elements in Master and PhD educations, as well as the quality (and, as an effect, the quantity) of research and outreach/uptake of research.

The BSU programme had a Phase I from 2011-2013, Phase II from 2014-2017, and is now implementing Phase III (2017-2021). Phase III includes six development engagements in the form of partnerships between African universities in Tanzania (3), Uganda(1) and Ghana (2), respectively⁴, and consortia of Danish universities.

The overall aim of BSU Phase III is that partnerships with African universities will enhance their role as providers of scientific knowledge and research-based education and advice to the society. It involves capacity development of the African universities through partnerships with Danish universities.

⁴ The participating African universities are: University of Ghana; Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana; Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania; Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College, Tanzania; State University of Zanzibar, Tanzania; Gulu University, Uganda

This aim is divided into a development objective that addresses issues “outside” the gates of the universities, and an immediate objective referring to how students, researchers and stakeholders of university develop and use capacities “inside campus”.

At strategic objective level, BSU Phase III will contribute to; i) improved quality of university education within the thematic areas leading graduates to obtain relevant employment or self-employment, ii) more and better quality research from the participating African universities feeding into the global knowledge base particularly relevant to sustainable development in Africa; and iii) specific uptake and use of applied research by societal actors, including private and public sector actors in the three countries.

The programme objectives are formulated at impact level, where BSU Phase III will contribute to:

- i) effective research-based learning and timely graduation of an increasing number of post-graduate students within the thematic areas;
- ii) more and better organised research in selected thematic areas producing research proposals and broadcasting research results, increasingly in regional and international networks and;
- iii) applied research addressing immediate societal challenges in selected thematic areas carried out in close collaboration with external stakeholders.

Main indicators to verify at this level are number of PhD and MSc students graduating, number of papers to peer-reviewed journals, number of research grant proposals submitted and number of ongoing research collaborations.

The participating universities differ considerably in terms of their size, funding situation and capacities. In the larger and better-established universities, the contribution by BSU may be more modest at university level compared to the smaller and younger universities. On the other hand, the development towards becoming more research-based universities is often more advance at the larger universities and they may be able to benefit more from BSU Phase III with respect research capacity than the younger, less established universities. The individual partnership engagements reflect these differentiated ambitions.

At outcome level, the programme will - through the partnerships - achieve results and have effects in three closely interlinked areas as described below⁵:

Outcome area 1: Administrative capacity:

University capacity is improved by strengthening administrative frameworks for university research.

⁵ Detailed Results Framework with verifiable indicators are outlined in the BSU III Programme Document (August 2017)

This includes administrative and financial processes, library and ICT facilities underpinning e-learning and overall policies related to the PhD education or to the career of young scientists. Many systems are university-wide, and emphasis will be on those that reinforce the achievements under outcome areas 2 and 3. In the individual partnerships, outcomes in this area will most often be at the level of users (students and researchers), actually benefitting from the facilities and services, while outputs will be that services offered, or that capacities present. Funding under this outcome area will across the six partnerships cover investments in administrative and financial computerized systems, facilities related to broadening the bandwidth for e-learning, digital and printed research resources; process and quality development, coaching, and on-the-job training in new computerised systems for grant management, student progression and theses management, and anti-plagiarism.

It is noteworthy that the Southern partners have shown high demand for continued support in this area, which focuses on the crucial links between providing research and teaching on the one hand, and the many critical support systems needed to deliver research and teaching on the other hand.

Outcome area 2: Research and outreach capacity at system/organisational level:

University capacity is improved by strengthening organisation and systems for researcher education and research processes.

This involves the academic aspects of the university research capacity within the selected thematic areas for the partnership, such as establishment of thematic research groups, faculty-wide enhancement of research methodologies and approaches, joint preparation of grant proposals, preparation of article manuscripts, etc. It also involves further work on strengthening the PhD and in some cases the master education within specified areas, e.g. through mandatory cross-cutting and/or elective courses, strengthened supervision, and PhD conferences. Equipment related to specific research thematic areas could also be included. There will in BSU III be a reduced number of thematic areas or stronger focus in existing areas in all partnerships, and no new scientific areas have been included.

Outcome area 3: Research and outreach capacity at the level of individuals:

University capacity is improved by strengthening research and outreach practices and networks.

By defining specific, minor pilot research within the thematic areas, researchers also improve their practices in other areas of the research cycle. The work is organised around the established thematic research groups and PhDs, which are funded under this outcome area, and should lead to closer linkages and cooperation between research groups in Denmark and in the partner countries. The emphasis on research outreach in the third phase build upon the improved ability to produce research results established in earlier phases. Outputs include research agendas and pilot research defined and in some cases carried out in collaboration with external stakeholders, and active networks functioning with ongoing dialogue. Most of the activities in this area will be closely integrated with activities in outcome area 2, but to ensure specific attention to the

results these will be specified under this outcome area. Some additional specific outreach efforts will also be carried out, such as seminars and conferences for stakeholders and targeted publishing. In some of the partnerships there will be dedicated efforts to apply innovation processes and approaches, in collaboration with external partners.

Each of the university partnerships have defined their own outputs organised in work packages, which relate to these three outcome areas. This includes partnership programme level outcome areas and the programme level results matrix with outcomes and output indicators is based on this.

Theory of Change

The Theory of Change for BSU is that *if* the administrative framework, the organisation and systems and the practices and networks for university research are strengthened, *then* the participating universities will enhance their research quality, education and outreach and hence provide a more significant contribution to social and economic development.

At the next level, the capacities (including incentives) to teach, organise and embark on research, and to support teaching and research (facilities, administrative and financial systems, etc.), will determine the actual quantity and quality of learning and research.

Researchers in both North and South gain merit by winning research grants and publishing, and they have to teach as part of their normal duties. BSU will only function if the incentives include a perspective of research proper, even if BSU is a research capacity programme, and not a research programme. It is thus also part of the Theory of Change that relations already built through parallel previous or ongoing research projects are a crucial asset in the partnerships.

Based on previous experience, the design of BSU Phase III assumes that research and outreach capacity is most effectively developed when kept together by a thematic, joint effort that involves e.g. PhD (or masters), students, post-docs and senior researchers from both the African and Danish partners around preparatory pilot and thesis research work. This integrated approach does imply that outputs (and outcomes) will in most cases be the effect of work which is structured and managed by thematic work packages, rather than by separate activities aimed e.g. only at teaching, or only at outreach.

BSU III is a relatively modest programme in financial terms, implemented over four years. The focused activities should be combined with systematic efforts to broaden lessons and enable – but not assume full responsibility for – university-wide upscaling. The longer implementation period (compared to BSU Phase II), combined with the stronger focus and the funding level, will also ensure that BSU Phase III implementation pace can adapt to the partnership capacity in both South and North, including in particular the absorptive capacity in the South and the delivery capacity in the North.

Objectives of the mid-term review

The main objective of the review is to assess achievements, challenges and lessons learnt by, and across, the individual partnerships, and to provide recommendations for possible follow-up initiative/program after the completion of the BSU phase III programme in 2021.

The review will focus on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of BSU Phase III and in addition on organisational capacity, strategic focus, operational/programming procedures and financial management.

Scope of work and activities

The review should assess:

- i) how relevant is the BSU III design in the current context of developing research, teaching and administrative capacities at the universities involved?;
- ii) is the BSU III approach an effective and efficient way of contributing to the process of improved management, education and research at the universities? Does it create the necessary platform for development and change, and does it foster the essential ownership? Do the partnerships with Danish universities contribute to this in an effective and efficient way?
- iii) Are the processes supported by BSU III sustainable over time, and what time perspective do we operate within? What is the status for the major assumptions and risks identified within the Theory of Change for BSU III?
- iv) to what extent are the researchers and people involved in the BSU III benefitting from the program in terms of opportunities and collaboration internally/externally?; and
- v) to what extend is BSU III at institutional level contributing to a better inclusion/collaboration/linking to other research oriented DANIDA modalities, i.e. Window1 and Window2 (for Ghana only), or funding from other sources?;
- vi) how can BSU III and future programs link up with collaborating partners, donors, Embassies etc. for increased harmonization of efforts within development research and capacity development?

The assignment includes but is not necessarily limited to the tasks listed below:

- Review documentation from BSU III, including programme document, inception reports, progress reports.

- Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions for travel interview the six partnerships and involved Danish partners via virtual platform (zoom)
- Address any other issue and provide recommendations of relevance for the BSU III implementation, including considerations related to:
 - Potential for increased South-South cooperation within and beyond the BSU-partners,
 - BSU III's potential for increased uptake/outreach, e.g. networking with potential partners in the public and private sector and in the North and South,
 - Recommendations for stronger linkages with existing research programmes (e.g. EU) to create coherence and boost funding for BSU III objectives and related activities,
 - Recommendation for narrowing in the gender gap in the BSU programme.

Timeline and Outputs

The assignment will take place between November-December 2020. All six partnerships will be interviewed virtually (Zoom video conferences of around 2 hours each). All partners, including partners from Danish Universities, will meet at a Midterm Seminar (video conference) in January 2021 (full day meeting). Final review report will be finalized by 1 March 2021-

The review will entail the preparation of the following:

- (1) Desk-based annual reports summarising existing progress and issues as reported in progress reports from each partnership. Question/issue guide for the partner reviews;
- (2) Draft review report. This will inform discussions at the January 2021 seminar;
- (3) Final review reports reflecting major findings and recommendations for the finalization of BSU III, and recommendation for the formulation of a new phase of BSU, if found justified.

All outputs will be written in English.

Team composition

The review team will consist of Henning Nøhr and Anna Kahl, both Danida, and Lars Arne Jensen and Ida Arendahl Jørgensen, DFC.

Documentation

To be elaborated

ELK

November 2020

Annex B – Summary of Danish Partners meeting March 2020

Participants: Lars Hviid, KU; Finn Plauborg, AU; Poul Engberg-Pedersen; Kirsten Thomsen, DTU; Björg Elvekjær, KU; Anne Marie Mosgaard, KU; Michael Alifrangis, KU; Jakob Rasmussen, RUC; Pascal Magnussen, KU; Lone Dirckinck-Holmfeld, AAU; Martin Mennecke, SDU; Susan Whyte, KU; Morten Birkved, SDU; Ida Jørgensen, DFC; Lars Arne Jensen, DFC; Mike Speirs, ELK; Henning Nøhr, ELK.

Purpose of the meeting with the Danish project partners was to share experiences and ideas regarding a possible continuation of the BSU programme, providing useful information for the preparation of the midterm review, which eventually was postponed.

ELK opened the meeting by highlighting the following recommendations and comments from the Evaluation report:

- Evaluation is overall very positive towards the BSU program in terms of capacity development. It has ripple effects down the systems, it addresses the need for re-thinking institution wide, it encompasses cross cutting thematically, SDGs are seen in ‘connection’.
- Has shown its value as a long term program.
- S-S collaboration has worked really well, and should be encouraged and strengthened in future programs.
- A strong and solid leadership is paramount for success, and South ownership results in effect to a greater extent.
- Consider to direct the support to lesser/weaker universities rather than the usual winners.
-
- Linkages to other Danida modalities, especially the W1, should be further strengthened.

Furthermore, ELK underlined that a new Danida strategy for research would include closer links between FFU and BSU programs at the involved universities, as well as a closer M&E of the results.

The individual projects put forward their experiences in relation to the planning of a continuation program, and the main messages were as follows:

- Management structures must be solid, and too much change in personnel during the implementation is a risk,
- Projects headed by Humanities (rather than Natural Sciences), are more likely to have an interdisciplinary thinking, also in terms of methodological approach,
- Embassies could play a role regarding dissemination/outreach/uptake etc.,
- The LFA works fine, in relation to politics, procedures and schools/curriculum etc.,
- Risk is that evaluations focuses too much on meeting Donor aspects, makes it difficult for smaller universities to focus on the real issues,
- BSU is a catalyst for additional research activities,

- BSU has a more gender balanced participation in research activities,
- BSU has catered for an increase in university colleges and PhD curricula,
- The resources have a tendency of being spread out too thinly due to maybe too many planned activities,
- The program approach have shown a great deal of flexibility, much appreciated from the involved actors,
- Important to strengthen relations in-country, e.g. Gulu vs. other public universities in Uganda,
- Important to have a flexibility in future programs to cater for the different needs and setups which exists at the individual university,
- The S-S-N collaboration established in BSUIII is seen as a very important factor by the involved partners and should be included in BSU4 as well, also with the two Ghana partners despite any news status they may have after 2020.

The overall take away messages from the meeting were that:

- i) long term engagement has huge impact in terms of establishing solid management structures cutting across universities, developing PhD curricula and Phd schools, establishing new colleges, and not least paving the way for increased South-South collaboration which is very much appreciated by all involved partners,
- ii) the BSU program has over time been a catalyst for additional research activities including a more equal gender balance within the scientific staff,
- iii) the BSU program has been active for almost ten years, but it is only very recently that even the bigger and more solid South universities are capable of taking the lead in applying for external funding in collaboration with North partners, and therefore it is too early to withdraw even from the bigger universities in the BSUIII, and
- iv) the collaboration arising through the BSU program seems to be stronger and more enabling compared to those arising from the FFU projects.
- v) Finally, it was suggested to look into BSUIII-similar programmes with our Nordic donor colleagues NORAD (NORHED program) and SIDA (SAREC program).

/DFC.

Annex C - List of People Interviewed

BSUIII-KNUST – Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology:

- Robert Abaidoo, BSUIII-KNUST coordinator, Director of Office of Grants and Research.
- Hannah Adom Eyison, administrative manager, Office of Grants and Research.
- Tsiri Agbenyega, KNUST
- Richard Bruce Lamptey, KNUST
- Alex Amerh Agbeshie, KNUST
- Sam Newton, KNUST
- Ofeibea Asare, KNUST
- Nana Ewusi-Mensah, KNUST
- Patrick Addo-Fordjour, KNUST
- William Oduro, KNUST
- Samuel Nikoi, KNUST
- Christian Gregart, financial consultant
- Torsten Rødel Berg, Aarhus University, Danish lead,
- Peter Furu, University of Copenhagen.

BSUIII-SUA – Sokoine University of Agriculture:

- Daniel Mushi, BSUIII-SUA project coordinator,
- Kalunde Sibuga, SUA
- Daniel Ndyatabula, SUA
- Sebastian Cheneambuga, SUA
- Niels Fold, UCPH – Danish lead
- Christian Gregart, financial consultant
- Olav Juul Sørensen, Aalborg University
- Per Kudsk, Aarhus University

BSUIII-UG – University of Ghana:

- Felix Kofi Abagale, Pro Vice Chancellor of Research, University of Ghana
- George Obeng Adjei, Director of ORID, BSUIII-UG coordinator,
- Kwadwo Owusu, WP 3 leader, University of Ghana
- Michael Ofori, WP 2 leader, University of Ghana
- Christiana Amoatey, WP 3, University of Ghana
- Richard Boateng, WP 1, University of Ghana

BSUIII-SUZA – State University of Zanzibar:

- Prof. Hamad Issa, BSUIII-SUZA Project coordinator SUZA,
- Pandu K-Pandu, Admin coordinator SUZA,
- Haji Mwevura, ProVice Chancellor academic resources , SUZA,
- Mohammed Sheikh, SUZA.
- Aziza Akadr, SUZA
- Biubwa Ally, SUZA
- Fatma Saleh, SUZA
- Said Bakari, SUZA
- Said Yunus, SUZA
- Flemming Konradsen, UCPH, Danish lead.

BSUIII-KCMUCo – Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College:

- Elton Kisanga, BSUIII-KCMUCo Project Coordinator
- Ahaz Kallonga, KCMUCo Financial director
- Michael Alifrangis, UCPH, Danish lead
- Dorte Holler, UCPH admin

BSUIII-GU – Gulu University:

- Agatha Alidri, BSUIII-GU Project Coordinator, Gulu University.
- Charles N. Okumu, GU
- Lone Dirkinck-Holmfeld, AAU, Danish Lead
- Judith Awacober, GU
- Susan Whyte, UCPH
- Geoffrey Tabo, GU
- Daniel Komakech, GU
- Elizabeth Opiyo, GU.

Annex D – Partner Report Summaries.

BSUIII-GU MTR meeting report.

1. Introduction to project – main areas of WP's:

Budget is DKK 10,000,000 with an extra grant of DKK 1,349,520 added under the unallocated funds.

Overall Objective: Significant social problems in northern Uganda are addressed through uptake of collaborative research that generates knowledge relevant for community transformation, as well as research-based teaching and learning (PBL and e-learning) that prepares graduates for working with such problems by 2021

Specific Objectives / WPs: 1) Administrative frameworks, facilities and services for research strengthened; 2) collaborative research and outreach capacity are improved by strengthening organisation and systems for postgraduate teaching and learning, building on and reinforcing on-going research; 3) collaborative research and outreach capacity within the thematic areas (i. Transforming education and ii. Rights, resources and gender in post-war development) are improved by strengthening research, postgraduate teaching and learning and networks at the level of individuals

Description of key themes, outputs and activities: BSUIII will continue to strengthen the research and teaching infrastructure at Gulu University in order to better realize its vision of 'community transformation'. It will emphasize close links between teaching and community outreach through collaborative action research. At both system and individual levels, efforts will be concentrated in two thematic areas. In the area of 'Transforming education', teaching and research will focus on the introduction of new pedagogical approaches (Problem-Based Learning and ICT) at the University itself and in other educational and training institutions. The area of 'Rights, resources and gender in post-war development' will be concerned with access to resources, conflict prevention and management, and gender issues in post-conflict development. Research networks for each area will coordinate activities within and beyond the University. Elective post-graduate courses will be offered in the two thematic areas. In addition, BSUIII will support the refinement and teaching of mandatory PhD courses required by the Institute of Research and Graduate Studies.

Participants:

Agatha Alidri, BSUIII-GU Project Coordinator

Charles N. Okumu, GU

Lone Dirkinck-Holmfeld, AAU, Danish Lead

Judith Awacober, GU

Susan Whyte, UCPH

Geoffrey Tabo, GU

Daniel Komakech, GU

Elizabeth Opiyo, GU

2. Actual status in terms of

- a. Delays due to the COVID-19 situation.
- b. Time frame for remaining activities – need for no-cost extension.
- c. PhD timing and completion of these.

In spite of the faced challenges, the BSUIII is estimated to be 70% on track. The COVID-19 has also brought about challenges in relation to the kicking-off of the activities under the unallocated funds, as both the ICT Centre of Excellence as well as the East Africa Case Challenge (led by State University of Zanzibar) have been halted as a consequence of the COVID-19.

It is foreseen that a no-cost extension up to end 2022 would suffice for the completion of activities, except for the PhD completion grants where there is a need for these activities and funds to be ring-fenced and extended to the end of 2023 given the delayed accreditation progress and COVID-19 effect.

A no-cost extension up to 2022 would allow for a number of action points and activities, including i) Kick-starting effective implementing of outcome Area 4: The Center of Excellence in ICT and Learning; ii) The Project will focus on the collaborative pilot projects in the two thematic areas; iii) Teaching the new PhD and Masters programmes accredited by the National Council for Higher Education; iv) Operationalizing the grants office; v) Launch, dissemination and implementation of Research Agenda, Research policy, e-Learning policy, Repository policy and Anti-plagiarism policy; and vi) Institute of Research and Graduate Training to operationalize the electronic graduate progress monitoring system.

3. Relevance of the BSUIII design, and effectiveness towards contributing to the process of improved management, education and research at the universities

In terms of relevance, the South leadership builds capacity at Gulu University to manage external grants as well as to identifying activities relevant to the university needs and act accordingly to respond to these needs. The time frame of 4 years seems to be suitable if the project is to have an long term impact at university level, as it simply takes time to change and improve/upgrade administrative structures and new pedagogical approaches.

The S-S collaboration enhances sharing of common knowledge, and the N-S collaboration enhances mentorship and capacity building. The triangulation of S-S-N collaboration is seen as being highly relevant for the success of the BSUIII.

As a result of the BSUIII Gulu University have been able to upgrade facilities and systems to a standard that meets the minimum standards of the Ugandan National Committee for Higher Educations.

4. Sustainability over time

The BSUIII in Gulu University is foreseen to have a long lasting and sustainable impact as it has contributed highly in assisting GU to develop capacity and develop research and administrative policies across the university to meet the minimum standards of the Uganda National Council for Higher Education. These policies have strengthened research and graduate education, and they are a major step to support Gulu University in its efforts to

strengthen research capacity at PhD and Masters level and research-based education, with a special emphasis on research 'for Community Transformation'.

5. South-South-North collaboration potential

There is huge potential for an increased triangulation of the S-S-N collaboration. Gulu University are very active in knowledge sharing and exchanging experiences through S-S workshops and research visits, and also on research stays and mentoring with S-N linkages. It has been quite evident throughout the BSU2 and BSUIII that GU thrives and benefits to a very high degree in their close collaboration with Danish partners, and also having PhD students endure long study stays in Denmark.

This creates the foundation also for strong linkages to and synergies with FFU funded programs involving GU, especially with the IMAGENU project at Aarhus University, but also with non-Danida funded Projects like the BSU and Transforming Employability for Social Change in East Africa (TESCEA) in co-funding the Gulu University Community Engagement Policy.

6. Increased collaboration/networks/international outreach as a result of BSUIII

The BSUIII3 has resulted in various outputs related to outreach, mainly noticeable within research networks focussing on sharing knowledge and experience regarding writing applications for external funding, co-publishing and book chapter writing. The thematic focus areas are within i) Transforming Education and ii) Rights, Resources and Gender. Also, a collaborative research partnership and networks between Gulu University Researchers and graduate students, Danish Partners, Private sector, Local Community and Local Government have resulted from the BSUIII.

Furthermore, a large number of initiatives of dissemination to non-academia has been conducted in the forms of various articles in newspapers and newsletters, and also via Radio talk show (interactive live talk show), Workshop/seminars with non-academic stakeholders and practitioners, through community engagement, and finally blogs by individuals (e.g. <https://agathalidri.blogspot.com/>).

7. Future outlook related to a follow-up program, incl. Balance research/admin cap. Strengthening

The BSUIII has to some extent included research pilot activities in addition to the administrative structures and policies across university which have been one of the main focus areas. As the improved structures and policies need time to consolidate and to prove their worth, a follow-up program will be both timely and needed for the sustainability and further local impact and ownership to evolve and mature at Gulu University.

The pilot research activities included in BSUIII would also benefit from a follow-up program in which it would be possible to strengthen the linkages and networks even further consolidating the research structures.

Finally, the Center of Excellence within ICT, which is to be established in the final part of the BSUIII, will benefit immensely from a follow-up program allowing for consolidation of the activities and relation to the surrounding departments at Campus.

The balance between research and administrative issues have been quite successful up to now. However, it is foreseen that an increasing percentage of research would be welcome for all of the involved partners, as research activities carries the results and outcome of the BSU programs up to now, and potentially it would be suitable for Gulu University to embark on a follow-up program in which the university structures and policies can show its worth.

/
DFC

BSUIII-KCMUC MTR meeting report

1. Introduction to project – main areas of WP's:

Budget is DKK 13,000,000 with an extra grant of DKK 1,319,500 added under the unallocated funds.

The research areas being carried over from BSUII, are areas where the collaboration between KCMUCo and Danish researchers have been very active and productive during BSUII.

Additionally, during BSUII a collaborating link was established within HIV research. The KCMUCo activities on HIV research are still limited, but they hold promise and we will explore its expansion during BSUIII. BSUIII research areas will be:

a) Reproductive health including obstetrics and gynaecology and linkage with pathology through telemedicine. Research capacity building and sustainability will be secured through the collaboration with University of Southern Denmark and the active collaboration with several Departments at Odense University Hospital on clinical care supported outside BSU.

b) Malaria. This will build on the long, successful collaboration on research on malaria and other febrile illnesses between KCMUCo and University of Copenhagen as well as the collaboration with Danish Technical University based on establishment of a second generation sequencing facility at KCMUCo. Both these activities have been supported by FFU during the past 4 years.

c) HIV. Through BSUII, collaborative links have been established between early/midterm career HIV researchers at KCMUCo and researchers at University of Copenhagen/ Copenhagen University Hospital. These links will be deepened.

Participants:

Elton Kisanga, BSUIII-KCMUCo Project Coordinator

Ahaz Kallonga, KCMUCo Financial director

Michael Alifrangis, UCPH, Danish lead

Dorthe Holler, UCPH admin

2. Actual status in terms of

- a. Delays due to the COVID-19 situation.
- b. Time frame for remaining activities – need for no-cost extension.
- c. PhD timing and completion of these.

A number of activities were postponed due to Covid-19, and a few were cancelled (e.g. meetings, student attachments at KCMUCo). PhDs are largely on track though one student is lacking somewhat behind, and the students have not been able to travel to Denmark for study stays. Field work has been affected as well as supervision and facilitators have been restricted from travelling.

Some planned activities are still being implemented, but naturally, the majority have been delayed or postponed (such as outreach activities, course an IPR, and course on knowledge translation). Regarding the implementation of the Center of Excellence within *Next Generation Sequencing and Bioinformatics* planned under the unallocated funds, it is ongoing, though most of

the planned activities are pushed forward at least 12 months, therefore awaiting the students to start courses as a COVID-19 consequence. The project express their need to extend preferably up to the end of 2022.

3. Relevance of the BSUIII design, and effectiveness towards contributing to the process of improved management, education and research at the universities

The design is unique and highly relevant in building capacity in both infrastructure and human resource, and this approach will help create sustainable results at KCMUCo. A number of research related gaps have been filled - both in terms of infrastructure, administrative structures and teaching - and the design and approach have made it possible to develop relevant specialized courses (e.g. on Bioinformatics) which are now to be offered by the college. Overall and in general, the design has put KCMUCo in a position with improved university infrastructure and equipment and an overall improvement in capacity to conduct research and research-based teaching and education.

4. Sustainability over time

The impact and outcome of the BSUIII on a long term scale seems to be well prioritized also from management side, as there is a very large number of people are benefitting from the program in terms of opportunities. Staff are being offered PhD and Postdoc training, and also developing their job opportunities through training (e.g. librarians and laboratory staff). This enables KCMUCo to retain staff which have been trained via the BSUIII, thus over time building research capacity through staff who has the BSU way of thinking incorporated/integrated in their mindset.

With regard to courses and what is being offered to students, we see that modules are being included in both MSc and PhD courses (e.g. Bioinformatics as a sub-speciality), and the developed courses are being included in the foundation modules. As a result the critical mass within the thematic groups are strengthened, the ability to attract external research funding is improved, and the sustainability issue of the program seems to be well integrated also beyond the BSUIII.

5. South-South-North collaboration potential

Extensive south-south collaborations/participation in BSU courses (capacity building for research & research-based teaching) are ongoing in several ways, with regard to both the administrative structures as well as the research related items. BSUIII grant administrators across the entire network met for the first of a planned series of training courses at KCMUCo in 2019 for an annual training session on issues related research grant management, but COVID-19 put a halt to the subsequent venues which were planned for, including courses in The East African Case Challenges (with GU, SUZA and SUA). Staff from several institutions (SUZA, NIMR, SUA) participated in hands-on lab courses at KCMUCo, and a course in IPR with participation from SUZA and the University of Ghana were done.

All this is done in close collaboration and mentorship with Danish partners, highlighting the potential for the S-S-N triangulation and for strengthened interaction in future programs, combined with a strong local/regional S-S focus.

6. Increased collaboration/networks/international outreach as a result of BSUIII

The BUS3 is linked to a number of initiatives as synergies between BSU and FFU are evident, for example through the FFU project *Environmental sustainability of hotels on Zanzibar* in which links to KCMUCo researchers are prioritized. Also the FFU project on *Predicting vector-borne disease epidemics: Dissemination of risk forecasting using DHIS2 in Tanzania* involves not only the BSU partners KCMUCo and SUZA, but it also involves other partners like National Institute for Medical Research in Tanga and the University of Dar es Salaam.

Recently, the FFU application on *Decentralised sequencing for infectious disease surveillance (PI: Tolbert Sonda)*, was successful. This clearly shows the impact of the BSU over time, as the PI has been trained and involved in previous FFU and BSU programs, finally being able to produce a successful application of international quality for external funding, and now able to bring in the BSU way of thinking into his own project allowing for even more staff and researchers to benefit from the program.

In an international perspective synergies exist between BSU and the EDCTP (EU-funded) program on clinical trial (*IPTp with DP and azithromycin for malaria, sexually transmitted and reproductive tract infections in pregnancy in high SP resistance areas in Kenya, Malawi, and Tanzania (2017-21)*). This involves partners in both Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Denmark and Norway. Also the *SeqAfrica Project (2019-2021)* funded by the Flemming Fund involves partners in Denmark, Nigeria and South Africa. Finally a proposal in collaboration with Gulu University on a bioequivalence study, to be funded by the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) in East Africa, is through to stage 2.

Overall, the regional and international collaboration for KCMUCo has to a very large extent been positively affected and strengthened by the involvement of BSUIII.

7. Future outlook related to a follow-up program, incl. Balance research/admin cap. Strengthening

Apart from further consolidating results from previous programs such as i) strengthening of the PhD school and supervision, ii) the formation of thematic research groups, iii) establishing re-entry grants for PhD's to become Postdocs, a follow-up program would also be focussed on how best to expand activities and collaboration with industry, as this has faced difficult times lately due to a number of reasons.

Also, an introduction of research sabbaticals in S-S-N is to be considered to provide researchers with time to focus even further their scope of work without having the teaching obligations.

Finally, a number of activities would be prioritized to further consolidate the courses and educations KCMUCo is offering for both MSC and PhD, including project management/leadership training for PhD students, masters in bioinformatics, establishing a meta-analysis unit, as well as strengthening the work on IPR issues.

/
DFC

BSUIII-KNUST MTR meeting report

1. Introduction to project – main areas of WP's:

Budget: DKK 13.000.000, and additional DKK 1.386.560 was awarded under the unallocated funds in 2019.

The overall impact goal for BSUIII-KNUST is:

KNUST will be recognised as innovation platform for teaching, demand-driven research and entrepreneurship for the accelerated achievement of relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This goal is envisioned through three outcomes, which all work packages contribute to in their respective tracks.

Outcome 1: KNUST staff have access to highly improved research-responsive administrative processes and systems

Outcome 2: KNUST has strong stakeholder collaborations and able to offer tailor-made solutions to societal problems through the conduct of demand-driven research

Outcome 3: The Capacity of KNUST is improved by strengthening research and outreach practices and networks

BSUIII is largely about consolidating the deliverables from BSUII. Therefore the four work package themes under BSUII have been maintained.

WP 1: Climate-Smart Agriculture and Environmental Management

WP 2: Innovation and Entrepreneurship

WP 3: Health Delivery Systems

WP 4: University-wide Research Support Services and Facilities.

Participants:

Robert Abaidoo, BSUIII-KNUST coordinator, Director of Office of Grants and Research, KNUST

Hannah Adom Eyison, BSUIII Project Manager, Office of Grants and Research, KNUST-Kumasi

Tsiri Agbenyega, KNUST

Richard Bruce Lamptey, KNUST

Alex Amerh Agbeshie, KNUST

Sam Newton, KNUST

Ofeibea Asare, KNUST

Nana Ewusi-Mensah, KNUST

Patrick Addo-Fordjour, KNUST

William Oduro, KNUST

Samuel Nikoi, KNUST

Christian Gregart, Consultant, WP 4

Torsten Rødel Berg, Aarhus University, WP 1

Peter Furu, University of Copenhagen, WP 3

Henning Nøhr, MoFA Denmark

Anne Kahl, MoFA Denmark
Lars Arne Jensen, Danida Fellowship Centre
Ida Arendal Jørgensen, Danida Fellowship Centre

2. Actual status

- a. Delays due to the COVID-19 situation.
At the present, no major delays are expected due to covid-19, but this will depend on the development during 2021, and whether delayed activities can be carried out this year.
- b. Time frame for remaining activities – need for no-cost extension.
Many activities are being pushed to the end of 2021, meaning a need for a short NCE. This might change however, depending on the developments during 2021.
- c. PhD timing and completion of these.
The PhDs are also not expected to have major delays. At KNUST, the planned PhDs involve 7 KNUST staff already undertaking PhD studies, but in need of smaller grants to finalise their studies. As such, the process has been slightly different from other BSUIII projects.

3. Relevance of the BSUIII design, and effectiveness towards contributing to the process of improved management, education and research at the universities

The new research management systems (GAMS and ReMis) have proven very beneficial for KNUST and the research staff.

The focus on administrative systems and subsequent visibility of research results – e.g. by better registration of publications, has improved the outlook for researchers in multiple ways. Both in terms of opportunities for funding, community engagement, links to industry etc. The integration of research and administration support has worked very well, and is rather unique for this programme.

It has also been highly valuable to provide “seed money” for KNUST employees who were unable to finalize their phd studies for financial reasons. Through this program, a high “return on investment” has been achieved, since many just needed a small amount to be able to finalize e.g. field work etc. and gain a degree.

On a side note, partners at **BSUIII-UG** highlighted that the administrative set-up of BSUIII-KNUST is highly beneficial for the running of the project, having a designated admin officer attached. This observation is shared by DFC and by project partners in BSUIII-KNUST themselves.

4. Sustainability over time

BSUIII-KNUST has improved the skills and confidence among the involved researchers to apply for funding and seek out opportunities. Both from Danida, but also from other sources. Even though there have not yet been any successful applications, some have made it far in the

applications rounds, among others the “Research For Development“ (UK funds).

5. South-South-North collaboration potential

The network between administrative staff generated from WP 4 has yielded good results among all involved BSUIII universities.

Furthermore, even though EU funding is not within reach for KNUST at the present moment, the network with both Tanzania, Ugandan and Danish universities is highly valuable for researchers when looking for funding opportunities abroad.

6. Increased collaboration/networks/international outreach as a result of BSUIII

As mentioned above, several applications have been prepared in collaboration as a direct output of BSUIII at KNUST. Even though none have yet to be successful, the basic infrastructure and collaboration through research groups and international partnerships is established, and the involved researchers express a positive development in the confidence to apply.

7. Future outlook related to a follow-up program, incl. Balance research/admin cap. Strengthening

Ghana is expected to be omitted from a BSU phase IV. Still, there are of course valuable lessons to consider in the design of a next phase of the BSU programme.

BSUIII-KNUST project partners express a high degree of satisfaction with the developments at the institution both in terms of administrative and research related capacity development. At KNUST these elements have worked very well together, to create better and further reaching impact.

As mentioned above, the administrative systems for financial management and better registration of research output has together with the formation of designated research groups in the areas of: *Climate-Smart Agriculture and Environmental Management* and *Health Delivery Systems*.

Even with the prospects of being discontinued in a new phase of the BSU programme, these research groups plan to continue their work, and seek funding elsewhere. The BSU programme at KNUST has made this possible, and also created the network and confidence needed for the researchers to apply for funding with other donors.

Furthermore, the network that has been created among administrative staff at the BSU universities and partners from Denmark is highlighted as an important element also in future capacity development, and a feature which is difficult to find funding for from other donors, as it is an areas which often falls between chairs in many funding schemes.

Also, the opportunities of exchange between researchers and PhDs to and from Denmark has been valuable.

To sum up the blend of financial support to strengthen administrative and research capacity in parallel tracks has been rather unique, and has worked very well.

Seed money for KNUST staff to finalise “stranded” phd studies has paid off, and given a significant output compared to input.

Network is crucial for researchers when seeking funding, and BSU has provided the opportunity to create such networks with researchers both in Denmark and in the other BSU countries. This ensures a useful foundation for future collaboration and the confidence to seek funding outside the Danida funding windows.

The creation of an administrative network between all of the BSUIII universities is mentioned by multiple projects in BSUIII as a major boost to the capacity development. If possible, this network plan to continue, even beyond BSUIII.

/DFC

BSUIII-SUA MTR meeting report.

1. Introduction to project – main areas of WP's:

Budget is DKK 13,000,000 with an extra grant of DKK 1,782,960 added under the unallocated funds.

The overall objective is to upgrade SUA's institutional capacity to deliver high-quality research and training in major aspects of African agriculture (including disciplines within science, life science and social science as well as cross-disciplinary research). The key thrust is that consolidation of BSU II achievements and implementation of new outreach and training practices will lead to higher quality of academic training and a stronger societal embeddedness of research. BSU III will continue with the three previously selected scientific thematic areas: i) Agricultural Value Chains, ii) Agro-Ecology, and iii) Aquaculture. These thematic areas will serve as a breeding ground for best practices in PhD training, research capacity building and outreach. Efforts will also be made to ensure that experience from the three thematic areas and the endeavour's to explore synergies between them will be adopted across SUA. Three outcomes are envisioned to contribute the following in their respective paths.

Outcome 1: Researchers are able to implement state of the art research and spend more time on core research activities and less time on financial and administrative tasks.

Outcome 2: SUA's capacity to implement research and research based teaching is improved by transforming research and training practices to foster strong linkage between research and training.

Outcome 3: There is an increased interaction and knowledge sharing with external stakeholders for contextualization of research and increased uptake of findings.

Basically, the strategic direction of BSUIII is to consolidate the BSU II efforts through the following actions:

- Upgrade research administration procedures (primarily financial management systems), laboratory and experimental facilities that are required to implement state-of-the-art research within particular and carefully selected fields of the thematic areas.
- Activate the research based teaching developed within the frameworks of the three postgraduate programs developed with support from BSUII including application of improved delivery methods. In addition, high interest on the eight generic courses developed and tested during BSU II indicates the need to incorporate the courses into other SUA curricula for ensuring sustainability.
- Develop the research capacity of SUA staff with special emphasis on junior scientists and their competence to undertake research and outreach.
- Interact with external stakeholders by constructing effective communication channels to public authorities, private businesses and civil society organizations. The aim is to

improve the transfer and exchange of knowledge from each of the three thematic areas that may have significant (potential or proven) social and economic impact.

Participants: Daniel Mushi (SUA), Kalunde Sibuga (SUA - AgroEco), Daniel Ndyatabula (SUA - AVC), Sebastian Cheneambuga (SUA – AquaCult), Niels Fold (UCPH), Christian Gregart (consultant), Olav Juul Sørensen (Aalborg University), Per Kudsk (Aarhus University), Henning Nøhr (MFA), Anne Kahl (MFA), Ida Jørgensen (DFC), Lars Arne Jensen (DFC).

2. Actual status

- a. Delays due to the COVID-19 situation.
 - i. Mobility of PhD program and staff has been stalled, resulting in a postponement of planned activities, incl. i) roll out of PhD program (running of courses and hiring of PhD candidates) and also a delay in approval of PhD curricula by TCU has been the result; ii) the research pilot projects has been stalled; iii) Outreach activities such as stakeholders’ meetings have been postponed; and iv) the Circular Economy mini project from the unallocated funds, which is depending on staff mobility to Denmark for specialized training activities, has been delayed.
- b. Time frame for remaining activities – need for no-cost extension.
 - i. An extension up to at least December 2022 (14 months NCE) is foreseen, and maybe even further if PhDs budget maybe can be separated from other activities, as the PhDs are on a 4-year programme at SUA. If BSU4 is not part of the equation, the NCE could go even further.
- c. PhD timing and completion of these.
 - i. PhDs enrolled at SUA are on a 4-year programme, and there may be a need to extend beyond 2022.
- d. The Circular Economy Mini Project (from the unallocated funds) has also experienced a slight delay in activities. This project works across the thematic columns which the project is working on, and this is especially interesting and new for the Danish partners working more across disciplines, requiring the partners to work and think more cross disciplinary.

3. Relevance of the BSUIII design, and effectiveness towards contributing to the process of improved management, education and research at the universities

The BSUIII is unique in the way that it fills the gaps in institutional capacities at universities in the South that no other initiatives have focused on. It is very clear to the university management

4. Sustainability over time

The sustainability outlook of the BSUIII seems to be well established at SUA, especially as a large number of staff members are involved in the three thematic areas across the university. The BSU mindset has been implemented and promoted since the beginning of

BSU at SUA, and it is now an integrated part of SUA research management and hence implemented across faculties as well.

5. South-South-North collaboration potential

- South-South collaborations have been extended to include Gulu University, SUZA and KCMUCo. The future would most likely include a formally established network collaboration with University of Ghana as UG is somewhat more advanced in some area than SUA.
- The S-S collaboration has been both institutionalized and also researcher-to-researcher based.

6. Increased collaboration/networks/international outreach as a result of BSUIII

- SUA has been established as the focal university for an AgroEcology Hub, involving institutions in Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi, funded by McKnight Foundation.
- New networks have been established also through Swiss Aid and RUFORUM.
- SUA has improved interaction with external stakeholders in terms of stakeholder meetings and industry internships.

7. Future outlook related to a follow-up program, incl. Balance research/admin cap. Strengthening

The follow-up program is envisioned to establish a more formal partnership with South universities, with more S-S university collaboration linked to one or two North universities. The thematic areas in BSUIII need nurturing. Tangible research results need to be communicated to end users via various channels, and therefore an increased focus on a communication and outreach strategy/plan is foreseen, also regarding building community of practice. Also. Mainstreaming the programs to other national institutions would be prioritized to encourage sustainability of new frontiers initiated by BSUIII.

And most important – old universities are still evolving and need to be improved to transit from 1st and 2nd to 3rd generation, and impact of a capacity development program requires sustained efforts and focus for a longer horizon.

/DFC

BSUIII-SUZA MTR meeting report.

1. Introduction to project – main areas of WP's:

The budget is DKK 13,000,000 with an extra grant of DKK 1,729,285 added under the unallocated funds, which includes “*the East African Case Challenge*” involving the four BSUIII projects in EA.

The overall objective of BSUIII-SUZA is to contribute to the enhancement of the capacity at SUZA to effectively conduct and manage research, deliver relevant and high quality education, as well as engage in active public and private partnerships to maximize knowledge sharing and a culture of collaborative solutions-seeking for the myriads of problems facing key economic sectors. Activities involve tourism and marine and coastal sectors, where to we will provide relevant data to inform policy formulation and management practices in Zanzibar. By doing this we aim to improve public health and enhance the sustainable growth of the tourism sector. These are both part of the overall developmental targets outlined by Zanzibar development strategic action.

The project is organized in three WPs: It will actively seek to create relevant synergies between the two research areas (i) environmental public health (WP 1) and ii) Marine ecosystem health and services (WP 2). WP1 will serve as common host for lab and planning and production of educational videos. WP 1 and WP 2 will in parallel work on pilot research studies involving active engagement of stakeholders incl. Case Challenge activity. WP 3 will provide support to guide and coordinate all these activities across the partnership. Also, the crosscutting areas, ICT equipment, library, financial management and strategy and synergies are outputs under WP 3.

Participants:

Prof. Hamad Issa, BSUIII-SUZA Project coordinator SUZA,

Pandu K-Pandu, Admin coordinator SUZA,

Haji Mwevura, ProVice Chancellor research, SUZA.

Mohammed Sheikh, WP lead SUZA.

Aziza Akadr, SUZA

Biubwa Ally, SUZA

Fatma Saleh, SUZA

Said Bakari, SUZA

Said Yunus, SUZA

Flemming Konradsen, UCPH, Danish lead.

2. Actual status

- a. Delays due to the COVID-19 situation.
- b. Time frame for remaining activities – need for no-cost extension.
- c. PhD timing and completion of these.

In general BSUIII-SUZA is running and activities are moving on, but surely delays are encountered especially as several focus areas are depending on the physical meetings with Danish and other BSUIII partners. SUZA is the focal point of the East African Case Challenge initiative under the unallocated funds, involving the four BSUIII partners in Tanzania and Uganda, and off course, this is postponed until travel again is permitted in the region. The time frame needed to complete activities as planned for is expected to run up end of 2022, so a no-cost extension is very much needed. Also for the PhD completion there is a need for extra time to finalize the studies, and even beyond 2022 there is a need to look into the possibility of earmarking funds for the PhD completion. Progress reports to come will be more clear on this issue.

3. Relevance of the BSUIII design, and effectiveness towards contributing to the process of improved management, education and research at the universities

The BUS3 design is relevant for SUZA, allowing for a relatively young university like SUZA to develop into a research and teaching based university developing MSc (even BSc) and PhD curricula over time at a pace suited for a proper implementation along with improved university wide management structures. SUA has gone from 4 to 7 campuses while in the BSUIII program, thus facing challenges of including and upgrading of these new 3 campuses to meet the standards envisioned by SUZA. The development of curricula is done in close collaboration and mentoring by Danish partners, as is the mentoring regarding the administrative structures and management systems in external grant management practices in a south to south capacity building exchange.

4. Sustainability over time

The BSUIII project is to a high degree centred around development of curricula and online courses via the MOODLE platform, allowing for an unspecified number of participants. As lectures are being trained in pedagogical content and content development in the MOODLE platform at both basic and advanced level, the quality and level of the courses improve substantially, and with the possibility of meeting the needs of a very large number of students, the sustainability issue seems to be moving in the right direction. Strengthening the use of MOODLE platform at SUZA by establishing policies that guide lecturers and students to use the platform in their daily teaching and learning activities. This will help SUZA to utilize e-learning practice for all programmes in daily teaching and also during emergencies like presently with the COVID-19.

5. South-South-North collaboration potential

Curricula development is to a high degree driven by the S-S-N triangulation, as the nature of activities have been mentoring/supervision and exchange of experiences. For future outlook, there is a great potential to elaborate this even further, as the personal meetings between S-N partners creates the room needed for developing and creating the trickle down effect through the system. The S-S-N collaboration could also be used to further explore the donor relations

and the potential in aligning and leveraging funds, filling the gaps needed to maximize the outcome from the obtained funds.

6. Increased collaboration/networks/international outreach as a result of BSUIII

Being a very young university with offering PhD courses only recently, there is a new landscape opening with the BSU programs. The collaboration with local and governmental institutions are obvious, yet a potential regarding coordinating the international funders exist, and this must be further explored and coordinated. SUZA is now at a stage where it can offer high quality collaboration in terms of research partners to international research partners. This is evident in the FFU project which BSUIII in SUZA is interlinked to, and also in relation to other donors it is evident that SUZA are becoming more attractive as a collaborating research partner. SUZA staff and researchers are to a higher degree focussed on the importance of international collaboration, and this is to a large extend an effect of the BSU programs at SUZA. Zanzibar government has currently an agenda on blue economy, and SUZA seeks to respond to this agenda with regard to courses and curricula.

7. Future outlook related to a follow-up program, incl. Balance research/admin cap. Strengthening

SUZA will beyond doubt benefit immensely from a follow-up program to the BSUIII, being a relatively young university still developing courses and curricula at basic as well as advanced level. Hence, consolidating the results up to now and with possibilities of further developing the university as a whole, capacity development is crucial regarding both research and administrative structures across the university. Momentum is there to continue the S-N collaboration, as the Danish partners to a large extend prioritize the collaboration developing and strengthening both research networks and administrative structures. The recent expansion from 4 to 7 campuses does highlight that administrative capacity development also should play a significant if a future program, yet it must be related to research activities and/or curricula development.

/DFC

BSUIII-UG MTR meeting report.

1. Introduction to project – main areas of WP's:

Budget: DKK 13,000,000. An additional DKK 1,374,148 was granted under the Unallocated Funds in 2019.

WP 1 outcome: *Researchers, graduate students and research managers at UG will be equipped with state-of-the-art resources for research delivery and efficient grant management at UG.* This includes targets for guidelines on e-textbook publishing; a virtual PhD classroom – building on the establishment of a video conference room in BSU2, used for among other things PhD defence; Improved grant management systems and –procedures across UG; Career structure for Post Docs across UG.

WP 2 outcome: *Internationally competitive malaria research is performed by established thematically focused research teams at UG.* Including establishment of a thematic research team, relevant PhD courses and training of one PhD and two Post docs within the area of the role of haemoglobinopathies in malaria. Furthermore, stakeholder engagement is envisioned, specifically involvement of The Sickle Cell Foundation and The Sickle Cell Association, as well as selected industrial entities.

WP 3 outcome: *Internationally competitive climate change research is performed by established thematically focused research team.* Including establishment of a thematic research team, relevant PhD courses on adaptation and mitigation respectively and training of one PhD and two Post docs within the area of climate change. There is also a goal of establishing and updating laboratory facilities to ensure state of the art climate change research at UG.

Furthermore, stakeholder engagement is envisioned, specifically involvement of the Ghana Meteorological Agency and Environmental Protection Agency, as well as selected farmer groups and agricultural marketing agencies. WP 3 was granted DKK 1,070,000 of the UG share of unallocated funds. The primary expense is purchase of equipment.

Participants:

Felix Kofi Abagale, Pro Vice Chancellor of Research at the University of Ghana

George Obeng Adjei, Director of ORID, BSUIII-UG coordinator and WP 1 leader, University of Ghana

Kwadwo Owusu, WP 3 leader, University of Ghana

Michael Ofori, WP 2 leader, University of Ghana

Christiana Amoatey, WP 3, University of Ghana

Richard Boateng, WP 1, University of Ghana

Anne Kahl, MoFA Denmark

Lars Arne Jensen, Danida Fellowship Centre

Ida Arendal Jørgensen, Danida Fellowship Centre

2. Actual status

- a. Delays due to the COVID-19 situation.
Especially the activities planned under the unallocated funds granted in 2019 have been delayed due to COVID-19, as they were planned for initiation in 2020. For WP 3, purchase of equipment was initially delayed due to changes in the

equipment, causing it to be outstanding at the onset of COVID-19. As per end of 2020, the equipment has still not been fully procured, nor installed at UG. As such, the actual training and use of the equipment as envisaged in the original application for unallocated funds remains outstanding.

In WP 1 there have also been challenges, as the activities are very much dependent on travels between the partners.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has created some challenges with regards to coordination between partners, especially in instances of miscommunication or other needs for clarification, which can be difficult via online means of communication only.

- b. Time frame for remaining activities – need for no-cost extension.

UG has formally requested, and been granted, a no-cost extension until December 2022 on the basis of delays caused by COVID-19.

- c. PhD timing and completion of these.

PhDs have already finalised much of their fieldwork and study stays in Denmark, meaning they are expected to finalise within the extended timeframe, and not need any additional extensions/ring-fencing of funds for finalisation.

3. Relevance of the BSUIII design, and effectiveness towards contributing to the process of improved management, education and research at the universities

BSU overall has had significant benefits for the University of Ghana, in terms of creating well functioning administration of grants, and specific research groups. Over time, students and PhDs funded by Danida have participated in grant proposals under BSU and FFU, and an “environment” has been created around Danida funded activities.

The south driven modality of BSU 3 and in Window 1 from 2008 until 2019 has also boosted the capacity at UG, and in Ghana in general.

4. Sustainability over time

As part of BSUIII, a 10-year research plan is being developed, including strategies for seeking funding elsewhere, with an eye to the plans to phase out Ghana as an eligible country for FFU research grants in Window 1. This plan includes an MoU between UG and AU. (note: as per the recent call for applications 2021, Ghana is no longer an eligible country in Window 1, but continues to be included in Window 2 within the themes of water resources and maritime development).

5. South-South-North collaboration potential

Good relations already established with both KNUST and the other BSUIII universities. Especially within WP 1 on administration, the network between all BSUIII universities works very well, and there is a reciprocal wish to continue this collaboration, also with the Danish partners.

In WP 3, there is a goal to create a framework for research groups in the south, e.g. through the

unallocated funds, where there is some overlap in the involvement of researchers (Kwadwo is for instance part of the group that received some funding through the unallocated funds at KNUST). Additionally, there is a good working relationship with KNUST, also informally, of exchanging notes and experiences.

6. Increased collaboration/networks/international outreach as a result of BSUIII

South-South collaboration within research has until now mainly taken place within Ghana, i.e. with KNUST. Also KCMUC has been a collaborator, but the remaining BSUIII universities have a different focus in their research, and are as such not likely or relevant collaborators. Within WP 1 however, there is greater potential for continued collaboration, since this is not research specific, but rather focused on administration and financial systems at the universities, where there is a lot to be learned from one another.

7. Future outlook related to a follow-up program, incl. Balance research/admin cap. Strengthening

There is still a need for institutional capacity development, and as the network on the administration set up through WP 1 shows, there are perspectives present also in the future. With regards to research, the universities involved in BSUIII largely have different research foci, making research collaboration less obvious. At least this is the perception put forward by the UG team. It could potentially be relevant, but the funding available in this programme is perhaps not sufficient to capture the attention of (some) researchers at UG.

To sum up UG has benefitted greatly throughout the BSU programmes I through III. It is the largest and most well-established of the BSU universities, and aware that they will most likely not be included in a future phase of the programme. Focus is therefore on the potential learning points and potential for S-S sharing of experiences. IT will also be relevant to draw on the networks which have been established through the programme so far, to ensure sustainability of the efforts.

/DFC

Annex E - Expenditure Report

After receiving the annual accounts for 2020 it is clear that there will be sufficient funds available to allow for the activities to be continued and finalized within the suggested extended project period up to ultimo December 2022.

Expenditure and available funds overview – all amounts in DKK

Project	Spent 2020	C/F 2020	C/F previous year	Funds left in DFC account
SUA	1,353,821	2,345,195	1,879,303	6,631,472
KCMUC	2,272,097	2,313,084	1,695,928	6,790,998
SUZA	1,366,194	1,831,753	594,817	4,317,414
GU	1,494,171	-2,538,791	-1,044,620	4,175,932
KNUST	983,342	277,927	1,261,270	310,317
UG	2,189,513	1,952,222	4,141,735	6,533,473