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Recommendations of the Panel of International Experts on the Building Stronger Universities in the Developing Countries Initiative (BSU)

Members of the Panel:

Professor William Experton
Professor Sigmund Grønmo
Professor Narciso Matos

General observations on the initiative

The panel considers the initiative to be valuable and innovative for the following reasons:

- It moves from individual capacity building to institutional capacity building.
- It forms platforms that will create synergy and stimulate interdisciplinary approaches and collaboration between the Danish universities.
- It includes activities in strengthening capacities in university management and governance.
- It increases the institutional responsibilities among the Danish universities for North-South cooperation.
- It allocates equal resources to the North and the South institutions.
- It mobilizes a substantial amount of resources from the participating universities in addition to Danida's contribution.

General recommendations

The panel would like to recommend that

- Danida secure financing for the subsequent phases of the initiative in order to achieve more sustainable results and impact;
- resources be set aside for a more in-depth assessment of the needs in order to prepare phase two of the initiative with a particular focus on the suggested aims and additional activities of the subsequent phases;
- Danida facilitates the best possible coordination with other donors at the partner universities in the South;
- an additional effort be done to prepare and agree on a monitoring and evaluation framework for each platform in order to assess the preliminary experiences of phase one.

Recommendations on how the activity plans may be improved

Growth and Employment

The panel recommends the platform to

- continue the considerations of widening the perspective and including contributions from other disciplines, e.g. in the social sciences;
- continue the dialogue regarding the curriculum contents and teaching at master's and bachelor level;

Platform on Environment and Climate

The panel recommends the platform to

- select the focus areas based on the results of a more thorough needs assessment as soon as possible;
- select achievable outputs that are specifically related to the focus areas.

Platform on Human Health

The Panel has no specific recommendations for the platform.

Platform on Stability, Democracy and Rights

The panel recommends the platform to

- be more focused in the selection of areas and activities based on the results of a more thorough needs assessment;
- select achievable outputs that are specifically related to the focus areas;
- be more consistent in the distribution of activities by project components.

Recommendations on the distribution of available core funding between the four platforms

On the background of the four proposals – each with two annexes – and interviews with representatives of the four platforms held against the agreed criteria the Panel of Expert concludes that

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

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

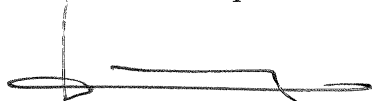
Conclusion

The Panel of Experts wishes to commend the members of the platforms for the hard work devoted to preparing the proposals in consultation with partner universities in developing countries. They also wish to express their gratitude for the invitation to participate in the review and selection process as well as for the hospitality they received from the Rectors' Conference and from the Universities Denmark staff.

The panel wishes the platforms and their partners in the South success in the implementation of this innovative initiative.

12 May 2011

Prof. William Experton



Prof. Sigmund Grønmo



Prof. Narciso Matos



Enclosed: List of the agreed criteria with the scoring as made by the Panel of Experts

Criteria to be applied in the review of activity plans and budgets

As scored by the panel of experts May 12, 2011

No	Evaluation criteria	Indicators (sub-criteria)	Score			
			E&G	E&C	HH	S,D&R
1	Relevance of the scientific focus area(s) and proposed activities for development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Match/relevance of the chosen scientific focus area(s) and proposed activities vis-a-vis national (South) priorities as e.g. stated in national sector strategies and national research strategies 2. Match/relevance of the chosen scientific focus area(s) and proposed activities with the strategy for Denmark's development cooperation and the specific development co-operation in each of the participating countries 	5	3.5	5	3
2	Addressing the needs of the partner institutions (justification)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevance of involved South partner institutions (appropriate structures for partnerships) 2. The dialogue and partnership process, notable South partners' active role in the process 3. Concise description of the needs of the partner institutions as e.g. stated in university/faculty/departamental strategy papers and as part of the dialogue process 4. How well the proposed activity plan matches identified needs for research co-operation, for human capacity building, and for institutional capacity building, including innovation and entrepreneurship 	9	6	9	5
3	Scientific/academic strength of the participating Danish researchers within the selected scientific focus area(s) of the platform	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of the research within the scientific focus area(s); as documented from CVs 2. Number and annual budget of on-going research projects¹ within scientific focus area(s) 3. Key staff resources within scientific focus area(s) divided to Prof., Associate Prof., Senior Researchers, Assistant Prof., Post Docs 	10	10	10	8

¹ If a project is listed under this indicator, the same project cannot be listed under indicator 4.1 or 4.2



No	Evaluation criteria	Indicators (sub-criteria)	Score			
			E&G	E&C	HH	S,D&R
4	Documented experiences of participating Danish researchers with human and institutional capacity building (research, education, dissemination) in developing countries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Average number and average annual budget of projects² with emphasis on human capacity building in developing countries over past ten years (2000-10) 2. Average number and average annual budget of projects³ with emphasis on institutional capacity building in developing countries over past ten years (2000-10) 3. Experiences with capacity building as documented from CVs 4. Relevance of the documented experiences vis-a-vis proposed activities 	9	10	10	7
5	Proposed activity plan and budget	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concise description of proposed activities 2. Platform strategy and activities in terms of “value for money” 3. Synergies and collaboration between the various parts of the activity plan and between partners (N-N, N-S, and S-S) 4. Synergies and collaboration with other platforms 5. Linkages/proposed collaboration with other programmes and initiatives 6. Measures taken in activity plan to avoid duplication of efforts with other programmes and initiatives 7. Description of assumptions and preconditions of activity plan and contingency plans 8. Measures to ensure long-term sustainability of proposed measures 	4.5	3.5	4.5	3
6	“Governance” and administrative set-up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decision-making structures, including balance between 	4.5	3.5	4.5	4

² If a project is listed under this indicator, the same project cannot be listed under indicator 3.2 or 4.2

³ If a project is listed under this indicator, the same project cannot be listed under indicator 3.2 or 4.1

No	Evaluation criteria	Indicators (sub-criteria)	Score			
			E&G	E&C	HH	S,D&R
		North and South 2. Measures for monitoring and evaluation (feed-back mechanisms) 3. Structures for internal communication 4. Structures for external communication and dissemination				
Total score			42	36.5	43	30

Evaluation scores will be awarded for each of the six criteria; not for the sub-criteria. The sub-criteria are issues which the reviewers should consider in the assessment. Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Half marks can be given.


 William E. Perton


Score	Description
0	The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1	Poor. The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2	Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
3	Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.
4	Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
5	Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

The maximum score of a proposal is 45, since criteria 2, 3 and 4 count twice. The Panel of Experts will prepare an evaluation report which specifies the score of the proposal in relation to the six criteria accompanied by a qualitative assessment/elaboration/comments. The assessment report is made publicly available.

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