



2007 - 2017

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UNIVERSITY PLAN FOR  
**increased collaboration with  
African institutions in research  
and higher education**

2018 – 2021





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*This action plan is a result of an initiative by the Rector of the University of Agder, who delegated a mandate to a working group consisting of representatives from all the faculties to come up with a proposal on how to intensify cooperation with African countries.*

*The members of the working group were:*

*Senior Advisor Øystein Djupedal, Head of the committee*

*Head of International Affairs Unit Dmytro Yakovenko, Secretary of the committee*

*Associate Professor Andreas Aase*

*Professor Svein Gunnar Gundersen*

*Associate Professor Hanne Haaland*

*Associate Professor Olav Johannes Hovland*

*Senior Advisor Søren Kragholm*

*Professor Stein Oluf Kristiansen*

*Professor Bruce Carl Rasmussen*

*Associate Professor Jørn Varhaug*

*Kristiansand, October 2017*

## **Preface**

The University of Agder (UIA) has an overall strategy called “Co-creation of Knowledge”. One of the main pillars of this strategy is to incorporate a global mindset in all activities. As a part of this, UIA wishes to strengthen its cooperation with some selected African universities, and the African knowledge community (e.g. civil society groups and enterprises) in general.

UIA has established more than seventy projects over the years in cooperation with different African Universities working on research and higher education. UIA wishes to continue, strengthen, and expand the long-lasting and strong links of academic collaboration with African universities, as well as to establish new ones.

Different Norwegian funding programmes have stimulated academic interaction with African partners over the years, for instance Norad/SIU’s NFU programme, which resulted in valuable research collaboration between UIA and Mzumbe University in Tanzania. NORAD/SIU funds helped establish a NOMA (Norad’s programme for master’s studies) master’s programme from 2007-2013, run in collaboration with four African universities



(Mzumbe University, Mekelle University in Ethiopia, Makerere University in Uganda, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana). The programme is now a regular master's programme at UIA run by the Department of Global Development and Planning (IGUS).

Since 2014, the Department of Information and Communication Technology and IGUS have collaborated on a Norad-financed NORHED programme, which aims to train PhD students from Makerere University. In addition, several other Faculties have developed strong and sustainable cooperation with partners in African countries. Here, the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Faculty of Engineering and Science are represented, as well as the Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences.

For many years, some departments at UIA received quota students from the University of Makerere, KNUST, and Mekelle University under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Ministry of Education's quota programme. In 2017, a new Erasmus + mobility agreement was established involving the training and exchange of staff and students from Uganda.

## **Motivation**

The African Union has developed a continental education strategy for Africa (CESA 2016 – 2025), which reflects the Post-2015 Development Agenda. CESA 16-25 is a comprehensive document, and the overall vision is to reorient “Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels” (p 21). The document emphasises regional cooperation, and that public - private partnerships should have the necessary human capital for sustainable development, so that they can become players in the knowledge economy. In a globalised world, international academic cooperation is increasingly important.

In this context, higher education institutions with clear aims for cooperation, well-developed strategies, a well-thought-out organisation, and some core funding, have a clear competitive advantage in achieving solid and mutually productive institutional collaborations with African partner universities.

This proposed plan is a step towards achieving this aim and providing support for the work of the Faculties and departments involved. The overall goal is to contribute to capacity strengthening within our own university, and at African universities within the fields of research, education, innovation, and administration.

The plan is based on the provisions and priorities defined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, and the Ministry of Education and Research (recommendation from the Ministry

of Education and Research no. 16: Panorama Strategy,) as well as the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED).

The plan for increased and sustainable cooperation with African universities focuses on UIA's activities responding to research-based challenges and priority countries. The plan also suggests a way of organising and funding increased interaction.

## **Research and education**

The University of Agder will mobilise resources including, but not limited to, local project development support in order to enhance larger research and education activities in the following six areas, reflecting general societal challenges and the research capacities and interests of the university:

### **1. Innovation**

**Research on innovation systems, economic and institutional development. Projects on technology implementation and the development of physical infrastructure at partner universities. Ensuring access to each other's infrastructure.**

### **2. Education**

**Research on pedagogy, schools, education systems, education technology, and teaching. Projects on increased technology usage to develop more extensive education collaboration between UIA and African universities.**

### **3. Social and economic development**

**Research on migration, social mobilisation, governance, poverty reduction, social welfare systems, conflicts, and gender.**

### **4. Health**

**Medical and social science research in collaboration with local partners, public health systems and eHealth. Projects on increased usage of ICT-based solutions for a more efficient health system.**

### **5. Sustainable development**

**Sustainable development of resources, research on needs and limitations, social equity, environmental protection, economic development and governance.**

### **6. Culture, arts and music**

**Research on basic cultural and musical structures and differences in the styles of music and art in our cultures. Projects are based on studying the basic building blocks: Ethnic and**

**tribal music and art styles, and historical and popular trends in culture and music development. There will be, in addition to this, research on education and teaching systems used in our diverse cultures, primarily in the performing arts field of music.**

In addition to the above-mentioned research priorities, the University of Agder will encourage the invitation of researchers from African partners to participate in the development of syllabuses for relevant courses taught at UiA, as well as to include such topics as African history, nature and society in relevant study programmes.

### **Establishing new partnerships with African institutions in higher education**

Several departments at UiA have excellent working relations with African universities, and these existing successful collaborations should be continued. However, for the purposes of guiding the establishment of potential new collaborations, and the further selection of preferred partners, the following aspects should also be taken into consideration:

- \* Collaboration and partnership agreements should be demand-driven, ensuring mutual commitment to developing cooperation over time.
- \* If new agreements/MOUs are to be signed, they should preferably be based on a history of interaction between researchers/research clusters/members of staff at both institutions.
- \* The potential to include several Faculties/ departments both at UiA and at the external partner institution should exist.
- \* External funding opportunities, for example through the Research Council of Norway, the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU), NORAD, and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be actively taken advantage of in order to stimulate the collaboration and its further development.
- \* All new agreements are expected to include both research and educational cooperation.
- \* African institutions are expected to have good regional and local partnership agreements in order to ensure a wider regional network and cooperation, and preferably have clear risk mitigation strategies to protect students and staff from any harm.
- \* Preference should be given to institutions that have active and extensive outreach programmes for civil society institutions.



## Priority countries

The University of Agder will support existing partnerships and foster new ones in the following selected countries:

**Ghana** is experiencing democratic and economic development, which may open doors to new partnerships. Our experience with Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) is that it is an ambitious, innovative, and interested in continued collaboration university.

**Ethiopia** remains a priority for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as for SIU (the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education), and UIA wishes to continue its positive collaboration with institutions in the country. The University of Mekelle has been a partner university for the master's programme Development Management, and both social scientists and health researchers have had strong ties to other Ethiopian universities.

**South Africa** is the only African country which, by 2017, had been included in an active Norwegian Policy Strategy for international collaboration, namely the Panorama Strategy. UIA has several projects in South Africa both in research and education exchange.

**Tanzania** has been a close partner country for Norway and the Agder region for many years, particularly through the Department of Global Development and Planning, as well within nursing and through the exchange programmes of the School of Business and Law. UIA wishes to build upon this long historic collaboration in existing and new partnerships.

**Uganda.** There are similarities here to the collaboration with Tanzania. UIA has extensive projects together with universities in Uganda that stand out as excellent examples of Norwegian-African university collaboration.

In addition to the above-mentioned countries, UIA is positive to cooperation with other African countries. This cooperation should be based on the requests and needs of the relevant academic groups, as well as the preferences and recommendations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway and other relevant bodies.

## Implementation

To ensure that the plan is implemented, as well as developing the webpages and database, a dedicated project manager with experience from collaboration with African universities will be recruited. This position will be initially placed within the Division of Research Management, International Affairs Unit. In addition, it is suggested that the project manager be assisted by an academic committee, with members from the current working group. This committee will meet on a regular basis to follow up the recommendations of this plan.

The committee will also analyse and present to the rector a potential, future, permanent organisation of the activities with African partners at the University of Agder. A permanent organisation form should be launched no later than 1 January 2019.

The leadership at UIA (through the rector, vice rectors, deans and the heads of department) is committed to addressing the plan for university collaboration through both a strategic focus and participation in academic programmes and visits.

### **Annual Funding 2018-2021**

To support the existing cooperation initiatives with partners from African universities, as well as creating new ones, UIA will further develop its internal funding schemes and designate special funds for this purpose.

The detailed budget proposal is presented below:

<b>Funding</b>	<b>Aims and target groups</b>	<b>Annual allocation</b>
Project Development Funds, African countries (PUS)	An extension of the existing Project Development Fund – projects in education and R&D	300 000 NOK
Africa Networking and Mobility Support Programme	Support for network development and travel grants for academic employees	500 000 NOK
Africa Incoming Researchers Programme	An extension of the existing Guest Researchers Scholarship programme – special funds for African researchers	300 000 NOK
Societal challenges with regards to the Action Plan (recommendations)	PhD-projects within the research groups at UIA	2 PhD candidates from the strategic allocation by the University Board.
Implementation of the Action plan – Phase 1	1 administrative employee at the International Affairs Unit in 2018 (12 months) + 3 researchers from the faculties	500 000 NOK
<b>Total sum resources planned</b>		<b>1.6 MNOK annually + 2 PhD candidates from the Ministry of Education and Research allocation</b>

## **Evaluation and success criteria**

This plan for collaboration will be evaluated after three years, and the results of the evaluation will be presented to the University Board. To be able to illustrate the development, 2017 will be used as a benchmark year.

The following ongoing success criteria are suggested:

- Number of joint projects in 2017-2021
- Number of outgoing and incoming students at all levels in 2017-2021
- Number of outgoing and incoming staff members for training, teaching and research activities in 2017-2021
- Number of joint publications in 2017-2021
- Number and size of externally-financed projects in 2017-2021
- Number and progress of jointly supervised PhD candidates in 2017-2021

Further criteria and indicators could be defined at a later stage.







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