

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

To: All Partner Institutions in the Building Stronger Universities

Asiatisk Plads 2
DK-1448 Copenhagen K
Denmark
Phone +45 33 92 00 00
Fax +45 32 54 05 33
E-mail: um@um.dk
<http://um.dk>



Enclosure

File Department
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Re.: Building Stronger Universities, 2nd phase

The second phase of the BSU programme was originally planned to be approved by the Danida Grant Committee at its meeting in June 2013. This did not happen as the Management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Danida had some serious concerns about the design of the programme. The main concern was that the partner institutions in the South would not get the most suitable support to strengthen their research capacity with the design of the programme. The extensive coordination in Denmark, the broad spectrum of activities, and the many actors both in Denmark and in the partner countries had made the programme too complex and too administratively cumbersome. Moreover, in view of the large grant that was expected for the second phase, the lack of documentation of results of the first phase was also a concern.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Danida has decided to redesign the BSU programme during the coming months and to submit a revised proposal for the Danida Grant Committee in October or November 2013. The Ministry will contract an external consultant who will assist in the formulation of a revised programme and who will also ensure a proper dialogue with all relevant partner institutions in the BSU. Danish universities will actively contribute to the formulation of the new programme.

The termination of Phase 1 and the formulation of Phase 2 of the BSU programme will be based on a set of principles described in the attachment. It is the intention to continue a number of key activities under the first phase until the end of 2013. Phase 2 should preferably start on 1 January 2014.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Einar H. Jensen'.

Einar H. Jensen

Acting Under-Secretary of State

The Building Stronger Universities Programme

Main principles for termination of Phase 1 and design of Phase 2

Clarification of the BSU programmes' objective

- The overall objective of phase 2 of the BSU programme should be to strengthen the research capacity of selected universities in Danida's priority countries through support to the research environments and research processes.

Principles for modifications in the programme design

- The basis for a revision of the programme is the good experience achieved in the first phase and the significant work that has been undertaken both in the South partner institutions and in Denmark to identify relevant activities for the second phase.
- The second phase will however not be a continuation of all partners and activities of the first phase. The intention is to focus the programme by having fewer partners in the South and fewer activities. This implies that some of the partner institutions in the South will be phased out after phase 1 whereas other partner institutions will continue in phase 2. Each of the partner institutions will be informed separately of the decision.
- The thematic platforms, which have been useful in the start-up of the BSU programme, will be phased out as the intention is to formulate a less complex programme with a stronger focus on each of the South institutions.
- The objective of the activities should be to strengthen the research environments and research processes. The stronger focusing of the programme implies that support to each of the South institutions is directed towards 3-4 professionally oriented capacity development activities (e.g. Ph.D. schools with related course development, courses in better Ph.D. guidance, preparation of concept notes for research programmes, development of protocols, faculty exchange, research seminars, support to preparation of applications, support for capacity development of research environments through accreditation, dissemination of research results etc.), and 1-2 support activities in the shape of e.g. courses in financial management, on-line access to libraries etc.
- A number of activities in the first phase will no longer qualify for support. These include i) financing of direct research activities as these should be financed solely through the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU), ii) financing of Ph.D. studies as this is also financed through the FFU (Ph.Ds already started including Ph.Ds in universities to be phased out will continue to receive funding), iii) education activities at master programmes, and iv) various forms of support to networking activities that are not part of the objective of building-up research capacity (and are

supported by a number of other donors). A ceiling of 10% in the total support for each South institution should also be placed on the share of the investment expenses.

- Instead of administrating the programme from Denmark through the central coordination and the four platforms with coordinators and chairs, the administration should be delegated to each of the institutions in the South. In this way, the administrative structure in Denmark will be simplified significantly.
- A model is being developed to ensure that the support for each of the South institutions is based on the specific needs of the institutions. Based on the applications to phase 2 comprehensive 'support package' for each of the partner institutions will be developed. Members of Danish universities in consortia with other actors will be invited to bid for these support packages. It is expected to be a requirement that one of the Danish universities is leading the consortium, and that at least one other Danish university should participate.
- The self-financing contribution by Universities Denmark in the first phase has been appreciated. However, it has been decided that this will no longer be a requirement in the second phase.

Transition between phase 1 and phase 2

- It is considered of utmost importance that the transitions arrangement ensures a gentle phasing out of a limited number of South institutions. Likewise, the reorganisation from the four platforms with a substantial coordination from Denmark must be carried out in consideration of the large number of involved persons who have put a lot of effort into the preparation of the second phase.
- It has been agreed with Universities Denmark that Phase 1 will continue until 31 December 2013 with a number of key activities:
 - The four platforms and the coordination unit will continue to operate until 31 December 2013 on the basis of unspent funds from phase 1 as of 1 August 2013.
 - The Ph.D and M.Phil activities will continue to operate until 31 December 2013 on the basis of unspent funds from phase 1 as of 1 August 2013; this also applies for institutions that will be phased out. In connection with the formulation of phase 2 it will be ensured that the Ph.D and M.Phil candidates that have already started under phase 1 will continue to be funded.
 - The special grant of DKK 19 million for communication activities, as well as the BSU Fellowship Programme with a grant of DKK 20 million will continue to operate under the present setup until 31 December 2013. In connection with the formulation of phase 2 it will be ensured that the administration of these grants can be continued for the institutions participating in phase 2.
 - The institutions that will terminate cooperation with BSU at the end of 2013 will be offered to formulate and implement various activities during the remaining

months of 2013 which could facilitate a soft landing, subject to availability of funds that can be allocated from unspent BSU funds as of 1 August 2013. The detailed formulation and implementation of such activities should be discussed and agreed with the BSU Coordination Unit. More information on this is being forwarded to each individual institution.

- Phase 2 of the programme will be formulated during the coming months and will be submitted to the Danida Grant Committee in October/November 2013. Expected start of phase 2 is 1 January 2014.
- Danish universities will actively contribute to the formulation of phase 2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Danida will identify and contract a process consultant who will assist in ensuring dialogue with all relevant actors in Denmark and in partner institutions - including platform coordinators and chairmen – and who will assist in the formulation of the programme document for the new programme.

Criteria for the selection of South institutions that will be a part of the future BSU

- Countries and institutions with many FFU-supported research cooperation projects, and especially countries with South-driven research cooperation programmes, have been prioritised before countries with limited direct research cooperation with Danish researchers.
- Institutions that either have general strategies or strategies at faculty level have been preferred as it is important in order to maximise the value of the cooperation that a strategic framework is in place in the South partner institutions to which BSU activities may be aligned.
- Cooperation with a few large institutions that receive significant support from other donors, or where the cooperation has been experienced as difficult, will not be continued.
- Positive cooperation in the first phase of the programme. Those institutions that continuously have made demands of e.g. 'sitting allowances' for participation in meeting and the like have been de-selected.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

12-07-2013