

VLIR-UOS Institutional University Cooperation Review Policy Document

“Sharing minds, changing lives.....building bridges, improving livelihoods”

Redesigning and repositioning of the VLIR-UOS IUC activities in the framework of a country strategy- based approach

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAA	Accra Agenda Accord
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China – Emerging nation economic grouping
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIUF	Conseil Interuniversitaire de la Communauté française de Belgique
CTG	Close the Gap: a Belgian NGO which partners VLIR-UOS institutional cooperation
CUD	Coopération Universitaire au Développement
DfID	Department for International Development, UK
DGD	Directorate General for Development, Federal Government of Belgium
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EU	European Union
FINIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICOS	Institutional Development Cooperation Units
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IFS	International Foundation for Science based in Stockholm supporting young scientists
INASP	International Network for Availability of Scientific Publications
IPED	International Partnership in Education for Development (a proposed new toolbox item)
IUC	Institutional University Cooperation (equivalent in dutch = UOS – see below)
KRA	Key Result Area
MDG	Millenium Development Goals
N	North
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NICHE	Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Building in Higher Education
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
NPT	Netherlands Programme for the Institutional Strengthening of Post Secondary Education and Training Capacity
NUFFIC	Netherlands Organisation for International Development
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PCM	Programme Cycle Management
PD	Paris Declaration
RBM	Results Based Management
RTA	Real Time Audit (a virtual-based approach to continuous monitoring of projects)
S	South
TE	Tertiary Education (equivalent of HE = Higher Education)
UC	University Colleges
UOS	Universitaire ontwikkelingsamenwerking (university development cooperation)
VLADOC	Vlaamse Doctoraatsbeurzen
VLIR-sec	VLIR Secretariat
VLIR	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad
VLUHR	Flemish University and High School Council

Executive Summary

This policy document summarises the findings of a review requested by the VLIR-UOS Bureau of the institutional university cooperation (IUC) initiative of VLIR-UOS which has operated since 1997. The review team was asked to formulate recommendations concerning a redesign of the IUC programme in view of the experience gained and lessons learned with IUC programme implementation over the last 14 years (so-called internal dynamics); to formulate recommendations concerning a repositioning of the IUC programme and linkages with other VLIR-UOS intervention types, in view of the new country strategy-based VLIR-UOS approach (so-called external dynamics); and to formulate recommendations concerning the participation of a wider range of institutions for higher learning (not only universities) in IUC programmes, the alignment with academic internationalisation (over and above development cooperation), and the space for national and international transversal initiatives (a mix of internal and external dynamics). The above sets of recommendations needed also to be integrated into a more holistic package that would ensure enhanced effectiveness of the IUC programme within a country strategy implementation framework. In this regard, the review team was expected to formulate a number of possible but coherent options. In terms of scope, all programme design issues were expected to be reviewed. These included the overall design and its appropriateness in view of the IUC programme objectives (relative size and duration, design dynamics, administrative framework, alignment with institutional or national policy objectives); the degree of flexibility in terms of design, leadership, scope and implementation; the formulation, monitoring and evaluation processes and methodologies; the management framework, definition of responsibilities and decision making processes, financial management, be it in the N and/or the S ; the IUC programme overall relevance, (cost)effectiveness and sustainability and its intended outcomes, including spin-offs; issues of ownership, selection and audit processes, communication and information management; and a review of actual practice versus procedures (protocols) that have been developed over the years.

The review was carried out by means of four main activities: a desk study, in which a transversal assessment of all available documents at the VLIR-sec on IUC activities, evaluations and all relevant internal working documents regarding the transition to a country strategy-based approach was made (Annex 1); a short benchmarking exercise which compared initiatives in institutional university cooperation supported by a selection of relevant agencies such as national donors and major education foundations; interview sessions with over 50 key VLIR-UOS IUC stakeholders based in the N and the S during July – early September, 2011 (Annex 2); and the production of a discussion document submitted to VLIR-sec in mid-September 2011 that was tabled and discussed at IUC Think Tank No 2 held on 4th October 2011, at which selected representatives of N and S stakeholders were present. All findings from these events were combined into this current policy document with coherent options as to how future IUC activities might possibly develop within a country strategy approach. It is intended that the findings of this review will also be discussed with a wider group of VLIR-UOS stakeholders at an IUC policy workshop planned for early 2012.

The interviews held with over 50 stakeholders based in the N and S proved crucial to the main findings of this review since the team was able to benefit from extensive experiences first-hand of

participants, administrators and beneficiaries of the VLIR-UOS IUC initiatives. The focus of future institutional university cooperation on fewer countries in the S is likely to alter the way in which donor assistance will be distributed and used in VLIR-UOS partner countries. Many of the key European national donors involved in supporting institutional university cooperation also plan to concentrate their capacity building activities in a smaller number of partner countries, which in many cases coincide with those also selected by DGD, Belgium. While the risks of double funding increase, there is nevertheless considerable potential for VLIR-UOS to form valuable donor alliances and to harmonise collective support to the TE sectors of the following countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Substantial care will be needed in terms of the design of IUCs in the future to minimise duplicated support to the relatively small number of universities with which Flemish academic teams can cooperate in the fewer targeted countries (now reduced from over 50 to 20). This situation will need greater donor collaboration to provide appropriate forms of support with complimentary goals. This will provide an extraordinary opportunity to introduce novel types of university cooperation mediations.

Three levels of VLIR-IUC partnership are proposed as frameworks to provide a high degree of flexibility to support TE in countries where the needs and stages of university development are likely to vary considerably. They consist of Level 1: the TEAM initiative geared to supporting university research and teaching teams as building blocks to more substantive forms of institutional cooperation. These include Level 2: the so-called BUILD initiative based on the traditional (post-2006) IUC model and Level 3: NETIUC based on the formation of local institutional consortia formed around a hub (ideally a previous VLIR-IUC partner) supporting the development of thematic activities, where possible aligned to the MDGs so that the outputs of future IUC partnerships will increase a country's ability to reach MDG targets, particularly poverty reduction and increase of access of local populations to education at all levels (primary through to tertiary), as components of universities' "service to society". The formation and involvement of multi-stakeholder platforms will ensure that as much attention as possible is made to the demand-driven needs of the country through the involvement from the outset of a wide range of stakeholders (including the commercial business sector, where appropriate, as well as identified end-users). In order to create an appropriate degree of regional (trans-border) spread, the establishment of a new toolbox initiative, the International Partnership in Education for Development (IPED), is recommended. The proposed three IUC levels will rely essentially on some of the well-tested design aspects of former IUCs (e.g. use of PCM approaches) with a gradual implementation of results-based management approaches along the lines described in Section 7) supported by a range of existing VLIR-UOS initiatives – the so-called IUC toolbox (as depicted in Annex 4). This policy will increase the "win-win" opportunities for academics in the N by generating joint diplomas and postgraduate degrees as well as generate valuable and relevant scientific publications. Support for the strategic establishment of pre-doctoral and doctoral training schools on campuses in the S should be considered by VLIR-UOS as one way of assisting the raising of academic standards at provincial universities currently in their early stages of development. This will be possible by making use of academic strengths and the experience of more established university centre(s) in any given country. Not all levels of IUC will be appropriate for operation in all of the VLIR-UOS partner countries: much will depend on the demand-driven nature of the national strategies in TE and on the country strategy papers currently being produced on behalf of VLIR-UOS by appointed external country experts. Repeated participation to large scale VLIR-UOS initiatives should be encouraged rather than opposed, in view of obtaining further and prolong "win-win"

situations for academics based in Flanders as well as in the S particularly in the new listing of partner countries.

It is strongly recommended that VLIR-UOS appoint an independent international advisory panel (or commission) to assist it in its work of selecting future IUC partnerships and in providing appropriate and rapid technical feedback to IUC teams. The commission panel of no more than 10 members would consist of international experts selected by means of a widely advertised competitive bid procedure. The operation of the advisory commission would be mainly achieved by electronic communication, as and when needed, backed up by an annual meeting at which progress and development of all existing and new IUC initiatives at the three different levels would be assessed and evaluated.

Underlying weaknesses in the completed nine IUCs were identified. Three of the most significant were: the relatively poor attention paid to gender mainstreaming in both the universities of the N and S, the dearth of young academic staff involvement in IUC projects and the heavily bureaucratic nature of annual, mid-term and final evaluation reporting procedures. Establishment of a female postgraduate and postdoctoral scholarship scheme may be one way of improving the current situation in gender mainstreaming while the involvement of teams with a broad spread of staff ages with varying professional qualifications might be preferentially favoured as future project members during competitive selection procedures. The changes from 5- to 3-year calendar phases is expected to ease the need for such extensive reporting in the future. The recommended appointment of an advisory commission will also assist by leading to the need for shorter more concise M&E procedures. In this case, the current mid-term would probably not be necessary until after the first (3+3) year sector (multiphase) of a future IUCs. The introduction of results-based management approaches (with associated training) to project and programme M&E should lead to the generation of effective activity performance indicators which in turn are expected to shorten substantially reporting structures due to their more regular application. Real time auditing of financial transactions within a project or a programme may prove to be possible to introduce and begin implementing in some IUCs where institutes enjoy adequate broadband connection to international cyber networks.

The invigoration of existing, and possible development of new, VLIR-UOS expert groups is strongly recommended because these create opportunities to share the knowledge and problem solving skills of former experienced coordinators and participants of IUC-projects. Examples of groupings are: ICT, library and information services, good laboratory practice, institutional (university) administration and financial and management.

Institutional learning within universities in the S needs to be supported to a greater extent in future IUCs by the involvement of appropriate balanced mixes of social and technical science projects within an IUC framework, rather than preponderance of one or the other. In cases where expertise is not available within an IUC programme and where there is a strong perceived need, consideration should be given to outsourcing certain training functions to commercial sector teams who have the necessary expertise relevant to universities and which can be engaged following open competitive bidding procedures. This will be particularly useful in the areas of financial and personnel management, ICT and other areas of special expertise which are frequently not recognised as

deficiencies in the academic sector. There may be special opportunities here for staff of the University Colleges who have relevant expertise to offer and who could become successful partners in future IUCs. Topics such as language training, financial and personnel management are examples.

Research-led teaching especially through the involvement of more postdoctoral scientists, is a recommended strategy towards enriching the development relevance of project research within IUCs. The provision of a number of strategic international postdoctoral internships for tenure in the S within a number of the new IUCs should be considered as is the establishment of a number of twinned non-tenured Chairs (full professorships) in International Development Studies based in a small number of university centres in the N and S. The VLADOC initiative, as a constituent of the proposed IUC toolbox, makes an important contribution towards enabling N postgraduate students to carry out their field studies in the S and to work alongside sandwich degree colleagues based in the S. These shared experiences are enlightening for the young N scientists who, after such experiences, usually wish to continue developing their careers in the field of international development. Regrettably only 6-8 of these competitive fellowships are available every year. Should there be a rise in demand from students based in in Flemish universities for these types of scholarships (especially in view of the “academization” of the UCs and greater numbers of Ph.D. students possibly involved), then the number of fellowships should be increased (even doubled if possible).

From the perspective of VLIR-sec operational issues, the existing contracts between the ICOS units and the VLIR-UOS should be reviewed mainly for the purposes of harmonization of academic and financial management across the different universities in Flanders so that all of the units operate according to the same working protocols with respect to the range of IUCs and the related support which they provide to the realisation of IUC toolbox components. This will be especially important in the light of the probable increase in the involvement of the UCs and the likelihood that greater numbers of joint Ph.D. diplomas might be arranged in future IUCs. The strategy of gradually reducing funding support in a scaling down fashion during the last three years of Phase II of an IUC is, with the benefit of hindsight, a poor one. This is because the policy largely failed to achieve what it was supposed to: i.e. stimulate the search by the local university for new funding sources that could sustain the development of the university along the lines started under the IUC. This practice should therefore be phased out and from now on searches for additional sources of funding to support and sustain initiatives started under the VLIR-UOS institutional university cooperation scheme should be undertaken at an earlier stage of an IUC (even to the extent that fund-raising even becomes an actual project activity in new IUC partnerships).

The review team wishes to acknowledge the extraordinary sharing of experiences, knowledge and perceptions of the VLIR-UOS IUC partnership programme provided to it during the course of the review exercise which pays tribute to the outstanding commitment of VLIR-UOS staff, the university academics and policy makers involved in Flanders as well as the S, to “build bridges and improve livelihoods” through sharing minds.

1. Background

The “Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad” (VLIR) is the Flemish Inter-University Council, and was established in 1976 to improve mutual understanding and cooperation amongst the universities of Flanders. VLIR operates as a think tank and advises the Flemish government on all policy aspects in which higher education is involved. University leaders and specialized staff members collaborate with VLIR to create consensus on a wide range of topics including degree structure, research management, quality assurance, student services and academic governance. Within VLIR, the VLIR-UOS has been established as a separate and largely independent department responsible for the management of funds for university cooperation for development. With funding obtained from DGD, the VLIR-UOS secretariat (VLIR-sec) serves the Flemish academic community (universities and non-university institutions for higher education) in the field of university cooperation for development. The VLIR-UOS activities in institutional university cooperation (shortened in English to “IUC” and in Flemish to “UOS”) to date have been framed by five-year plans ratified by the DGD. Between VLIR-UOS and the academic institutions it is intended that there should be a clear division of tasks: VLIR-UOS being responsible for overall policy matters, programming, project selection, follow-up and evaluation and universities and other TE institutions responsible for academic and financial management and programme implementation. Governed by the Bureau of VLIR-UOS, the VLIR-Secretariat engages in collaboration with the academic institutions through each of the Institutional Development Cooperation Units (ICOS) based at the six Flemish universities (universities are associated with 21 university colleges or “Hogescholen” in Flanders).

1.1 Goal and purpose of the VLIR-UOS IUC programme

The overall goal of the VLIR-UOS IUC programme is ‘empowering the South (or “local”) university as an institution to better fulfil its role as development actor in society’. This is consistent with the VLIR-UOS logo which is “Sharing minds, changing lives”. Initiated in 1997, the programme has been operating for over 14 years and in 2012 will utilize ca. 29% of the overall VLIR-UOS budget (based on the total operating budget of €35.74 million) and as such is the single most important operational activity of the VLIR-UOS. The total organisational structure of the VLIR-Sec will absorb ca. 7.5% of the total VLIR-UOS budget in 2012, which is broadly in line with an administrative budget of most international organizations of the equivalent of under 10% total operating costs. In view of its nature, visibility, and the number of academics involved, VLIR-UOS is often considered to be a testing ground for new innovative practices in international university collaboration. The VLIR-UOS sees itself primarily as a facilitator in finding the best match between priorities and needs of institutions in the S, and the interests and expertise of academics based in tertiary education institutions in Flanders (N). It sees “motivation” as a particularly crucial ingredient of the team approach and the dynamics of cooperation in creating sustainable academic collaborations and networks. These structures support S universities and research institutions in their triple function as providers of educational, research-related and societal services, which impact upon national and regional development. The notions of sustainability and impact are key components of the IUC programme of VLIR. The following can be considered as the main features of the VLIR-UOS IUC partner programme:

- Long term collaboration with a limited number of selected universities geared towards institutional development.
- Well-elaborated phase-in, phase-out and ex-post partner programme opportunities.
- Financing and facilitation of cooperation (Partnership); not budget support.
- Content based on match between the priorities of the partner university and the interest and expertise offered by Flemish counterparts.
- Demand initiated leading to a joint programme based on partnership.
- Two successive five-year partner programmes with an earmarked overall budget of over € 6.000.000
- Average annual budget: € 745.000, of which some € 650.000 is operational.
- Seven years full budget thereafter declining gradually in Years 8, 9 and 10 to 85%, 75% and 50%, respectively.
- Extensive post-partner programme support facilities.
- The creation of North-South and (North)-South-South networks.
- Overall Duration: about 17 years, of which 10 years of earmarked partner programme funding

1.2 Range of VLIR-UOS interventions¹ available to current IUC programmes

The VLIR-UOS programmes are characterized by diversity of approach, modality, length of cooperation and the flexibility of choice available regarding the types of collaborative activity. Since their inception in 1997, the IUC programmes have evolved into more focused and increased developmentally related collaborations. According to information posted on the main VLIR-UOS website www.vliruos.be, the description of the current VLIR-UOS university collaboration programmes is provided in English² is as follows.

The **South programmes** comprise projects in the South that aim at building local capacity at an institution or department in terms of education, research or service to society.

- **Own Initiatives** (OI): research and training projects lasting no more than five years in which academics cooperate with an academic partner in the South.
- **South Initiatives** (SI): innovative forms of cooperation between Flemish academics and academics in the South, seed and harvest money, matching funds, network facilitation etc.
- **Institutional University Cooperation** (IUC)³: long-term multidisciplinary institutional cooperation between Flemish academics and a university in the South, lasting ten years or more. There are currently twenty listed university partnerships which VLIR-UOS is or has supported over the last 14 years.

Congo programme: a specific country policy for Congo, in association with other Belgian

¹ The reviewers recommend that care should be taken in using the word “intervention” in the developmental context (despite its widespread acceptance). In English it can mean “impediment”, “obstruction”, “restriction”, “retardation” – meanings that are not normally associated with progressive aspects of development.

² The Dutch version of the programme pages is much more extensive compared to the English one.

³ Subject of the current review and which now has a website dedicated specifically to its many activities (http://vliruos.be/index.php?language=EN&navid=498&direct_to=Institutional_University_Cooperation_IUC)

development cooperation actors, primarily CUD (the French-speaking sister organisation of VLIR-UOS).

The **North programmes** are primarily implemented at the Flemish institutions of higher education and are oriented to building development expertise, policy support for development cooperation and for strengthening social support in Belgium.

Education

- **International Courses (ICP)**: master's degrees on development-relevant subjects, organised in Flanders for students and professionals from developing countries.
- **International Training Programmes (ITP)**: practically focused training lasting 1-4 months for students and professionals from the South.
- **Short Training Initiatives (STI)**: intensive courses of no longer than 2 weeks for students and professionals from the South.
- **Programme Study Expenses (PSE)**: a budget for the Flemish university to compensate the study expenses connected with the education of students from the South.

Research

- **Research Platforms for Development Cooperation (O*platforms)**: cooperation between researchers and development cooperation actors oriented to supporting the development cooperation policy of these actors.
- **International Congresses (INCO)**: academic congresses on a development-relevant theme bringing together actors from North and South.

Awareness-raising

- **Awareness-raising initiatives (AI)**: initiatives of Flemish institutions of higher education to raise awareness of development cooperation in the academic community.

Recently, and particularly post-2006, users of the VLIR-UOS programmes have also been able to choose between relatively short, medium, and long-term cooperation options with budgetary requirements that can range from as little as €7,000, for so-called 'research backpacks' (allowing focused research regarding a specific interest or problem that can be addressed over a relatively short period of time) and much larger and longer programmes (€6,000,000 for durations of 10 years or more) such as the IUC Partnership Programme, aiming at institutional and human capacity building in a phased approach. An overview of key VLIR-UOS mediation types are as follows:

Own Initiatives

The initial aim of these was to respond to a local, development need, which can be remedied by an academic cooperation with a Flemish university. It was promoted through a common initiative, usually at the department or faculty level and taken by at least two academics, (a S academic and a Flemish N academic). The following considerations were taken into account when a selection was made:

- The objectives contributed to the improvement of the living conditions of the local population;
- The sector activities reinforced the socio-economic basis and the civil society of the partner country;
- The research was oriented towards sustainable development and the interaction between social, cultural, ecological and economic factors;
- The continuity of the project was assured by the partner institution(s) after the maturing of the financial support from VLIR-UOS;
- Own Initiatives were limited in duration (3, 4 or 5 years). In the cases of 5-year projects these could not be extended any longer due to Belgian government regulations. The indicative maximum budget which could be made available by VLIR-UOS was in principle €310,000 (total budget for the total project duration). Projects exceeding this budget needed a specific motivation and a sound justification.

IUC Crosscutting

Adjacent to the regular IUC programmes, VLIR-UOS is constantly spearheading new initiatives to meet the dynamic demands of the academic world in both the S and the N. These initiatives usually have a strong transversal character within the individual programmes and can promote other kinds of cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. As such, within the IUC programme, a number of consistent sub-programmes exist. For example, there is the competitive **Research Initiative Programme** (a constituent of the post-IUC toolbox and research/department based), **the N-S-S programme** (exchanges between programmes and projects) and an **ICT programme for Outreach Initiatives** (e.g. Close the Gap - CTG, spearheading delivery of second hand PCs). Also, VLIR-UOS is organising **thematic workshops** with a number of specialised providers such as INASP (e-based information systems) and IFS (research proposal writing and scientific writing/publication of research papers).

South Initiatives

These concern calls for more small-scale projects which can be considered as “seed” money subsequent to any ‘regular’ projects within the existing VLIR-UOS programmes, as “harvest” money (to broaden the impact of earlier projects) or as encouragement for innovative forms of cooperation that may subsequently grow into regular IUC programmes. The budget has been limited to €15,000 and the duration of its projects to 1 year.

North-South-South Cooperation Fund

This initiative is deployed when there are opportunities for collaboration between two university institutions in the S as happened in the case of the collaboration in the latter part of Phase II of the Pest Biology Research Centre at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania and the University of Jimma. Funds have been made available also to other institutions in the S when such opportunistic situations have arisen during the course of on- going IUC Programmes.

International conferences (INCO)

The objective of this initiative is to contribute to knowledge distribution in both the N and S, but with substantial contribution coming from Flanders. The funding available is up to a maximum of € 20.000 (to include personnel and operational costs as well as travel costs, etc.)

Scholarship programmes and travel grants for international students

These are as follows:

a) International Masters/Course and Doctorate Programme

The Masters training programme focuses upon 15 selected Master programmes (1 or 2 years) mounted at Flemish universities, with their primary target being students from developing countries and who have special interests in themes relevant to specific problems in developing countries. The aim is to provide training to the best students from the S with the high likelihood of their employment in a responsible position in the S, so as to apply or transfer the knowledge acquired in Flanders within the country of origin. About 180 scholarships per year are financed. There is also attention paid by VLIR-UOS to maximising activity value impacts through the ICP Ph.D. scholarship scheme (i.e. the exclusive Ph.D. funding channel) and to various follow-up training activities.

b) International Training Programmes

These are short term practical training courses with a duration between 1 to 4 months, organised at a Flemish university but targeted at students from the S who already have some professional experience. Their objective is to transfer knowledge and skills to young professionals from developing countries and create possibilities for cooperation and networking. On average five to six ITPs are organised per year depending upon the level of funding available from year to year.

c) Short Training Initiatives

This targets similar groups of young scientists to the ITP initiative, but is generally shorter in duration: minimum of 5 days and a maximum of 14 days. The activity is also mounted at the Flemish universities with a maximum budget of €50,000 per KOI, consisting of operational budget of €12,500 (lump sum) and scholarships for a minimum of 12 participants.

d) Travel grants for Flemish students

These are to support postgraduate research, of which 3% is specifically earmarked for the VLADOC initiative in 2012 to support eight fellowships, and ~13% for education activities representing around 18% of the total VLIR-UOS budget). These initiatives give competitively selected Flemish students the possibility to visit and carry out research and educational

activities within a developing country. This opportunity is regarded as an “eye-opener” with its main objective the sensitisation of Flemish students to development issues through hands-on experiences to develop better a research paper, a Master’s thesis or undertake an internship.

About 600 travel grants (for academics, administrators and postgraduate students from the N and S who are participating in IUCs) are financed by VLIR-UOS in performing various planned mobility and collaboration functions integrated within the APs of on-going IUC Programmes. Because of the large amount of air miles involved, VLIR-UOS now sets aside a special budget line “CO₂ compensation” in respect of the Ethiopia IUC programmes to offset the environmental impacts of its combined carbon dioxide emission footprint⁴ created by so much national and international air travel activity. Such awareness of global issues related to climate change are good to see in an organization, whatever its size, which is involved in international development that incurs substantial travel commitments.

e) Support for existing long-term commitments and the stimulation of new initiatives

The following on-going activities require continuing funding as follows:

- IUC programmes which are in the middle or during their Phase II where operational annual budgets are progressively decreased to 85%, 75% and 50% over the last three years;
- The RIP initiative which is part of the current post-IUC toolbox and which plays an important role in raising the standards of research in which post-IUC institutions can engage with their IUC partners in the N;
- The remainder is distributed between other new initiatives and for the financing of the VLIR-UOS in-country offices (in Ethiopia and the DR Congo). The latter offices have been established to coordinate IUC and other VLIR-UOS activities in-country in cases where there are several TE institutions collaborating, or about to collaborate, with the Flemish universities.
- University collaborations between TE institutions in the N and in the S (and by extension between various forms of N-N and S-S linkages) are important mechanisms for ensuring that development (service to society) proceeds in the best interests of the countries concerned as determined by the contexts of local politics and strategic plans for development made in-country and within the region. Internationalization which proceeds during an IUC activity opens up many new interactions between donor agencies and NGOs⁵. Not only are there direct benefits accruable to the collaborations of this nature but there is also the added advantage of enabling human resources within universities to independently think, learn, reason and progress in a democratic fashion for the good of the society in general. The comparative advantages of gender mainstreaming on civil society and the experiences of advanced language training and honing of abilities to communicate in the internationally important languages of English, Spanish and French through publication in scientific and social science journals of international repute are among some of the direct

⁴ <http://www.co2gift.be/content.aspx?l=029&lang=NL&group=2> – CO₂ gift website currently concerning Ethiopia activities.

⁵ European University Association (2010) Africa-Europe Higher Education Cooperation for Development: meeting regional and global challenges. White Paper. Outcomes and recommendations of the project: “Access to Success: Fostering Trust and Exchange between Europe and Africa” (2008-2010), 24pp.

benefits of international university collaboration, which sometimes go unrecognized since these types of mediations are not so visible during the course of collaboration and the implementation of academic staff and student mobility exchanges. In effect, a country-based approach had already been started by VLIR-UOS in 2006 for its actions focused on the DR Congo. This was mainly at the request of the Congolese partner universities and also in order to respond to the growing needs in respect of that country emerging from a prolonged internal civil war conflict to make sure that aid was more effective and aligned with donor systems with local management structures. As such, the Paris Declaration (PD) put all these issues into a common position and agreement. In view of the on-going policy discussion between DGD and indirect actors such as NGOs, and in order to better comply with the principles set out by the PD and its counterpart agreement in Accra (AAA)⁶ on increased aid efficiency, a concentration of the Belgian cooperation within a more restricted number of countries has been warranted. The exact number and identity of these countries is now agreed (Annex 1) and country-wide strategies will now become underlying policy for future activities. Furthermore, the principle of 70% of the total budget for development activities being spent in the S countries will be applied. VLIR-UOS is convinced that a further concentration of its aid will not only improve its efficiency and effectiveness but also continue to support regional actions and the autonomy of proposals of the individual researchers aligned to development issues such as poverty reduction in the S and N.

1.3 Terms of reference

The terms of reference required that the review team:

- formulate recommendations concerning a redesign of the IUC programme in view of the experience gained and lessons learned with IUC programme implementation over the last 14 years (*internal dynamics*);
- formulate recommendations concerning a repositioning of the IUC programme and linkages with other VLIR-UOS intervention types, in view of the new country strategy-based VLIR-UOS approach (*external dynamics*);
- formulate recommendations concerning the participation of a wider range of institutions for higher learning (not only universities) in IUC programmes, the alignment with academic internationalisation (over and above development cooperation), and the space for national and international transversal initiatives (*mix of internal and external dynamics*).

The above sets of recommendations needed also to be integrated into a more holistic package that will ensure enhanced effectiveness of the IUC programme within a country strategy implementation framework. In this regard, the external experts were expected to formulate a number of possible but coherent options.

In terms of scope, all programme design issues were expected to be reviewed. These included:

⁶ Summary contents of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda Accord
http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3746,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html

- the overall design and its appropriateness in view of the IUC programme objectives (relative size and duration, design dynamics, administrative framework, alignment with institutional or national policy objectives etc.);
- the degree of flexibility in terms of design, leadership, scope and implementation;
- the formulation, monitoring and evaluation processes and methodologies;
- the management framework, definition of responsibilities and decision making processes, financial management, be it in the N and/or the S ;
- the IUC programme overall relevance, (cost)effectiveness and sustainability and its intended outcomes, including spin-offs;
- issues of ownership, selection and audit processes, communication and information management; and,
- a review of actual practice versus procedures (protocols) that have been developed over the years.

1.4 Methodology

The following methodology was employed for the IUC review consisting of:

A **desk study** to conduct a transversal assessment of all available documents at the VLIR-sec concerning IUC activities over the 14 years of IUC programme operation, and relevant internal working documents regarding the transition to a country strategy-based approach. The Final Evaluation and Country Evaluation Reports of Ethiopia⁷ and Vietnam⁸ were valuable as sources of information with which to assess the relative performances and effectiveness of the completed IUCs in terms of their aim of building academic capacity in the participating S institutions and the relative levels of their service to society able to achieved through the deployment of the standard VLIR-UOS IUC model accompanied by post-IUC initiatives. Along with the outputs of the VLIR-UOS Think Tank No.1 of October, 2010 (Annex 2), the review team wished to encapsulate the main lessons learned and, in combination with the progress of current IUC programmes in DR Congo, Burundi and Ecuador, produce a dynamic transversal analysis of the currently operated IUC model.

The desk study was followed by:

1. **Benchmarking** to contextualise the IUC programme with reference to comparable initiatives of relevant agencies such as CUD, NUFFIC, EU, major education foundations, as well as the academic and/or political initiatives in the South, and the changing overall global development provision situation;
2. **Interview sessions** with selected key stakeholders in the North and the South during July – early September, 2011. A listing of stakeholders interviewed is presented in Annex 3;
3. **Elaboration of a discussion document** submitted in mid-September 2011 that, possibly along with others, is to be tabled and discussed at the second IUC Think Tank scheduled

⁷ Alan Penny and Damtew Teferra (2010) Country Evaluation Ethiopia. 68pp

⁸ Jan Visser and Trinh Quoc Lac (2011) Country Evaluation Vietnam. 168pp

for early October 2011;

4. **Drafting of a concluding report** with coherent options on how future IUC activities might develop within a country strategy approach. It is intended that the findings of the review be discussed with a wider group of stakeholders at an IUC policy workshop planned for early 2012.

The review team, consisting of three experienced academics with accumulated knowledge of VLIR-UOS activities of well over 30 years and professional academic careers themselves of more than 80 years, have a strong interest in and appreciation of international university collaboration. When it started its work its approach developed as follows:

- Because of the breadth of the subject and the limited time available to it over the main summer holiday period, meant that a combination of activities would be equally shared between each member of the team (e.g. in the cases of some interviews, drafting and text correcting work) and in the case of joint activities (e.g. face to face interviews with IUC stakeholders in Brussels and Leuven), any intervening discussions were to be carried out by Skype conferences. Several stimulating discussions were also held with members of the VLIR-sec.
- In contrast to the customary fairly extended style of reporting in VLIR-UOS reports, a more direct and incisive style would be adopted.
- A much appreciated high degree of freedom from the VLIR-UOS Bureau and VLIR-sec allowed the team to develop “out-of-the-box” thinking. This was obviously stimulated through an extended series of lengthy discussions with fifty interviewees, many with very different backgrounds and functions within the context of VLIR-UOS activities.
- A firm belief in the future value of supporting the prevailing strong collaborative spirit between universities in the N and S that encompasses a WIN-WIN for all partners, that transcends paternalistic attitudes and includes awareness of the rapidly changing global conditions impinging upon development activities strongly aligned to achieving the MDGs.

2. Reflections on 14 years of management and support of VLIR-UOS institutional university cooperation

2.1 VLIR-UOS programme management

During the 14 years of running the IUC Programme, the IUC management system has been based on the following division of tasks: VLIR-UOS has been responsible for the programming - including the selection of partner universities, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the individual IUC Partnerships and of the overall programme of IUC initiatives. VLIR-UOS is accountable directly to the Belgian Government under its Directorate General for Development (DGD). Actual implementation of an individual partner programme is delegated to a Flemish university that functions also as the coordinating university in the N. To achieve the appropriate levels of international co-ordination within and between the universities in the N, special units – the ICOS’s – have been established in

each of the main universities in Flanders to assist in the management of IUC Programmes. The Flemish university appoints the Flemish coordinator who has the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the programme implementation, based on contractual agreements signed between the Flemish coordinating university and the VLIR-UOS Bureau (the management committee overseeing the activities of the VLIR-sec). From the chronological point of view, the following were some of the milestones in terms of IUC programme development:

- The first round of IUCs were initiated in the period 1995 - 1997;
- the introduction in 2002 of the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach and logistical framework methodology in VLIR-UOS and local programme managers and associated Programme Management Units in some countries in the S;
- the elaboration of a phase-out tool box for those partnerships which came to an end as from 2006;
- the development of cross-cutting programmes that work with IUC programmes that are both on-going and are phasing out (i.e. ICT, library development and bio-statistics as three examples);
- innovative adaptations to the structure of an IUC programme in view of working in fragile states (e.g. DR Congo and Burundi);
- increased attention to align IUC programmes with national frameworks concerning poverty reduction and higher education (especially since 2007).

Even with the overall modalities of management and responsibilities in place over the last 14 years, there has undoubtedly been a progressive evolution (and definite improvement in many aspects) of the constituent activities of IUC Programmes such that currently there is a greater emphasis being placed (by design) on social science in the various projects composing IUC activities. These developments, along with the implementation of short-term workshops and other highly interactive interventions (even elements of psychology), have had the effect of encouraging transversal (cross-campus) initiatives which have no doubt increased elements of organizational learning and institutional culture in more recent IUC collaborations. The current series of on-going IUCs have substantially different project mixes and components compared to the earlier IUC programmes and there has been a substantial (and comparatively successful) evolution of IUC programmes in which there are now themes of activity which have a beneficial effect on institutional binding across campuses in the S between constituent project activities. The capacity to accommodate substantial changes to the IUC management of on-going IUC partnerships says a great deal about the levels of communication and degrees of flexibility that exist between the Flemish universities, the individual academics involved and the responsive role played by VLIR-UOS in making changes where necessary to its mode of operations so as to raise the levels of cooperation attainable between the universities involved in IUC linkages.

2.2 Questions raised during early stages of review

Key questions which the review team eventually decided to address so as to establish the relative effectiveness of the nine IUCs that had passed through their ten years (5+5 years) of activity phases, were :

- Have completed IUCs reached their aims of providing verifiable and effective service to society?
- Have the IUC partnerships led to the involvement of academic staff, other than those initially involved at IUC inception in project activities?
- Have the VLIR types of intervention been adequate to achieve the goals intended?
- Will the participation of junior academic participants in the North be guaranteed in the near future?
- Under what operational modalities is the participation to future IUC's to be envisaged?

2.3 Strengths of the VLIR-UOS IUC Partnership Programme

Based on the written information provided for this study, throughout 14 years of operations, the VLIR-UOS IUC programme has established the following comparative strengths following a widely accepted and agreed *modus operandi*:

- **Long-term sustained cooperation:** For institutional cooperation to be effective, long-term partnerships have been developed and supported for an active and substantial period of campus-campus collaboration, i.e. for at least 10-12 years (if the 1-2 years of lead-in support is included);
- **Orientation** towards the institutional needs and priorities of the partner universities in the S: donor support responds to the needs and priorities of the partner institution. Linkage projects and programmes need to fit well into the local policy environment of the S partner institution and therefore should respond to the priorities that have been identified by these institutions themselves.
- **Ownership:** apart from their required participation in the process of project identification, partner institutions from the S also need to be fully involved in the process of implementation at all levels. A lack of strong involvement from beneficiary institutions has a negative impact on the successful implementation as well as on the sustainability of cooperation projects;
- **Concentration:** focusing efforts on a limited number of partner institutions in the S⁹ leads to apparent advantages in terms of programme management and more effective activities that can maximise developmental impacts.
- **Donor coordination:** VLIR-UOS is convinced of the usefulness of donor coordination such that VLIR-UOS IUC programme support has usually been, wherever possible, complimentary to other donor and NGO actions geared towards:
 - a. the institutional development of the partner university;
 - b. the improvement of the quality of local education;
 - c. the development of local postgraduate education in the South;

⁹ A total of twenty universities in the S have been involved as partners with Flemish universities since the VLIR-UOS IUC programme was launched in 1997

- d. the encouragement of S-S linkages.

The desk study and the outputs of the Think Tank No 1 (October 2010) deliberations (Annex 2) concluded that the IUC Programme had additional strengths to the more obvious ones mentioned above. These were:

- Both multi-and inter-disciplinary projects are included in IUC Programmes and there is flexibility to alter and modify these at the mid-term stage of the two 5+5 year activity programme;
- Comprehensive but fully flexible multi-package support is available from the other associated VLIR-UOS activities which can be provided for supplementing and expanding activities during the course of a tightly planned programme of collaborative activities; infra-structural support which has been provided, particularly ICT and library services, has been considered of a good standard and has been much appreciated by S stakeholders. It has undoubtedly enlivened student teaching and e-learning possibilities (although regrettably most ICT platforms which have been mounted during the first nine IUCs have not led to the successful mounting of new open courses).
- The S academics interviewed during final evaluations appreciated considerably the real and sustained commitment of Flemish academics during IUC programmes. This might be a reflection of the fact that no salary top-ups are permitted under VLIR-UOS IUC actions to participants from the N, so there is a real shared academic interest in collaborative activities and a real sense of strong partnership. It also infers that the inception procedures appear to be appropriate. This strength and its contribution to the eventual successful outputs of IUCs should never be underestimated when evaluating the performances of IUC programmes .
- The quality of research and to a certain extent research-led teaching has improved on campuses in the S, and there may arguably have been even a positive influence on teaching in the N, especially in those cases where collaborative research topics were in the domains of tropical science-based, medicine and socio-economic disciplines. This is indicative that in some cases there were additional (perhaps less visible) “win-win” situations for academics in the N since there are benefits for their teaching as well as stimulating outputs from their research in the form of collaborative scientific papers (a highly visible “win-win” component).

2.4 Weaknesses in the VLIR-UOS IUC Partnership Programme

Despite the above strengths, there were some notable weaknesses identified during the Think Tank No 1 (Annex 2) and during the current review in relation to the completed IUC programmes. Main ones were:

- Under performance of useful feedback to collaborating teams in the N and S : there were impressions from many stakeholders that there was a lack of supportive feedback from

the VLIR-sec following receipt of the Annual Joint Steering Committee reports as well as the respective Evaluation Commission mid-term and final reports. The main criticism from S stakeholders in particular has been that the contact between them and VLIR-sec was solely for the purposes of chasing up reports or clearing up unexpected administrative difficulties. The VLIR-sec had acquired over the years a reputation for being a heavily bureaucratic unit with an apparent limited interest in the outcomes of IUC initiatives. This impression was unfortunate and has not been helped either by the long-winded reporting structures that over the years have been put in place for the Annual Reports and Mid-term and Final Evaluation exercises. It became clear during the interviews that there were also many different perceptions from both the VLIR-sec and the ICOS staff in Flemish universities as to expected administrative roles of the ICOS units within the different universities in Flanders.

- It was perceived by many N academics interviewed that there is concern that more attention needs to be paid by all concerned (VLIR-sec through to the University Rectors) to improve the so-called “win-win” for academics’ continued involvement and sustained commitment for long periods during the extended IUC partnerships. The absence of top-up salaries is perceived to be a good thing by even the most hard-pressed academics since this assures both personal and professional commitment from all concerned in making institutional cooperation function through many years.
- The IUC activities to date have paid minimal attention to gender mainstreaming and youthful input both in the N and the S: there was a notable dearth of female academics and female postgraduate students involved in VLIR-UOS IUC activities in the partnership universities particularly of the N?.
- Organizational development in the S institutions has sometimes been weakly represented in the original work plans and later in the actual activities undertaken during the earlier VLIR-UOS IUC partnership programmes (pre-2006), with the notable exception of important cross-campus infrastructural support initiatives like ICT and library services. Educational and institutional development aspects of universities in the S were relatively weakly treated in the early IUCs. It is reassuring that these components of institutional capacity strengthening have now begun to be tackled in the later IUCs (from 2008 onwards).
- Insufficient attention was being paid in some IUCs to the development of opportunities for training and offering work experience to technicians and junior support staff; they form important human resource components of a well-functioning university where ICT, laboratory and library support would be expected to attain higher professional standards if they were to be fully involved and integrated in IUC activities.
- Frequently there were cases of a lack of clarity between the work plans of IUCs and the activities of intermediate institutions external to the S university and which were centrally involved in developing national TE policy. Such organizations include entities such as national Academy of Sciences and National Science Councils, as well as NGOs operating

within the TE sector in the country in which the partner university institution was embedded.

- There was frequently a weak design of projects such that there were not clear linkages between planned activities and intended outputs. In many cases this was because the log-frame logic was not sufficiently tight at the project level to enable performances of collaboration to be made easily evaluated particularly at the mid-term stage (viz. evaluators' comments relating to the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Moi-Kenya IUC)¹⁰. The strict spending of yearly budgets by 31st March every year with no allowance for carryover of funds from one AP to the next exacerbated these types of project design faults. It also meant that in many cases panic spending was practiced in many IUC project components in order to adsorb all the available funds within a single budget year. Such "enforced" practices undoubtedly may have led to inefficiency and, not surprisingly, instances of possible wastage of financial resources because of the need for hasty last minute spending.
- Many present actors perceived there continues to be a luke-warm effort to attract young or inexperienced newcomers from the N to the field of international development co-operation.
- Notwithstanding a general approval of increased concentration, a restriction of the number of countries to twenty may endanger a few excellent and ongoing project opportunities elsewhere in other countries previously in the 50 or so partner countries eligible to apply for VLIR-UOS support at the IUC level.

2.5 Opportunities to strengthen the VLIR-UOS Partnership Programme

Several opportunities were recognised during the course of the review for improving the existing strengths of VLIR-UOS IUCs within the contexts of international inter-university cooperation for development. These were:

- Increased use of outsourcing during an IUC of training and expertise provision to highly professional organizations and consultancy operations. This move might then ensure adequate and appropriate delivery of short intensive workshop training on issues such as result-based management approaches, local development of tools for education performance monitoring and evaluation, development of real time auditing systems as potential new management tools (using methods now made possible through the ICT broadband revolution enabling daily, weekly or monthly monitoring of such things as financial transactions and monetary movements and short-term project reporting of technical and personnel matters), developing appropriate performance indicators for the local institutional situation in the S. The outsourcing operations would concentrate on the aspects of university institutional building in which many academics are not either sufficiently familiar, qualified or, within the realms of reality, particularly good at! A

¹⁰ Mid-Term Evaluation of Moi University http://www.vliruos.be/downloads/Mid_term_evaluation_Moi_University.pdf

certain degree of outsourcing may therefore be advantageous to assist academically based efforts at building up components of university institutional and organizational mechanisms .

- English/French language training and other specialized non-academic training activities (such as financial and institutional management and technical professional skills) might be better attended to in IUCs by the associated TE institutions (University Colleges - UCs) in Flanders than could be carried out previously by the Flemish university academic community. There could therefore be a useful expertise niche and avenues for UCs to become involved relatively soon as fully engaged partners in future IUC activities.
- Collaborative research between European universities and ones in the S is currently regarded as being a primary tool in realizing development in the S, particularly in Africa¹¹. This consensual policy could assist even more than before VLIR-UOS forge alliances in the EU aid programmes of the future and so extend more effectively its existing associate status in Erasmus Mundus consortia (see later under Section 5).
- Geographical concentration by many donors operating in the same countries can facilitate the forging of new donor alliances to ensure complementarity of actions and such a focus can enhance efforts to make a greater impact on development and so make a stronger contribution to MDG issues such as poverty reduction.
- Consideration should be given to the establishment of a VLIR-UOS International Advisory Panel (an external Commission) to guide and advise the VLIR-sec on educational development matters and in provision of appropriate feedback to N and S institutions involved in IUC activities. The Advisory Panel could then also assist the VLIR-UOS make more regular but less bureaucratic measures for monitoring and evaluation of IUC partnerships, thereby reducing the report loading on collaborating institutions in both the N and S.
- An advisory role for the specialist groups formed in Flanders as a result of previous and on-going IUC collaborations in topics such as ICT, Good Laboratory Practice, Information Systems and Organizational Management should be considered as a potentially valuable resource to the VLIR-sec in handling monitoring and evaluation issues and feedback within the contexts of future IUC programmes.

2.6 Main threats to the VLIR-UOS IUC Partnership Programme

The main threats were considered to be as follows:

¹¹ EUA White Paper. Africa-Europe Higher Education Cooperation for Development: Meeting Regional and Global Challenges. White Paper. Outcomes and recommendations of the project: "Access to Success: Fostering Trust and Exchange between Europe and Africa" (2008-2010)

- The emerging BRIC economies like those of Brazil, Russia, China, India and certain Asian countries like S. Korea¹² might in the foreseeable future play increasing roles in provision of university collaboration on the grounds of partnering mutually exclusive initiatives in the fields of mining, oil exploration and others linked to land resources (including growing their own food), which might seriously undermine (and possibly disrupt) the long-term support being provided by VLIR-UOS. Countries with prominent TE institutions might be attracted by the funding that these new generation of donors can offer (i.e. funds without too many strings attached, provided within a comparatively short time frame and with the possibility of substantial capital investments in mind). Due to the different terms and conditions of collaboration that these new donors can make might be considered by some institutions as more open-ended and attractive than that which can be provided by more traditional donors, VLIR-UOS being one of them.
- Instabilities in the bank sector and the unpredictable and often large fluctuations in exchange rates over several years. VLIR-UOS policy decisions have to be made in this respect, especially with the prospect of a weakening euro currency because of some European countries being in deep financial debt. Therefore risk management becomes an increasingly important factor in the donor activity arena. Alliances with other donors (sharing donor responsibilities) can provide an effective risk management policy.
- Continuation and likely increases in emphasis on publication-driven career development and career development evaluations of academics both in the N and in the S. Attention to developing opportunities which increase the element of WIN-WIN for N and S academics needs to be considered now very much more seriously than in the past as an extra incentive for academics remain committed and involved in N-S university collaborations.
- Increasing numbers of traditional S partners have gained experience with an array of N donors and the N donor involvement by different countries on a single university campus in the S may fluctuate considerably as respective economic threats arise, thus requiring a greater attention to N donor cross-cooperation which, it must be said, has been negligible at times.

3. Redesigning and repositioning VLIR-UOS IUC activities

The current review was instigated largely because of the enforced changes in development policy by the Belgian Government in response to need to align development actions to international agreements like the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda Accord. In addition to these political policy adjustments which DGD and consequently VLIR-UOS need to make, there has been formalization of the way in which Belgian organizations working in development will be required to integrate their activities in a more cohesive and aligned manner than has been the case in the past. This opportunity was seized by the VLIR Bureau to launch a thorough analysis and concomitant strategic audit of its

¹² Interestingly South Africa is currently in final discussions to become a member of this group (largely due to its considerable gold and platinum mining reserves that bolster its attractiveness to the existing members of the group)

modes of operation in respect of its institutional university cooperation (IUC) programme. This is a timely exercise because of a socio-academic development in which a pioneering generation of IUC promoters enact the final phases of their careers and a younger generation of motivated, but highly pressurized academics, need to take over. Finally, the recent changes in world economies, growing implications of global climate change, coinciding international donor strategies, rapidly improving information technology within the developing countries themselves, warrant such an effort.

3.1 New political agreements and development policy directives

On 22 April 2010, VLIR-UOS with La Commission Universitaire pour le Développement (CUD)¹³ signed a political agreement with the Belgian Federal authorities. The CUD under the CIUF¹⁴ is responsible for the implementation of the policies of university cooperation for development in the French speaking parts of the Belgian community. The CUD is described on its website as “a place of dialogue and consultation which seeks to pool the resources and potential of French-speaking universities of Belgium to increase the effectiveness of their contributions to international cooperation and enable and implement projects that no institution would ever have the ability to achieve alone”.

The agreement stipulated that starting on 1 January 2013, VLIR-UOS will shift from an intervention type-based approach, to a country-based type approach. Furthermore, and among other norms, mediations will be limited to 20 VLIR-UOS partner countries with the provision that at least 70% of the S budget needs to be spent in countries of the Belgian bilateral cooperation (consisting of 18 countries). This agreement and its associated emphasis on geographical concentration to align and focus more its activities to development-related issues, such as poverty reduction, will therefore be expected to have a profound effect on the manner in which VLIR-UOS has been funding partnerships. With the IUC programme currently representing some 65% of the overall S budget, this calls for a repositioning in the future of the type of interventions deployed by VLIR-UOS.

3.2 Implications of the geographical concentration strategy and shorter calendar phases

Implications of the new directives for IUC operations laid down recently by DGD require that increased emphasis be placed on targeted development activities (according to a country strategy policy) which is primarily aimed at poverty reduction in fewer listed countries (Annex 1). For the moment, the VLIR-UOS strategy is to focus on producing country strategies for five of the listed countries, i.e. Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Cuba and Ecuador. The remaining 15 countries will be integrated later into IUC activities following country strategy formulation in a gradual scaled-up approach. Initiatives are currently under way to develop the first set of country strategies by the end of 2011. Another directive which VLIR-UOS must align itself to is that future IUC activity should be based around multiple 3-year phases of action instead of the previous 5-year ones and that it should adopt result-based management approaches to evaluating and measuring partnership progress.

3.3 Need to build “win-win” incentives for academics participating in VLIR-UOS IUCs

There is a continuing concern that academics in the N are under pressure from university administrations to maintain high impact journal publication-driven career development. This trend is also likely to be increased for academic based in the collaborating TE institutions in the S as well.

¹³ <http://www.cud.be>

¹⁴ <http://www.ciuf.be>

Fortunately some universities in Flanders are beginning to develop explicit credits for international collaboration and teaching activities as one further criterion for promotion. More urgently than ever before therefore is there a need to bring to the fore the academic advantages and the levels of career satisfaction attainable from involvement in development collaboration. Additionally, participating in development collaboration requires skills different from those attainable in standard academic activities. This is especially relevant when it is considered that Flemish universities continue to receive increasing numbers of postgraduate students from overseas, many of whom come from contrasting cultures. A certain level of diplomacy, tact, patience, empathy and understanding of the perceptions of such students during their education in the Flemish university has to be manifested by all involved. There needs now to be an injection of “win-win” elements in future IUC partnership activities for N (and with the above concern in mind, even academics in the S). The development of joint N-S university diplomas and degrees is one possible activity that could bring more career evaluation rewards to academics. There is also an opportunity for these joint courses to be focused on developmentally relevant and significant thematic subjects like climate change, food security and nutrition, raising household incomes in rural communities and so on. Finally, teaching efforts in the S must be recognized in the curricular evaluation procedures in the N.

3.4 Ageing profiles of IUC partnership academic units based in Flemish universities

An urgent need has been recognized by the review team and other stakeholders to ensure that there are adequate incentives for sustaining involvement of larger numbers of younger academics (below the age of 45 years) in Flanders to participate in future IUCs. Prior to the interviewing process, the review team was well aware of the strong academic interest of some Flemish university staff for the natural and physical sciences which impinge upon human, biological, soil and water resources in the tropics. Several of the more successful academic groups which had been active in VLIR-UOS IUC partnerships¹⁵ have been under the leadership of well-motivated, enthusiastic senior academics with international reputations who had themselves started their own careers 30-40 years ago in the tropical regions of the world. Upon returning to Europe only a few avenues were available to allow them to continue building upon their earlier academic research experiences. However, the institutional university cooperation activities which VLIR-UOS funded provided the natural conduit through which they could continue their research on tropical systems. It is recognized that their combined involvement has had an enormous positive impact on the relative successes of IUC partnerships over the years. Many of these cooperation pioneers however are now reaching retirement age and in many cases there may be no obvious successors! This situation has been a WIN-WIN for academics whose research topics are to be found in tropical regions since postgraduate and postdoctoral research can be readily fostered through the IUC framework. There are many other senior Flemish academics however who have become involved in VLIR-UOS activities because they have a special interest in supporting and participating in the development of universities in less advantaged parts of the world. The WIN-WIN for them is a little less tangible but they do benefit nevertheless from attracting postgraduate research students from overseas to become members of their own research teams as part of international scholarship activities.

3.5 Forthcoming changes to the TE academic landscape in Belgium

¹⁵ Senior academics interviewed in Flanders have been involved in as many as 19 collaborative VLIR UOS IUC initiatives with S universities over the 14-year period of their existence.

The Flemish higher education (TE) system consists of university colleges (UCs), universities and five associations, i.e. institutional co-operations between one university and one or several university colleges. Pursuant to the Bachelor's-Master's-Doctorate structure the following types of programmes are being organised:

- Professional Bachelor's programmes which are professionally oriented and are organised by university colleges only. They are, to all intents and purposes, a continuation of secondary education but with an added emphasis on technology and social services.
- Academic Bachelor's programmes offered by university colleges within an association or by universities which are geared towards transition to Master's programmes. They also tie in with secondary education but foster interests in research and innovation.
- Master's programmes tie in with academic Bachelor's programmes and are offered by universities and university colleges, within the framework of an association.
- Promotions to the degree of Doctor are organised by the universities and "academized" curricula in University colleges. These levels of activity can be accommodated readily by joint degree and registration programmes stimulated by cross-educational linkages supported by the EU.
- The UCs are in the elaborate and stepwise process of "academization". This is a five-year process which started in 2008 and will be completed in 2013 with eventual accreditation of the institutions¹⁶. It involves among other things the obligation for staff to hold a Ph.D., introducing the ability of some institutions to award Ph.D. degrees, access to funding for applied research and for integration of educational programmes with those of the traditional universities. The exercise is being overseen by the so-called "Associations" (consisting of a University and several University Colleges). Examples are KULeuven +13 UCs, UGent + 3, UAntwerpen + 4, UHasselt +3, VUBrussels +2. The VLUHR (the Flemish University and High School Council) has been created to oversee the integration of the universities with the UCs. The VLUHR oversees international collaboration and development collaboration. The UCs have even created an enterprise "Flamenco"¹⁷ to cater for these needs. For the time being, student mobility is the main mode of action. The recent ministerial agreement introducing country-based strategies (Section 3.1) is acknowledged and VLIR-UOS will therefore need to reappraise its future strategy and involve UCs in its future actions wherever appropriate. Currently, the involvement of UCs in development collaboration is minimal. From 2013 onwards, all VLIR programme lines will be available to staff within the UCs. Co-financing is also one possibility that has to be considered if increased numbers of academics are to be involved in new forms of IUC programme. Also, all levels of the decision-making process should be enlarged and should observe democratic principles and include representatives of the UCs in decision making processes but nevertheless always observing prevalence of academic standards.

¹⁶ Integratie van Vlaamse hogescholen in de werking van VLIR-UOS. Jo Bastiaens, Stijn Coenen, Dorien De Troy, Klaas Vansteenhuyse. December 2010.
http://www.vliruos.be/downloads/Integratie_van_Vlaamse_hogescholen_in_de_werking_van_VLIR_UOS.pdf

¹⁷ The Flamenco initiative: <http://www.studyinlanders.be/>

3.6 Increasing involvement of the entrepreneurial sector in future IUC Partnerships

With the new political directives described in Section 3.1, the participation of SME's should be considered as one of the important ways of achieving more effective outreach and uptake of new processes in society. These could have the potential of creating raised income generation opportunities among local populations and thereby contribute to poverty reduction. This could be done through existing alliances between VLIR-UOS with NGOs operating in this field, e.g. the NGO Exchange¹⁸, and benefitting from the expertise present in University Colleges, where numerous links with SME's are nurtured.

4. A selection of international donor agencies which support TE institutional capacity building in the S

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken during the current review with the aim of ascertaining the levels and types of mediations currently being funded and operated by other donors that provide for N-S inter-university collaborations with a strong development focus in the S (Table 1). Text boxes indicate the similarities, differences and the strengths of the various donor provisions which the team wish to highlight.

4.1 National donors providing support for IUC activities focused on development

There are several federal organizations, government departments and NGO donors providing various levels of support to inter-university collaboration. The S university platforms have long been recognized as having great potential for bringing about progressive development through outreach activities from campus to local societies and in some cases can provide innovative solutions to local problems. The importance of education, particularly at the TE level, has also been recognized and acknowledged as being a key factor in the development of any nation through its effect of creating stronger elements of democracy and open thinking in civil society. The universities and other TE institutions also provide other levels of education in the country through extramural activities such as teacher training and the use of infrastructural facilities like ITC to modernise teachers' knowledge bases through engaging the open library. Issues such as gender mainstreaming and human rights can also be better developed from a university environment. The main government donor actors are shown below in Table 1 in alphabetical order with their respective web links. An outline of the levels of support provided by each of the donors of inter-university collaboration is presented below.

The British Council - The PMI2 Research Co-operation programme is designed to grow high quality research co-operation between higher education institutions in the UK and agreed priority countries. The programme targets many SE Asia countries but also a few in South American (e.g. Argentina) and Africa (e.g. Ghana and Nigeria). Funding is intended as pump priming to initiate and stimulate projects of excellence that have the potential to be sustainable in the long term. 84 projects were funded in 2009 and are continuing for three years.. DfID supports development projects based on

¹⁸ <http://www.ex-change.be/en/index.html>

Table 1. Donors providing funds for inter-university cooperation focusing on development

Donor	Country	Web-link
British Council, UK and the Department for International Development (DfID)	U.K.	http://www.britishcouncil.org/new/
CUD - La Commission Universitaire pour le Developpement (CUD) in association with CIUF – Conseil Interuniversitaire de la Communité française, Wallonia, Belgium	Belgium	http://www.cud.be http://www.ciuf.be
DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development	Germany	http://www.daad.de/entwicklung/beratungsprojekte/akquise/08150.en.html http://www.bmz.de/en/what_we_do/issues/Education/hochschulbildung/index.html
DANIDA	Denmark	http://um.dk/en/danida-en/partners/research/int-research/
FINIDA	Finland	http://formin.finland.fi/Public/default.aspx?nodeid=15336&contentlan=2&culture=en-US
Irish Aid	Eire	http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/index.asp
NORAD	Norway	http://www.norad.no/en/Thematic+areas/Education+and+research/Norwegian+support+to+education/Norwegian+support+to+higher+education+and+research.135803.cms
NUFFIC	Holland	http://www.nuffic.nl/home
Sida	Sweden	https://itp.sida.se/itp/Programcatalog.nsf/dspobjProgrammesByTarget?readForm&target=G&year=2011

university campuses in Sub-Saharan Africa but these are generally parts of multi-disciplinary regional programmes and have a strong result-orientated bias. The Council supports postgraduate training schemes and finds places for potential postgraduate students from developing countries in the UK universities but as such there is no established IUC-type activity with development aims.

CUD/CIUF – the French speaking sector of the Belgian Federal Government’s support to university capacity building in the S mirrors closely the aims and activities being promoted and supported by VLIR-UOS. The support of the French speaking counterparts of VLIR-UOS use interventions of a similar scale to the VLIR-UOS IUC model with the exception that they use lighter forms of project assessment and a more narrative reporting during mid-term and final evaluations.

DAAD – German Academic Exchange Service – the activities of this organisation are geared very much to a consultancy-based approach provided by German educationalists and researchers in

support teams made up of experts in the N universities. Core activity fields for the DAAD are aligned to international projects which include:

- Developing modern curricula and adapting these to national structures as necessary, creating strategies for the internationalisation and profile-building of universities through: innovative degree programmes (Bologna Process¹⁹, trans-national education, e-learning, joint and double degrees);
- Creating degree programmes or establishing study centres and institutes (e.g. the European Study Centres);
advising on the implementation of quality assurance and accreditation systems;
- Developing university management and planning structures;
- Planning and implementing scholarship and exchange programmes ;
- Designing and implementing tailor-made training programmes and in-service-courses for university administrators and academic staff.

Working on behalf of the Asian Development Bank, the DAAD advised the National University of Laos on the creation of a Faculty of Economics. Mongolian teacher training institutions were advised on aspects of curriculum development and higher education management training programmes. Working on behalf of the World Bank, the DAAD contributed decisively to developing a system of quality assurance and accreditation for the Republic of Yemen. Again on behalf of the World Bank, the DAAD contributed to developing the concept and structure for a Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS). Working on behalf of the EU, the DAAD takes part in various higher education projects in Asia aiming at improving academic cooperation between Asian and European partners and at promoting the key role played by higher education in development cooperation.

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Three organisations in Germany are responsible for promoting academic and university partnerships and cooperation: The German Research Foundation (DFG) provides funding for academics from developing countries who are undertaking research projects jointly with German colleagues at German institutions. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) supports a large number of students from partner countries every year through scholarships – to enable them to undertake postgraduate work. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) supports highly qualified academics engaged in original research.

The supra-regional "Cooperation Between Universities" project is also being implemented within the context of German development cooperation. It supports regional networks of universities in Latin America and Southern Africa, particularly in the area of quality management and public-private partnerships. In addition, within the context of Technical Development, highly qualified young academics and managers from developing countries receive scholarships to spend some time at the Bonn International Graduate School for Development Research (BIGS-DR) run by the Centre for Development Research (ZEF) at the University of Bonn.

¹⁹ Bologna is the Italian city where the European Ministers of Education met in 1999 to sign a declaration on the future of Higher Education in Europe which now has developed into a matrix of joint university degrees at all levels (B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. in the technical sciences)

Public-Private Partnership (PPP)²⁰. Public-private partnerships are alliances between public sector development cooperation and private industry, such that both sides benefit. In this model, the BMZ supports the projects of private businesses in foreign countries provided they generate tangible benefits in line with the goals of German development cooperation. PPP projects can harness private sector funds for developing countries. They also sensitise private businesses to the goals of development policy and get them involved in efforts to achieve them.

DANIDA – Danish International Development Agency - The Danish Government provides support for international research and includes support for international agricultural research and support for a number of institutions with a focus on health, the economy and social conditions. For a number of years the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has worked to focus the support to international development research such that fewer institutions chiefly in partner countries are supported through multiannual commitments. The selection of institutions is based among other things on an assessment of the relevance to Danish development policy priorities. Total support for international research comprises DKK 60 million (=€8.6 mill) in 2011: DKK 35 million for international agricultural research and DKK 25 million for other international research. Cooperation with research institutions and think-tanks has two objectives:

- To strengthen the developing countries' own research through graduate training and Ph.D. programmes ensuring that developing countries have access to knowledge and methods that e.g. can be applied to diagnose and treat disease, inspect food or assess air quality in large cities.
- Create new knowledge that can be applied in development assistance, for example new knowledge about climate change, sustainable energy, the use of mobile phones in terms of mothers' health, or value chains in the private sector.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also supports international research institutions, for example in the fields of agricultural and health research and in the social sciences and plans to grant support amounting to approximately DKK 265 million (€38 million) for development research in 2011 (the same order of magnitude to that of the VLIR-UOS budget for 2012).

FINIDA, Finland: Projects have long been considered to be the basic units of development cooperation, a donor country supporting, for example, a particular province of a partner country in the development of forest administration or in the construction of water and sewage systems. There is now an increasing movement to develop from project cooperation towards programme cooperation. A recent evaluation was undertaken for a North-South-South Higher Education Programme that was implemented in 2007 - 2009²¹. The evaluation examined the five years of implementation of the programme (including a pilot phase North-South Programme) with a view to making recommendations for the next phase. The evaluation was based on document reviews as well as field visits to case study countries (Nepal and Uganda) and to TE institutes in Finland to interview HEI senior officials and network participants. A total of 34 networks were supported by FINIDA based in Latin America, Southern Africa and SE Asia. One of the interesting findings was that improvement in standards of teaching was more evident in institutions that had already participated in some form

²⁰ A strong attempt to create businesses on campuses in the S coupled with postgraduate technical training

²¹ Finida Evaluation Report: <http://formin.finland.fi/public/download.aspx?ID=51841&GUID={ED612391-F610-47B1-B1B0-2AE2522E71F0}>

of international collaboration and that were used to sharing information. Impact on standards of education has mainly been positive, though to date this shows more clearly in individual rather than institutional capacity development. While the programme and the individual networks are generally well managed and organised, there is room for improvement in monitoring and evaluation of impact through using a log frame analysis at the network planning stage. This will also support results-based rather than activity-based reporting. Network objectives should focus more on needs of both the Northern and Southern partners. The N-S-S Programme is a valuable asset to Finnish development cooperation as well as to the recipient higher education systems in the South and it is worth continuing.

Irish Aid: - Irish Aid's White Paper highlights the priority which the Irish Government places on supporting education systems in developing countries. Education has been central to Ireland's own economic and social development. From their own experience they are aware that key policy decisions and sustained investment in education also take time to translate into economic and social progress. Education has been one of the key drivers of Irish economic success and therefore the Irish feel well placed to be an advocate of sustained and planned investment in education. Irish Aid is committed to supporting initiatives in developing countries that will increase access to education for girls and increase the participation of women at local, district and national level education planning. While the focus of Irish Aid is on basic education provision in Developing Countries, the Irish are acutely aware of the role higher education plays in achieving this objective. This is especially true in relation to teacher education. Interestingly, Irish Aid management differentiates between Education and Development Education, the latter being related to the role of education in meeting some of the eight MDGs. In Uganda, Irish Aid has provided €2 million for a Teacher Training College in the Rwenzori area and is now in the process of supporting the college to introduce ICT as a learning tool. In Ethiopia, Irish Aid, in partnership with a number of other donors, supports an innovative teacher training programme aimed at helping the Ethiopian Government increase the number of qualified teachers and upgrade their skills. The emphasis of Irish Aid to date is on teacher training at the TE level, but in the future, according to a recent speech by the Education Minister, Irish universities and their staff will be expected to increase their direct involvement in development education and research activities funded by Irish Aid.

NORAD: - About four per cent of the Norwegian development aid budget is spent on higher education and research. It has extended cooperation with universities and colleges in developing countries, contributing annually about 200 million NOK (€23 million) for strengthening and developing higher research institutions in the S. A major part of this support is channelled through:

The Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU). The programme is financed by NORAD and is administered by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU).

NORAD's Programme for Master Studies (NOMA) provides financial support to develop and run Master Degree Programmes in the S through collaboration between local and Norwegian Higher Education Institutions. As with the above programme, NOMA is financed by NORAD and administered by SIU.

NUFFIC, The Netherlands – has as its motto “Linking Knowledge Worldwide” and everything which has been done since its foundation in 1952 has been driven by this mission. Nuffic implements programmes specifically aimed at strengthening the performance of individuals, organizations and institutions in developing countries or to help them develop their capacities by extending their expertise, know-how and skills. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs therefore finances a number of international education programmes for a number of developing countries with capacity development as the main objective.

Nuffic manages three programmes:

- **NFP** is a scholarship programme with three modalities: scholarships to take part in selected international accessible short courses, master degree programmes and Ph.D. studies conducted by Dutch institutions. NFP focuses on education and training of mid-career staff in 60 countries, which should lead to capacity building within their organizations, whether public, private sector or non-governmental.
- **NPT** aimed to strengthen the capacity of post-secondary education and training organizations in 14 countries, but is now being phased out.
- **NICHE** aims to strengthen institutional capacity in 23 developing countries for institutions and organizations providing post-secondary education and training. The programme focuses on selected sectors, areas and themes agreed upon by local authorities and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The NFP (Postsecondary Education and Training Capacity) and the NICHE (the Netherlands Initiative for Capacity Development in Higher Education) programme launched in 2008, pay special attention to Sub-Saharan Africa, gender and the needs of the labour market. The actual knowledge and skills transfer and capacity building is achieved by providing courses, training and education to individuals, and through specific projects with partner organizations in participating countries. Nuffic awards grants to Dutch institutions for the NFP scholarships holders who do their studies with them. Under the NICHE programme, Nuffic awards grants to both Southern and Dutch NICHE project implementing organizations. In 2004-2005 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to wind down its own IUC partnership programme, similar to the VLIR-UOS IUC model, so as to concentrate more of its efforts on using outsourcing from competent expert groups to achieve its main objectives. Although generally successful, this approach has occasionally experienced problems with the appointment of some independent consultant firms who once finishing contractual arrangements are not always available to provide a sustainable support mechanism for university collaboration and training in specific academic management tasks.

NICHE and NPT are less university-oriented than VLIR - UOS, and therefore the priorities of these initiatives may differ, e.g. improved institutional and organizational attainment is more important for VLIR-UOS.

Dutch University colleges have participated to a large extent, but these institutes are not the same as universities in their teaching and research. In summary, The Netherlands has fundamentally restructured (streamlined) its academic landscape in the past 20 years.

Sida, Sweden has a major focus at the current time on Uganda and on building up Makerere University as a regional training and research centre. The overall sector objective is greater autonomy for the research system and improved analytical capacity in areas of importance to poverty reduction, democratic governance and peaceful resolution of internal armed conflicts. This objective is in line with the Ugandan National Development Plan's emphasis on the importance of research and innovation to social and economic development. Ugandan Ph.D. and Masters students have been able to graduate from MU and from Swedish universities through local or joint degrees, and regional exchanges between universities in East Africa has increased. Sida's support to MU has among other things contributed to increased access to internet, library resources, research, infrastructure, gender mainstreaming, increased research and research training capacity in areas relevant for poverty reduction, and strengthened collaboration between academia, government and industry. The purpose is to build capacity at the largest public university, MU, in Uganda and to strengthen the institutional capacity for research management. The partnership programmes are implemented in collaboration with Swedish universities and research training is conducted both in Sweden and in Uganda. The overriding objective of Sida's support to research cooperation partners is that they better plan, produce and use scientific knowledge. As a response of the 2011 letter of appropriation, which states that Sida should invest at least 75 MSEK (i.e. €7.5 million) on research related to diseases that primarily affect poor children. At present, the Unit for Research Cooperation within Sida is working on new portfolio analyses in five thematic areas:

- Environment and Natural Resources
- Research for Health
- Social Sciences
- Natural Science and Technology
- Research Policy and Research Management

Types of Cooperation

Bilateral cooperation

The overall objective of Sida's support to national research systems is that partner countries should be able to independently identify research problems of relevance for development, prioritise areas for research, carry out research and secure the necessary financial resources and human capacity to enable the research system to deliver.

Regional cooperation

Through regional assistance Sida aims at creating new knowledge and building research capacity

Global organisations

Sida contributes to global development through its support to global organisations. These organisations operate on many different levels and cooperate with a whole range of different actors.

Swedish research cooperation

Support to Swedish researchers is an important component in Swedish international development cooperation. The aim is to develop and sustain the Swedish knowledge base and research capacity in areas that are of relevance to poverty reduction, to encourage exchange of ideas and information,

support to, for example, cutting-edge research, funds covering travel costs and PhD grants assists Sida in working towards this mission.

Swedish Research Links

The Swedish Research Links Programme seeks to stimulate research ties between researchers in Sweden, on the one hand, and in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) and South Africa on the other. Funds from the programme are intended to cover the extra costs arising from this collaboration. These may, for example, relate to travel, workshops and publication of jointly written articles. Salaries, on the other hand, are not funded as these are regarded as an institutional responsibility.

Development Research Programme (U-forsk)

Sida contributes to Swedish development-related research programmes via its U-forsk (standing for University research) Programme. Further aims are to promote scientific research cooperation between researchers in Sweden and developing countries and the participation of Swedish researchers in joint research programmes and research cooperation relevant to development. In support of its work, the programme has reference groups which cover the following fields; i) humanities, education and culture, ii) health, iii) natural resources and environment, iv) natural science, technology and industrialisation, and v) social sciences²².

Ever since network support was initiated in 2004, 11 networks have been supported:

- Livelihoods, Natural Resource Governance and Environmental Change in Rural Sub Saharan Africa
- The Swedish Network of Peace, Conflict and Development Research
- Swedish Research Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry for Development
- DevNet - The Development Research Network on Nature, Poverty and Power
- Child Survival - reaching the target. A thematic network to promote research and advocacy
- SASNET, Swedish South Asian studies Network
- Swedish Development Economics Network
- VAW - Global Network for research collaboration on violence against women
- Sanitation and water supply in peri-urban areas in developing countries
- Universities in inclusive systems of innovation - Challenges for the 2015 Millennium Development Goals
- Learning from Each Other - Gender and Development Network (GADNET) with sub-network Gender and Development in Practice (GADIP) 2010-2012

Special calls

Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning (FORMAS)

Applications for support must be relevant for FORMAS's areas of responsibility (as outlined in the FORMAS research strategy) and for Sida's areas of responsibility (as outlined in Sida's Strategy for

²² Equivalent perhaps to the expert groups in Flanders?

Support to Research Cooperation). A FORMAS project can last for one or two years and should comprise a 2-4 month stay per year for the main applicant from Sweden at a host research organisation in a developing country. The university or the institute in Sweden will administer the grant. The project should have a co-applicant (also PhD), employed by the host organisation, who will actively participate in the research. One short visit (maximum 2 months) in Sweden for the co - applicant can be included in the project.

Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB): Contagious Diseases

Sida's Unit for Research Cooperation and MSB announce calls on the research theme of the global fight against communicable diseases by developing the capacity in the handling and prevention of these. Together they fund a three-year program with the aim to increase cooperation between scientists from Sweden and scientists in developing countries within the research area of communicable diseases. Approximately 20 million SEK (€2 million) will initially be available the first year, with MSB and Sida contributing equal shares. The call covers major threats and challenges to health and society of mutual interest to both Sida and MSB, addressing the sources, pathways and mitigation measures concerning the spread of communicable diseases.

Partner Driven Cooperation (PDC)

The objective of PDC is to stimulate and strengthen the emergence of self-supporting relationships of mutual interest between Swedish partners and partners in low and medium income countries. The idea is to utilise research results from both Sweden and partner countries in innovation, in areas of policy making and other developmental issues in order to contribute to poverty reduction and equitable and sustainable global development. The aim of this call is to assist in the process of building up a sustainable collaboration between researchers, policy specialists, and innovators at Swedish institutions/organisations together with similar actors in the selective collaboration countries. In PDC the partners are expected to initiate and pursue the cooperation by themselves. Shared ownership along with mutual interest and division of responsibility are of central importance in enabling the relationship to become self-supporting in the long term.

Special call: How does research and innovation get an impact in developing countries?

This call, which was announced in 2010, aims at providing Sida, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNESCO and Sida's partners within research cooperation with a greater basis of knowledge regarding higher education, research and innovation in developing countries. A total of 5 of the submitted 10 applications were granted funding. One application received a planning grant and the remaining four grantees will receive funding during the entire three year period. Sida will support these research projects with a total of about five million SEK (€500,000) per year during 2010-2012.

EU Inter-university collaboration programmes

One of the most important schemes mounted by the EU for university collaboration in which universities in the S have been engaged is **Erasmus Mundus**²³. "EUROSA" is an Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Partnership scholarship programme funded by the European Commission and is coordinated by the University of Antwerp. It promotes mobility for students, researchers, academic and administrative staff from South Africa to Europe. It supports mobility grants to 88 South African

²³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm

master students, doctoral researchers and staff so that they can spend a period abroad at one of the partner institutions. The EUROSA partnership is committed to contribute to the development of redressing past imbalances and to improve the participation rate of historically disadvantaged individuals in higher education. Capacity building and human development, with specific attention to vulnerable groups and excellent academic potential, are at the core of the project. It promotes intercultural dialogue and international cooperation between the higher education institutions involved. Talented students from different regions and different social economic backgrounds will receive the unique opportunity to spend a period abroad and benefit linguistically, culturally and socially from this intercultural experience in a new learning environment.

Both UA and KUL are participants in the EUROSA initiative. In the case of KUL, the EUROSA initiative is similar and consists of a diverse and complementary partnership of nine European, eight South African and four associated partners which are dedicated to implement a well-functioning mobility scheme taking into account the capacity and expertise of the European partners and the needs of the South African partners. A total of 88 students and staff will spend a study or research period in Europe: 48 master students will be trained in specialized courses and will be introduced to new teaching and learning methods; 26 PhD students will have access to high-level Ph.D. programmes and internationally renowned research units; 14 members of staff (both academic and administrative!²⁴) will be trained, conduct research, teach or prepare joint publications at one of the European partner universities. The management of the project and the internal communication structures will be based on the creation of several management bodies and subunits.

Another example of a N-N-E-S consortium is one of the 2011-selected ERASMUS MUNDUS projects. The Consortium is composed of partners representing eight European countries (Sweden, Italy, Poland, UK, Ireland, France, Greece, and The Netherlands) and five Asian countries (India, China, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh). All the partners are outstanding universities in their respective countries and most are comprehensive and research-oriented. With such a wide spread of universities from different countries, the experience of international cooperation projects differ and one of the strongest benefits and opportunities is the possibility to develop a common good practice and know how within the project. It is believed that by cooperating with the very best partner universities possible, the project will have a stronger societal impact in the Third Countries concerned: individuals chosen for mobility will return home better equipped to help shape their home region's future. In the process, strong links to Europe will have been established, helping both Asia and Europe better understand and cooperate with one another. Joint projects, such as twin programmes and shared research projects²⁵ will be particularly emphasized within the project, both through the selection process and by organizing workshops on that theme.

ICSU – International Science Council – with headquarters based in Paris, France and local offices in the main S regions of the developing world, identifies and addresses major issues of importance to science and society, by mobilising the resources and knowledge of the international scientific community;

- to promote the participation of all scientists, irrespective of race, citizenship, language, political stance or gender in the international scientific endeavour;

²⁴ Something that VLIR-UOS should perhaps do more of in IUCs?

²⁵ Much like that which happens already under the VLADOC initiative?

- to facilitate interactions between different scientific disciplines and between scientists from 'Developing' and 'Developed' countries;
- to stimulate constructive debate by acting as an authoritative independent voice for international science and scientists.

ICSU works with strategic partners to plan and coordinate international research programmes that address major issues of relevance to both science and society. To this end, a number of Interdisciplinary Bodies have been created, addressing various themes, including: global environmental change; hazards and disasters; ecosystem change; oceans; space research; and solar-terrestrial physics. The ICSU systems of international university collaboration are similar to those being operated by VLIR-UOS on the periphery of the IUC programmes, such as student mobility, staff exchanges and cross-campus transversal activities in university education.

5. IUC operational models to support the country strategy approach

The new country strategy approach is intended to support the special needs of specific countries in terms of their TE sectors in terms of their ability to more effectively serve society and move forward progress on reaching the MDGs, particularly poverty reduction. No two countries can be expected to be at identical stages of development at any given time with respect to the status of their university structures because of innate differences in their geographical and demographic characteristics, recent and historical legacies and the political persuasion of their governments, among many other things. The physical and human resource condition of national institutions, especially primary and secondary education establishments and the state of its transport infrastructures, can also be strong determinants of the status of access to TE. In the S, more attention perhaps needs to be placed in future years on universities' roles in supporting primary and secondary education in addition to providing good standards of TE. The delivery of good standards of university education in the S (in terms of both physical and trained staff resources) is exacerbated by the fact that many developing countries are in the exponential growth stages of university establishment such that some local provincial universities have often grown in an uncoordinated and disparate fashion with the involvement of many different support mechanisms apart from national governmental ones: e.g. well-intentioned church organisations, assortments of local and international NGOs, in addition to some of the major international donors, each very often with their own agendas.

From the perspective of VLIR-UOS, the potential for donor alliances would appear therefore to be considerable in the following countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Nicaragua, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

Mechanisms have now to be formulated for dealing with the pressing needs of some of the smaller local university institutions in the S, in addition to some of the larger TE centres. In these circumstances, it is probably wise to approach new N-S, S-S-N university capacity building efforts under the new country wide strategy approach with as much of a flexible retinue of support and management planning mediations as possible.

The review team considered a range of models of collaboration which would have the capacity to be able to tackle *in a flexible way* the challenges of university academic capacity building in a broad range of fragile political and institutional infrastructure situations in different partner countries.

Table 2. Target (partner) countries of selected donors

Donor	Target (partner) countries
British Council	China, Ghana, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam
CUD, CIUF	South Africa, Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Ivory Coast, Cuba, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guinea, Haïti, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Uganda, Peru, Philippines, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, El Salvador, Senegal, Surinam, Tanzania, Palestinian territories, Vietnam, Zambia, Zimbabwe
DANIDA	Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia
FINIDA	Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia
Irish Aid	Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia
NORAD	Angola, Burundi, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique
NUFFIC ²⁶ NPT	Benin, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia
NUFFIC NICHE	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Surinam, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia.
Sida, Sweden ²⁷	Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Bolivia
VLIR-UOS	Burundi, DR Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Morocco, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, Surinam India Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Vietnam

5.1 Major considerations

Factors which are considered important for the external and internal dynamics of institutional university cooperation at an international level with institutions based in the S, and which often lead to increases in the “win-win” situations of the academics involved, are presented below. These considerations have been formulated following more than fifty interviews with individuals and groups based in both Flanders and the S and as a result of the lengthy discussions possible at the VLIR-UOS Think Tank No 2.

²⁶ In terms of country focus, in accordance with Dutch bilateral policy, NPT focuses on the group of 36 countries with which the Netherlands already had entered into a multi-year partnership but was run in initially 15 and later on 14 countries. It was envisaged that NICHE would be implemented in the 14 NPT partner countries and nine others. The aim is to spend at least 50% of NPT and NICHE funds on projects in Sub-Saharan Africa.

²⁷ Countries being phased out of research collaboration by Sida are: Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Laos, Vietnam and Honduras. Sida is currently reviewing the possibilities to initiate cooperation in Zambia, Kenya, Mali, Cambodia and Bangladesh.

1. There are many attractions for academics in the S to form research and teaching collaborations with those based in Europe because they can offer academic excellence and a well-endowed pedigree in student and research (and teacher) training. In short, there is a niche value in the effective activities of VLIR-UOS (in which it should be justifiably pleased) and other Belgian organisations, particularly certain NGOs. Special interests of the many teams in Flemish universities with burgeoning research profiles in tropical agriculture, aquaculture, soil science, engineering, food security and nutrition etc., make Belgium (and especially Flanders with its strong 400+ year-old traditional university system), a most attractive partner for university collaboration. The fact that Flemish academics can operate in several international languages is an additional asset, sometimes taken for granted but which is a substantial strength.
2. Where weaknesses in the delivery and functioning of IUCs have been observed, these need to be addressed as soon as possible through appropriate modifications to VLIR-sec and ICOS management practices and by the adoption of new or improved procedures, e.g. the use of briefer protocols and the introduction of streamlined communication and feedback systems from the VLIR-sec to IUC teams based in the N and S following submission of Joint Steering Committee Reports. The main issues for improvement are discussed in Section 6 under operational aspects. After 14 years of N-S university collaborations in a wide range of countries, most of the successful components of VLIR-UOS mediations (listed in Section 2.3) need to be retained in most cases but with possible modifications to suit the targets and aims of specific country-wide strategies. It is likely that with the new challenges additional strengthened and, in some cases, totally new support structures may be needed to deal with challenges associated with supporting younger universities located in provincial districts and in countries no longer included in VLIR-UOS's direct action plans as listed partners (Annex 1). Problems to be tackled are likely to be poor or non-existent ICT service provision, large physical distances between the lead university(ies) in the main cities and the provincial centres exacerbated by poor transport infrastructures, and many other confounding factors associated with geographical, political and/or academic isolation.
3. Shared research and teaching interests are the most usual way for a university cooperation to be spawned at the international level. Cooperation at the department or faculty level usually arises as a result of a continuation of previous interactions between an ex-postgraduate student and his/her supervisor. This means that M.Sc. and Ph.D. scholarships can pay dividends apart from producing scientific publications, thus increasing the "win-win" component for academics who engage in development-related tertiary education. These initiators normally create the strong innate level of commitment to pursue a collaborative piece of research over many years. In other instances, cooperation can come about because of shared interests expressed in either published work or through contacts made at a scientific meeting or an international conference. The latter activities therefore have important potential to pay direct dividends in terms of spawning cooperative activities between campuses in the N and the S and should never be overlooked as to the significant role they play in bringing

potential actors of IUC partnerships together.

4. Direct contacts between different staff and technicians at a single local university in the S can also lead to strengthening long term inter-university cooperation opportunities. The indirect but substantive role that meetings, networks and joint study make to encouraging cooperative institutional activities in the S should never be underestimated. In fact, one stakeholder based in the S at a university which has already received long-term IUC support stated that what VLIR-UOS is really good at is bringing people together. It is highly desirable that initial contacts come about as a result of academic interactions initially and not through government department interventions as part of a political agenda. Academic, tertiary education/research bodies like National Academy of Sciences, National Science and Technology Research and Professional Training Councils and National University Associations should be priority targets for VLIR-UOS and its local university partners with which to engage during the implementation stages of a country strategy. The degree to which such engagement will be required on a country to country perspective will depend on the advice of senior local counterpart academics, university administrators and other multiple stakeholders as to which intermediate organizations should be involved in the negotiation and matchmaking phases during the initial stages of establishing a framework for formulation of any future IUC partnership. In cases where there are possibilities or potentials for industrial or technological uses of discoveries made by academics, approaches to local industry and commercial enterprises should be made at as early a stage as possible in IUC formulation to encourage the eventual spawning of relevant entrepreneurial activities on campuses in the S through a broad open communication strategy.
5. There is a clear perception among all VLIR-UOS IUC stakeholders interviewed (in both the N and S) that effective institutional level cooperation is rarely initiated by the efforts of senior university administrators in a top-down fashion. Every section of university life in the S (and the surrounding community in which the local university is embedded) has to be “on board” (a participatory bottom-up approach) preferably at the beginning of an IUC programme, although this is often not always feasible so that a continuing multi-stakeholder platform consultation process can be formulated to develop into the life of an IUC, even as a project activity (an outreach project) so as to act as an updating communication process. The whole action profile of initial contacts, discussion, planning, project formulation within the priorities (strategic plan where available) of the local university (-ies) in the case of many country approaches), application for VLIR-UOS funding and implementation of appropriate management functions **takes time** (usually years) to reach a point that it is wise for a full IUC involving many actors and university departments to proceed. The new 3+3 calendar of phased activities proposed for future IUCs will help in this regard, since the first three year phase could provide a good proving period for the various levels of negotiations, staff training and matchmaking processes prior to beginning a prolonged institutional cooperation.
6. The platform (framework) for a successful IUC tends to be acquired when several groups of academics, sometimes in disparate disciplines, self-realise the mutual advantages of

international collaborations, not only for their own academic development, but also the substantial collegiate benefits that can accrue to their institution by entering into a significant campus-wide cooperation. This internationalisation can be an important component of university maturation, but with certain reservations²⁸. The current trend (and imposed policy) will now be to develop institutional capacity in-country rather than by a trans-border or regional approach. This means that some TE institutions based in certain countries which are no longer considered partner countries will be unable to apply for VLIR-UOS support in the form of an IUC. Therefore there should be a mechanism whereby staff and students of such institutions can still be involved in some type of trans-boundary, regional- based TE education, particularly developmentally-related research-led teaching which is based in a VLIR-UOS partner country. Examples of this need are found in Sub Sahara African countries like Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the latter two having benefited from IUCs based at their main national universities where e-learning and related ICT facilities were built up but which have still to be used to best effect for distance undergraduate and postgraduate training.

7. In some countries, successful institutional cooperation programmes may only be possible following thoroughly planned engagement of several academic groups (preferably teams) of individuals (senior and junior academics, postdocs, postgraduate students and technical staff) in multidisciplinary or thematically focused projects across either single or multiple campuses. Arrangements for setting up and negotiating the structure of an IUC can therefore take much time to organize and to be agreed upon with potential Flemish partners. It is advisable therefore that a longer lead in time, than the former one of only one or two years, be used for essential training, planning and formulation of future IUCs. Some components of a university might also feel resentment at being left out of IUC activities and this can have long term consequences for the success of an IUC. Efforts should be made to avoid the such situations by providing as much negotiation time as possible to the formulation stages so as to reach official consensus of the different project programmes within a planned IUC.
8. The donor delivery field is overlapping in many target/partner countries (see Table 2), so that increased attention will have to be paid to the formation of advantageous alliances with other donors and actors (like international and local NGOs) in a partner country so as to harmonize as much as possible cooperation efforts.
9. The protracted time it takes to establish a fully operational university institutional cooperation as described above in 8 should not be underestimated. Extensive cross-campus discussions and workshops are required to settle differences of opinion, issues entrenched in local or national politics as well as various social stigma and logistical components. These impediments include matters such as:

²⁸ OECD Policy Brief (2004): Internationalisation of Higher Education. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/33/60/33734276.pdf>

- the availability of time²⁹ that senior academics have available to spend on programme activities so as not to conflict with their timetabled teaching, on-going research and administration duties and other internal and extramural duties;
- their relative capacities to influence and lobby the support of others, including some senior administrators of the university who might have different academic agendas,
- their own skills by which they can attract collaborators from another institution in another hemisphere (Flanders) to commit time and effort; i.e. the real personal commitment of the local and N university academics concerned.
- Research-led teaching is one of the recognised ways of stimulating and improving university education, particularly at the postgraduate level. Research-led teaching takes many different forms. If one sees “research” principally in terms of its “external” activities (presenting conference papers, posters, teamwork and networking) then research-led teaching will mirror these aims. If one sees research in terms of “internal” activities (analysis of data, conceptual advances of ideas) then the teaching will take the form of classes in methodology and data interpretation. If one understands “knowledge” in objective terms as external facts independent of minds, then the teaching one does will reflect this emphasis, whereas if one sees “knowledge” in constructivist terms (being as much “made” by knowing agents as “discovered”), then teaching will emphasise communication and the social and environmental conditions under which knowledge can occur. Similarly, how one views the nature of scholarship and different models of learning will also influence how research-led teaching is conducted³⁰. Undoubtedly there needs to be as much social science input into future IUCs so as to ensure that maximum expertise is available to facilitate community interactions and continuing stakeholder involvement.

10. Extramural university activities are important for the communities surrounding a university, as are the activities which go to ensuring that organizational learning occurs on campus and that the development of all aspects of university campus life at the same time are extended in a cohesive fashion. However, this process takes time and the university and international donors should recognise that the institution must pass through several phases, before realising its ability to serve society by direct visible actions. The intermediate stage is characterised by the ability of the institute to assist local communities, e.g. improve primary and secondary school teaching in the district or region, through extramural activities as happened in the success of Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania supporting primary school teachers through extramural training on the back of improvements to the university’s own ICT infrastructure and the improved management of these resources as a consequence of the IUC partnership³¹.

²⁹ It is often a fact of life and indeed ironic that intellectually broad-minded academics are often the ones who are most interested and envisioned in collaborative activities but are also the ones who are already over-committed in terms of their professional time. Time management in a formal setting (requiring additional training) can become an important issue.

³⁰ Research-Led Teaching. Summary of article “Understanding Research-Led Teaching”, by Angela Brew, HERDSA News, Volume 25, No. 1, April, 2003. http://tlu.fbe.unimelb.edu.au/pdfs/Research_Led_teaching_Summary.pdf

³¹ S.H.Mantell and O. Abagi (2008). Final Evaluation of the IUC Partnership with Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) Tanzania. 172pp.

11. The development of more direct services to society, e.g. realising innovative processes that can generate new sources of income and thus contribute to reduction in poverty through job creation and raised household incomes. In many N countries, entrepreneurial development of new processes is stimulated if SMEs can be located adjacent to or within the university campuses. Consideration should be given to this type of approach (which donors like GTZ support) on campuses in the S.
12. The rate of spread of interest in an institutional university cooperation depends on the conditions under which the institution is operating. Therefore different universities in different provincial districts of a given country may well require different support mechanisms depending on their past history and relative state of development. Individual to individual academic collaboration is the most frequent way cooperation and collaboration starts. When individuals are leaders or senior members of academic teams then there is a good chance that the spreading of collaborative efforts from one group, department or faculty to another will eventually occur. Another stimulator to generating collaborative activity is access to sophisticated pieces of equipment new to a chosen field of research and if accessible to potential collaborators new horizons of cooperation and production of joint publications are opened up. Shared teaching of joint courses between N and S partners, as previously mentioned, is another way in which institutional cooperation can be stimulated with a strong “win-win” component. Mounting advanced student courses, particularly at the Masters level or as part of a Ph.D. student’s formalised research-associated skills training, can also be an important spawning ground for both IUC research and teaching activities and can assist most positively in the strengthening of education aspects of an on-going IUC partnership.
13. Next to open-ended research collaborations, problems of humanitarian nature (HIV-AIDS, healthcare, hunger and malnutrition, clean water supply etc.) need to be addressed urgently as thematic areas of research and training in future IUC partnerships so that service to society aspects of long term cooperation can be generated in a more direct and targeted fashion.
14. It is often overlooked that there usually needs to be a critical mass of academic staff, postdoctoral researchers, postgraduate students in a local institution before international collaborative activities can effectively take place. Many of the universities in provincial situations in the new priority partner countries might not have sufficient staff to even participate in a IUC at the institutional level. Therefore, the review team considers that there needs to be an initial focus on team-based initiatives which would generate a suitable critical mass of staff and students upon which a normal type of IUC can be built. Alternatively, cooperation with other universities in the country may be best based, where possible, on the lead of institutions which have already gained institutional cooperation experience from an earlier IUC partnership.

5.2 Potential models of VLIR-IUC Partnerships

The review team sees great advantages in a **flexible, scale-up** approach to building inter-university cooperation partnerships in the future, as has largely been a success in the past with the VLIR-UOS support provided by the OWN Initiatives fostering research collaborations between individual university groups as a first step to forming a sound platform upon which a more cross-institutional cooperation with Flemish universities could be built. The latter can only take place once good working relationships are established (over a number of years) and with both the N and S parties having a strong familiarity of the academic potentials of each other. Three levels in the scale of collaboration are proposed as outlined below with their main partnership and cooperation characteristics described in Table 3.

VLIR-IUC Partnership Level 1

This basic level of partnership will focus on university team building (research and education teams based in the N and S) sharing common research and/or teaching interests and therefore largely mono-thematic in scope and focus. It has been concluded by the majority of those interviewed during the current review exercise as being the best small scale formula and can act as the stepping stone to Level 2 Partnerships. Future Level 2 partnerships can be initiated in the same way as previous IUCs but that greater attention would have to be paid to organizational development issues within the local institution such as cross-campus academic capacity building and organizational learning etc. Particularly important at this level will therefore be intra-collegiate workshops, short term training initiatives (in aspects of communication, time management etc), interactive internet fora with which teams based in the N and S can link. A suitable name for this initiative might be **“TUC”** (**T**eam **U**niversity **C**ooperation) or **“TEAM”** (**T**ertiary **E**ducation **A**lliance and **M**obilization) initiative. It is teams rather than disparate groups of individuals which are centrally involved in building future meaningful IUC activities of a truly sustainable character. Teams also mean that leadership and internal team hierarchical structures are not usually issues (since such aspects of internal dynamics are inherent in team formulation and success). Most importantly, if a leader does retire or move on in his/her career, other senior members of the established teams can take over and ensure long-term stability and commitment to the institutional cooperation underway. Multiple and inter-disciplinary approaches to addressing research problem solving are also fostered more dynamically by team rather than individual approaches.

VLIR-IUC Partnership Level 2

This partnership has its focus on the well-practiced IUC approach involving institute-institute collaboration and capacity building spawned from the TEAM initiative above to promote cross-institutional (transversal) frameworks, so critical for facilitating and supporting organizational learning processes. Compared to Level 1 type partnerships, much more emphasis should be given to institutional development and to education, together with a healthy focus on generating scientific research results at an international level. In view of the relative success of the previous and ongoing IUC programmes, the abbreviation “IUC” should be retained standing for **I**nstitutional **U**niversity

Cooperation. One other possible name which the review team has considered, in view of the recent political agreement between CUD and VLIR-UOS, is **BUILD** – Belgian University Initiative for Learning and Development.

VLIR-IUC Partnership Level 3

This level of partnership could extend on a country-wide basis some of the previous and existing IUC collaborations between Flemish universities and university centres in the S to form TE consortia. These are designed to extend the benefits already accrued and enable other possibly isolated and young HE institutions in the same country to receive support along the lines of those previously engaged in VLIR-UOS IUC collaborations. The experienced institution would act as the “HUB” institution to build, strengthen and develop interdisciplinary academic activities in universities located different locations within the country. The emphasis in this initiative will be on upgrading, strengthening and improving standards of TE learning capacity nationally and to foster research activities on agreed thematic areas (or possibly one thematic area with a general emphasis on poverty reduction). Intermediate institutions and organizations developing TE strategies in a country (such as Academy of Sciences and NGOs) could be invited to join each consortium formed as a network of TE institutions. Names which the review team considered for this level of IUC initiative which would focus on national university development were **NUC** – Networked University Cooperation, **NIUC** - Networked Institutional University Cooperation, **WEBIUC** – Widening Education Building Institutional University Cooperation or **NETIUC** – National Education and Training Initiative for University Cooperation.

6. Operational characteristics and objectives of the three proposed VLIR-UOS IUC partnership models

The three major types of IUC partnership proposed above to be based in S universities should create maximum levels of flexibility required by the new country-wide approach while at the same time assisting VLIR-UOS rationalise its IUC partnerships as part of its Southern Programme. The operational modalities of the three levels of IUC and their respective outputs and outreach activities (aligned as a priority to development targets related to the MDGs) are presented next. These two sets of matrix elements provide the reference frame for introduction of results-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches, as discussed in Section 7. It is envisaged in this adjusted policy approach that the retinue of the various initiatives (relatively smaller in budgetary requirement than IUC partnerships which VLIR-UOS currently funds and administers) will form the bases of an **IUC toolbox** (as depicted in Annex 4) consisting of support mediations along the lines of some of the current range of support (perhaps over time, not all of those listed in Section 1.2). It is suggested that rationalisation of VLIR-UOS mediations to reposition its activities better to the country strategy approach could be managed and tested out conveniently over the period 2012-2015 when just five countries: Cuba, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Uganda and Vietnam, are planned to be the early foci for the country strategy.

Outlines of characteristics of the components of three partnership levels are compared in Table 3 and the components of each illustrated in Annex 4. In terms of calendars of operating phases, instead

of two five year phases, more numerous 3-year ones (with separate and agreed budgets) will be possible with implementation of a new 3+3 model. Because of the time it normally takes to formulate and establish IUCs of levels 2 and 3, it is proposed that as a guide the first three years should be devoted to negotiations and familiarisation of the potential partners before an IUC action programme begins. This will ensure that the remaining three phases (which could span a total of nine further years) will be better founded on well-planned activities with shared visions, as opposed to pushing through the formulation and starting of an IUC in a shorter 1-2 year period. The lead-in three years can then contain many more useful training and workshop activities, the holding of nationwide stakeholder workshops (to take maximum benefit from national-based **multi-stakeholder platforms** in an engaging participatory process) in the S (and possibly also in the N in the light of the changing academic environments described in Section 3.5), as well as outsourced advice for alignment and associated training in financial management and university administration. It is recommended that the phasing out budget strategy (i.e. operating budgets decreasing proportionately during the last 3-4 years of a partnership) be dropped altogether in the future since this measure did not necessarily induce partner institutions in the S to seek alternate sources of funding in good time before the Phase II of traditional IUCs came to an end.

6.1 VLIR-IUC Partnership Level 1: TEAM

TEAM actions will be relatively short partnerships (three years) in areas of either thematic research, TE teaching methods or novel types of organisational learning approaches between S and N academic teams at the laboratory or department levels. The TEAM IUC would eventually replace the current OWN and Southern Initiatives as the first step in a rationalisation of VLIR-UOS's rather long list of support initiatives. The TEAM IUCs would be renewable for a further three years (6 years total possible) based on competitive motivation and justification, e.g. innovative or novel scientific insights, acute humanitarian needs or strong likelihood of successful outreach. If the yearly financial envelope for a typical IUC (BUILD) partnership is assumed to be unity, a TEAM would be envisaged to absorb only 33% of that. As the participants are primarily highly trained researchers and university teachers, the topic of collaboration will emerge through mutual academic interests, but preference for support will require a TEAM to focus on academic activities which underpin the knowledge and training bases required to achieve the MDGs. As fairly light partnership structures are being dealt with under this initiative, administrative and financial reporting is expected to be facilitated by apportioning 0.2 FTE ICOS in the N. Expected primary outputs are publications of international standing, as well as graduates from **joint degrees** at the M.Sc. (where accreditation procedures are possible) and Ph.D. levels. TEAMS will be attractive to N promoters because they generate interactions yielding sound scientific rewards, in addition to generating valuable development-related research and training activities. They can be started without any prerequisites other than a good relevant project and a viable team compositions (ideally multi-stratified – junior and support staff, in addition to postdoctoral and senior academic human resources).

6.2 VLIR-IUC Partnership Level 2 : BUILD

These partnerships are akin to the earlier classical IUC's. However, due to the 3-year mode of financing, the opportunity presents itself to modify the former cycle of budgeting and evaluation to suit local conditions and the 3-year programme cycle. The focus of a BUILD is threefold: institutional

development, education and research. Several teams on both sides (N and S) can participate and, based on the numerous indications the reviewers have received from experienced actors, a decent administrative and financial support is deemed indispensable. Therefore a 0.5 FTE ICOS together with the provision of a country facilitator acting within the BUILD is suggested (Annex 4). The country facilitator will provide scientific and/or institutional assistance and to work in very close contact with partnership's coordinators and promoters. Additionally, the yearly joint steering committee reports will be evaluated by the VLIR Advisory Panel (Commission), to provide a rapid and detailed feedback to the cooperating teams in the N and S, and additionally perhaps involving inputs from relevant VLIR Expert Groups to solve acute problems in an efficient and effective manner. The expert groups would ideally be made up of experts not only from N universities but also increasing numbers from those of the S. As the institutional and educational outlook is important here, one may expect outputs accordingly, e.g. the creation of pre- and post-doctoral schools, local research councils, new curricula, conference cycles etc. in addition to high standards of scientific output (the well-recognised "win-win" for participating academics).

6.3 VLIR-IUC Partnership Level 3 : NETIUC

These partnerships are to be created in order to fully and profitably address the requirements of a countrywide strategy. They require the participation of an experienced and reasonably well-developed institute in the S (the "hub"), a group of participant institutes throughout the country and one or more N universities to form a strong university consortium. Such consortia are not to be taken lightly and will require strong logistic and managerial support structures (again the role of a country facilitator would be invaluable). The reviewers therefore envisage that such endeavours are restricted to countries in which institutes have already gone through a BUILD (traditional IUC) experience or are adjudged to taking on the responsibility and appropriate management of a hub. The large number of partners allows a NETIUC to be developed around a well-defined theme with obvious and high impact on the MDGs at the country level. Less of a capacity building initiative, a NETIUC should focus on cross-institutional interactions such as applied thematic research, inter-university curriculum development, joint degrees at B.Sc., M.Sc. and Ph.D. levels, and as a priority address nation-wide needs in the educational and research arenas. The big responsibility of the hub institute in running the consortium and providing support to its members warrant apportioning adequate funding to conduct coordination functions in the S.

6.4 Additional measures to support the South and North Programmes

There have been some weaknesses in IUC delivery over the 14 years and lessons have been learned (Section 2.4). Although some well-tested VLIR-UOS initiatives have excelled in bringing about and sustained effective levels of S-N university collaboration, others might now be dropped so as to release funds for more pressing requirements in the light of the approaches required to support the new country strategy. As to which activities should be wound down and which others need to be introduced will depend largely upon the outcomes of the country strategy missions and their assembled reports. However, the team considered that there are already many VLIR-UOS initiatives which overlap to a certain extent and a more streamlined options of key support may be advisable.

Additional measures might also be needed to underpin important regional university interactions (performing significant degrees of internationalization for universities of the S) which might be affected adversely by the new country concentration policy.

6.4.1 Creation of a new toolbox

In order to address frequently heard requests for regional supra-national initiatives (especially in view of the new country focus), the review team proposes a new initiative which could be called **I**nternational **P**artnerships in **E**ducation for **D**evelopment (**IPED**). The IPED will take full advantage of leading TE centres in the S of high standing (as one finds, for example, in the leading universities of South Africa) and which can play an increasing role in upgrading TE for within the contexts of a whole region. Already inter-university councils (e.g. Inter-University Council of East Africa based in Kampala, Uganda) exist in regions which contain VLIR-UOS partner countries and these could be important partners of regional TE training and research initiatives. As such, IPED also attempts to address the often heard caution (during interviews) of specific countries not being allowed to participate or specific themes not being adequately addressed by a NETIUC because of their supra-national dimensions. Costs may be kept relatively low as there is minimal capacity building required for the hub institutions since they are already well-founded universities (in the South Africa example Universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria and the like). The satellites should be enabled by VLIR-UOS to cover expenses related to travel, lodging, course materials, e-learning, etc. Experience in managing relatively complex, large-scale projects like these probably requires prior expertise obtained through an IUC or a NETIUC-type activity. This initiative could be jointly funded either by on-going EU programmes like ERASMUS MUNDUS or in collaboration with counterpart national donors like Sida, NORAD or FINIDA which have special interests in supporting regional and international networks. The latter agency might have particular interests in this type of initiative because of its relatively large interest in N-S-S networks (noted in Section 4). This could also open up opportunities for Flemish universities to interact more appropriately with poorer, less advantaged VLIR-UOS partner countries (like Nicaragua, Peru and Indonesia), and even for those no longer on the list of 20 but which have been countries in which IUC partnerships have been active in the past (eg Zambia and Zimbabwe). The added value of exploring even W-E-S [West-East-South] IUC activities might be considered in those cases where traditional Eastern Bloc countries have maintained strong linkages with traditionally communist countries, e.g. Vietnam, and university administrations have been modeled on soviet systems. The potential of N-N relationships (eg with universities in the Netherlands) with certain combinations of S-S collaborations should be examined as conduits to fostering more relevant and developmentally related postgraduate training programmes. Most of these top universities in the S, candidates for IPED coordination, usually have well-developed distance learning courses in which several Flemish academics and student exchange programmes are already cooperating. These training initiatives could act as a stimulant for advanced postgraduate training at masters and doctorate levels in developmentally important topics such as Food, Nutrition and Food Availability, Global Climate Change mediation etc.: all important and relevant in the context of poverty reduction and realization of other MDGs. Similar scenarios for SE Asia for countries like Indonesia could include possible benefits from training and research partnerships with well-established universities based in countries like China, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, some of which already enjoy linkages with the Flemish universities either as a result of VLIR-UOS IUC activities or as a result of other international university cooperation schemes. In the case of Latin America, linkages between developing universities in countries like Ecuador, Nicaragua and Peru would benefit from training and research associations with the developed universities in

countries like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay to build on existing alliances with Flemish universities.

6.4.2 Creation of a small number of non-tenured professorships in International Development

In order to promote additional “win-win”, the review team suggests the creation of a small number of non-tenured **University Chairs in International Development** (for 3 years in the first instance with an age limit at appointment of 45 years of age) to be considered as a stimulant to mid-career academic leadership in both N and S universities in a type of joint twinning arrangement, whereby teaching and research activities will be carried out in both the N and the S on a reciprocal exchange basis. The new professorial leaders would be expected required, in their role as future drivers of development-related research and scholarship, to work closely with respective IUC coordinators, promoters and country facilitators so as to raise the visibility and **shared** ownership of VLIR-UOS partnerships by both N and S universities. Chairs could be advertised on a competitive basis to each of the university centres in Flanders and several counterpart local universities in the S. If at least one was to be based in each of the regions, this would focus attention by other universities on the importance of academic involvement in development cooperation. This would, as previously mentioned, be expected to provide an ownership quality for the Flanders universities that would enhance the “win-win” element of participation in VLIR-UOS IUC partnerships. The cost of ca €130,000 per annum (including secretarial support) would equate, in the case of six such chairs, to the equivalent yearly cost of maintaining one IUC partnerships but would be expected to bring substantial benefits. The initiative would confer prestige to the respective universities and, most importantly, will also provide positions for academics in mid-career (40-45 years of age) to promote further their careers in development and who would be expected to become actively engaged the academic activities being generated by the new range of IUC partnerships. The chairs would also be expected to stimulate the involvement of young postdocs to become involved in developmentally related research and teaching. Research-led teaching would be an important focus for joint academic initiatives to be carried out in the S on either BUILD or NETIUC level partnerships.

6.4.3 Other additional measures

Feedback from interviewees indicated that some additional IUC “toolbox” (IUC-support initiatives) would be welcome in the light of the new country strategy approaches. These include provision of some support for universities in the S to develop **pre-doctoral** and, where appropriate under prevailing country strategies, **doctoral** schools. The former would concentrate efforts by institutions to train potential M.Sc. and Ph.D. scholars in English language and university level teaching skills prior to the departure of scholars to Flanders to undertake their postgraduate studies. Additionally, the internationally accepted practice of taking advantage of highly skilled, foreign researchers and teachers at the **postdoctoral level** should be introduced by VLIR-UOS and stimulated where appropriate. This is because both forms of support when included within the framework of an IUC contribute positively to a “win-win” for both the S and N academics since scholars arriving in Flanders will be better prepared to undertake research and training activities than was previously the case and can begin their research activities very much earlier than they might have done in the past. The postdoctoral scientists would be an efficient force for developing both research and pedagogic aspects of university level teaching, as well as providing various forms of focused **mentorship** for newly graduated, returning Ph.D. staff members. Should appropriate donor alliances be pursued by

VLIR-UOS (e.g. with EU initiatives like Erasmus Mundus and with counterpart government donors active in institutional university cooperation in VLIR-UOS partner countries as discussed in Section 4.1), this would certainly help to attract international postdoctoral level researchers and teachers into the universities and would have the effect of stimulating research-led teaching in the S (again resulting in a “win-win” element for both S and N academics).

6.5 Other operational aspects for VLIR-UOS to consider

Attributing support for IUC partnerships should follow a two-tier application and selection process, where a 2-page concept note is submitted initially. This is followed by a competitive selection of the most likely candidates, who are then invited to submit full proposals. In contrast to earlier procedures and in line with European practice, the budgets for all types of partnership selected are to be negotiated on a justification basis, even though the overall size of the partnerships can be bracketed.

Country facilitators would preferably be experienced mid-career programme managers with scientific research backgrounds and one would be allocated per partner country. The appointee would carry out in-country management and coordination functions in much the same way that the current Country Programme Manager in Ethiopia is carrying out successfully this function.

The “win-win” for the academics in the N would be enhanced by the retention of a specialist team scheme (performing an institutional collaboration role similar to that of the OI and SI schemes did previously to stimulate team-team activities) to stimulate collaborative research output and opportunities to publish.

The new VLIR partnerships would require existing initiatives like the VLIR-UOS Scholarship schemes and the VLADOC , INCO, RIP initiatives to continue as tool box components. The post-IUC support programmes should be phased out since the partnerships of levels 2 and 3 (BUILD and NETIUC, respectively) would be for definitive 3-year blocked periods following which funding would cease, thereby encouraging more proactively the partnerships to search for alternative funding sources at least by the halfway stage of any partnership. As mentioned previously, the “degressive” type funding scheme (during Phase II of the current IUC model) has not usually been successful at increasing urgency to ensure the sustainability of local university project groups. It has generally been perceived as a negative “unfriendly” feature of the current VLIR-UOS IUC model by partners in the S. In addition, with more donors concentrating on fewer of the same partner countries then alternative funding sources should become more readily available for partnerships signalling a long term vision to continue international cooperation with European universities, even after the 3+3+3+3 year period of VLIR-UOS support. As mentioned above, the lead-in phase in partnerships at IUC levels 2 and 3 would be extended from the usual 1-2 years to one of 3 years.

The first three years of an IUC/BUILD or NETIUC could be considered as a partnership development stage in which TEAM initiatives initiate research activities and develop strong university teams in the N and in the S. The collaboration, if successful by the end of the first three years, could continue as an extension for another 3 years but generally this would only be allowable if the results of research were to be the subject of outreach or entrepreneurial uptake. At the three-year stage a decision could be taken as to whether or not the TEAM partnership could graduate into a fully-fledged IUC/BUILD programme. The three years of inter-university collaboration would allow for appropriate

decisions to be made as to the feasibility of a sustainable IUC-like activity with 4-5 teams engaging in a transversal collaboration more akin to an IUC/BUILD situation. Budgets could then be planned for a three year period with a certain agreed level of virement of funds allowed between financial years

Table 3. Operational characteristics of the three proposed VLIR IUC Partnership models

Partnership types and their characteristics	TEAM	BUILD (=Traditional IUC)	NETIUC
Calendar (years)	3 (+3)	3+3+3+3	3+3+3(+3)
Scope and function	TE team collaboration	Institutional focus Educational focus Research focus	National focus Institutional focus Educational focus Research focus
Financial scale	0,3 (+0,3)	1	1,5 for HUB, 0,5 for satellites
Theme driven	yes	no	yes
Operational modalities	0,2 FTE ICOS	0,5 FTE ICOS Country facilitator	0,5 FTE ICOS Country facilitator
VLIR support available	No	Yes , through VLIR-UOS advisory commission and expert groups	Yes, through VLIR-UOS advisory commission and expert groups
Sequentiality	None	None	BUILD
Geographical scope	City	City	Country
S partners	Single laboratory or department	Single campus	Several campuses/institutions within a single partner country
Outreach expected	Commercial products, methodologies, spin offs	TEAM outreach + leading personalities within and outside of the institution	BUILD outreach + country wide effects
Output expected	Publications, diplomas	Publications, diploma's, course materials, new institutional structures like doctoral schools, local research grants,	As with BUILD output + linkage programs, scientific results related to the selected theme(s?), joint diploma's

		conferences, joint diploma's	
WIN-WIN (N)	Publications, contacts, Ph.D. students, academic career promotion credits, intangible benefits	Team "win-win" + a university chair (?) in International Development based at each of the Flanders universities	As with Team "win-win"
Typology	N-S	N-N-S-S	N-S-S-N-S or W-E-S where appropriate
Performance Indicators	To be established	To be established	To be established

with finalization of financial reporting to be made by the end of the third year in each operational block of three years. With a N country facilitator in post in-country it will be possible to continuously monitor projects especially in areas away from good broadband connection where real time audits could be difficult to organise (see RTA approaches outlined in Section 7) and also to investigate local opportunities for alliances with other donors to establish additional TE support initiatives in the focus country.

6.6 Addressing operational weaknesses in current VLIR-UOS IUCs

Several of the weaknesses identified during the Think Tank No 1 deliberations of October 2010 and the current review, could be readily served by deploying outsourcing approaches in delivering certain services to IUCs such as in financial management, ICT and information systems provision, organizational development training, as has been done for several years by donors like NUFFIC after its version of the IUC collaborative programme.

The VLIR-sec frequently finds itself in an invidious position (i.e. unable to show bias) when it comes to making decisions about apportionment of funding within in an IUC programme: it is apparent that fund allocations have often been made in the past on the basis of democratic equality and distribution of funds on a strict proportional basis to each of the constituent projects, regardless of the specific resources required to service the specific needs of each project as demonstrated by the logframe, PCM planning as well as the evaluation criteria.

To resolve these types of situation in the future, it is timely to consider establishing an independent **international advisory panel** (or **advisory commission**) to guide and advise VLIR-UOS in making decisions relating to IUC resource allocations on technical grounds. Additionally, such a panel could prove invaluable in performing regular monitoring and evaluation of the relative progress of IUC partnerships on a should more regular monitoring be implemented. Overall assessment of progress of the new IUC partnerships might also be feasibly carried out by the appointed advisory group through the provision by partnership teams of a lighter reporting structure that will enable decisions

to be made rapidly as to whether or not to continue programmes on technical grounds or to provide appropriate advice for feedback to be made on technical matters when and where these are necessary.

There would appear to be an urgent need for the contractual arrangements between the VLIR-UOS and the various **ICOS units** in Flemish universities to be reviewed and aligned more closely with each other than they appear to be at present so that there are clear mandates as to what specific IUC programme management responsibilities are required of each ICOS and its university. Also, the possibility that Flemish programme coordinators sign a consultancy type contract directly with the VLIR-UOS at the start of a partnership might be considered so as to reduce any misunderstandings of expected performances and lines of communication between the VLIR-sec and the academic units constituting IUC partnerships.

7. Advantages of results-based management (RBM)³² for monitoring and evaluating future VLIR-IUC performances

The logframe was originally developed for use by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the early 1970s. Since then, the logframe has become a key planning and management tool for many development agencies—Britain’s DfID, Canada’s CIDA, Australia’s AusAID, and Germany’s GTZ to name just a few.

Typical uses of the logframe have been to support participatory project planning, to serve as an analytic tool to document project results, and to provide a sound monitoring and evaluation framework. The logframe has clearly proven its value as a management and planning tool and is now firmly established as an essential tool in development work. Indeed, the logframe is the primary tool through which development agencies conceptualize project objectives and determine appropriate strategies and tactics to attain those objectives. However, as originally formulated, the logframe’s primary application has been as an analytical tool for project design. The current VLIR-UOS IUC programmes use the logframe and PCM approach in their planning stages but have often failed to carry out appropriate levels of needs analysis (despite the completion of problem tree analysis) and other forms of Front-End Analysis so as to define a baseline for specific project activities and provide a means of comparing results with situations which were present at the beginning of the work. The ultimate rationale behind this state of affairs is that the lack of adequate indicators precludes realistic assessment, whatever the methodology employed. Other shortcomings of M&E systems based on the logframe analysis (LFA) approach, now recognised by donor agencies and practitioners alike are: M&E is an ex-post reporting system and does not provide timely support to project management’s needs to react to changing circumstances; LFA refers to a single project option and provides no support for decision-making when progress is not as anticipated – essentially each logframe is a tick list of what is expected as opposed to what is feasible according to changing circumstances; the M&E system generates reports which provide inputs to decisions, which take place at some later date, to “resolve problems”, causing essential decision and project events to move behind schedule resulting in “project drift”; M&E + LFA are not flexible enough nor do they

³² <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>

provide any guidance for decision-making as conditions surrounding a project change; M&E+LFA possess no mechanisms for supporting transparency or traceability of events/resources flow; M&E + LFA possess no methodologies to ensure a practical support of sustainability in terms of flexibility and authorization of resource use within implementation and post-implementation stages; M&E+LFA have no effective mechanisms nor do they provide any useful guidance for managing effectiveness and efficiency of: optimised allocation of implementing agency resources and optimised allocation of project resources. Because M&E+LFA generally acts as a “reporting system”, the system tends to separate implementing agency management from project level implementation operations because the M&E-LFA is confused with an information management system (in some cases almost akin to a black box). This can lead to significant delays in essential decision-making.

In the context of results-based management (RBM), modifications to the original logframe are required, particularly as stakeholder understanding of the causal relationships between expected results and underlying assumptions and risks are elaborated. This dynamic element is generally absent in the traditional logframe approach. There is a need to develop most appropriate performance indicators for university collaboration and organisational development work. Indicators that are relevant to the specific projects have to be devised at the stage of planning by the potential actors themselves so that these can be used later as evaluation benchmarks. These topics will need considerable discussion within VLIR-UOS and with academics involved in future IUC partnerships. There could be a future role here for the Flanders expert groups – i.e. a group could be commissioned by VLIR-UOS to work on generating appropriate model indicators for typical IUC activities.

In the contexts of VLIR-UOS partnership programme reporting procedures have in the past been notoriously arduous. The adoption of a RBM approach (because it is based on more regular M&E on a continuous daily or weekly basis (in so-called RTA: real time audit approaches), information can be provided on a daily or weekly basis via internet communication systems. This level of monitoring is particularly useful for financial control and management applications. Reporting on technical matters might not require monitoring so frequently – perhaps once every calendar month. The principle of monitoring is not so much checking up on what the projects are doing but more identifying problems as these arise and taking remedial actions before serious issues develop: prevention is better than cure. With internet systems now functioning more smoothly because of broadband fibre optic backbone construction serving many of the partner countries, these opportunities now present themselves as genuine practical options.

Monitoring (M) can be defined as the on-going process by which stakeholders obtain regular feedback on the progress being made towards achieving their goals and objectives. Contrary to many definitions that treat monitoring as merely reviewing progress made in implementing actions or activities, the RBM approach focuses on reviewing progress against achieving goals. In other words, monitoring is not only concerned with asking “Are we taking the actions we said we would take?” but also “Are we making progress on achieving the results that we said we wanted to achieve?” The difference between these two approaches is extremely important. In the more limited approach, monitoring may focus on tracking projects and the use of the resources provided by VLIR-UOS. In the broader approach, monitoring also involves tracking strategies and actions being taken by partners and non-partners, and figuring out what new strategies and actions need to be taken to ensure progress towards the most important results. Evaluation (E) is a rigorous and independent

assessment of either completed or on-going activities to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision making. Evaluations, like monitoring, can apply to many things, including an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector or organization. The key distinction between the M&E components is that evaluations are done independently to provide managers and staff with an objective assessment of whether or not they are on track. They are also more rigorous in their procedures, design and methodology, and generally involve more extensive analysis. However, the aims of both monitoring and evaluation are very similar: to provide information that can help inform decisions, improve performance and achieve planned results. While monitoring provides real-time information required by management, evaluation provides more in-depth assessment. The monitoring process can generate questions to be answered by evaluation. Also, evaluation draws heavily on data generated through monitoring during the programme and project cycle, including, for example, baseline data, information on the programme or project implementation process and measurement of results.

8. Conclusions and main recommendations

The provisional findings of the IUC review were presented in a Discussion Document at the policy discussions of the VLIR-UOS Think Tank No2 meeting held at VLIR-sec 4th October, 2011. This policy document was produced subsequently with the benefit of the assembled ideas and the follow-up discussions. The conclusions and recommendations listed below follow broadly the opinions and ideas of participants and stakeholders interviewed. The Review Team has also considered and included the various additional points raised by VLIR-sec staff members during the three-week period after the Think Tank event. Summary conclusions and main recommendations to be made at this stage, even without any knowledge of the various country strategy documents now being assembled, are therefore as follows.

1. The results of a desk study which surveyed the findings of all Final Evaluation Reports of previous IUCs, relevant internal reports and documents, and a number of mid-term evaluation reports of some current IUC partnerships led to suggestions for ways in which future IUC partnerships could be strengthened and various identified weaknesses addressed in the light of the new country strategy approach. A benchmarking exercise highlighted the activities and policies of other international donors of institutional university cooperation (particularly those of national donors based in Europe). The perceptions and ideas of stakeholders concerning VLIR-UOS IUC partnerships in view of the introduction of new country strategy approaches in the future assimilated from interviews with over 50 stakeholders based in the N and S proved crucial as they were able to share with the review team extensive experiences first-hand of the VLIR-UOS IUC initiatives either as participants, administrators or beneficiaries.
2. The focus of future institutional university cooperation on fewer countries in the S is highly likely to alter the way in which donor assistance will be distributed and used in VLIR-UOS partner countries. Many of the key European national donors involved in supporting institutional university cooperation plan to concentrate their capacity building activities in a smaller number of partner countries, which in many cases coincide with those also selected by DGD, Belgium. There is considerable potential therefore for VLIR-UOS to form valuable

donor alliances and harmonisation of support in respect of TE in the following countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda. Substantial care will be needed in terms of the design of IUCs in the future to minimise duplicate support to the relatively small number of universities with which Flemish academic teams can cooperate in the fewer targeted countries (now reduced from over 50 to 20). This situation will need greater donor collaboration in delivery of support with maximal levels of complimentary and provides an opportunity to introduce new types of mediation.

3. Three levels of VLIR-IUC partnership are proposed as frameworks to provide a high degree of flexibility to support TE in countries where the needs and stages of university development vary considerably. They consist of Level 1: the TEAM initiative geared to supporting university research and teaching teams as building blocks to more substantive forms of institutional cooperation. These include Level 2: the BUILD initiative based on the traditional (post-2006) IUC model and the Level 3: NETIUC based on the formation of consortia formed around a hub university (ideally a previous IUC partner) supporting the development of thematic activities, wherever possible aligned to the MDGs designed to develop TE resources in a specific partner country. The outputs of future IUC partnerships will be intended to increase their impacts on a country's ability to reach MDG targets, particularly poverty reduction, as a component of "service to society". The formation and involvement of multi-stakeholder platforms will ensure that increased attention is made to the demand-driven needs of the country at an early stage of cooperation and the planning of an IUC.
4. In order to create an appropriate degree of regional (trans-border) spread, the establishment of a new toolbox initiative, the International Partnerships in Education for Development (IPED), is recommended. The three partnership levels will rely essentially on some of the well-tested design aspects of former IUCs (e.g. use of PCM approaches) and the gradual introduction and implementation of results-based management approach as described in Section 7) supported by a range of existing VLIR-UOS initiatives – the so-called IUC toolbox (as depicted in Annex 4). This policy will make contributions to "win-win" opportunities for academics in the N by generating joint diplomas and postgraduate degrees, as well as producing relevant scientific publications.
5. Support for the strategic establishment of pre-doctoral and doctoral training schools on campuses in the S should be considered by VLIR-UOS as one way of raising the academic standards of provincial universities currently in their early stages of development by utilising the strengths of more established university centre(s) in a given country. Not all levels of IUC will be appropriate for operating in all of the VLIR-UOS partner countries: much will depend on the demand-driven nature of the national strategies in TE and on the country strategy papers produced on behalf of VLIR-UOS by appointed external country experts. Repeated participation to large scale VLIR-UOS initiatives should be encouraged rather than opposed, in view of obtaining a better "win-win" situation in the N as well as in the S.
6. It is strongly recommended that VLIR-UOS appoint an independent international advisory panel (commission) to assist it in its work of selecting future IUC partnerships and in providing appropriate and rapid technical feedback to IUC teams. The commission panel of

no more than 10 members would consist of international experts selected by means of a widely advertised competitive bid procedure. The operation of the advisory commission would be mainly achieved through electronic communication as and when needed by the VLIR-sec, backed up by an annual meeting at which progress and development of all existing and new IUC initiatives at the three different levels would be assessed and evaluated.

7. Underlying weaknesses in the completed nine IUCs were identified. Three of these were poor attention to gender mainstreaming, the dearth of young academic staff involvement in IUC projects in both the universities of the N and S and the heavily bureaucratic nature of reporting procedures. Establishment of a female postgraduate and postdoctoral scholarship scheme may be one way of improving the current situation in gender mainstreaming while the involvement of teams with a broad spread of staff ages with varying professional qualifications might be preferentially favoured as future project members during competitive selection procedures. The changes from 5- to 3-year calendar phases is expected to ease the need for extensive reporting and the possible appointment of an advisory commission will lead to shorter more concise M&E procedures. These could include the current mid-term evaluation but this would probably not be necessary until after the first (3+3) year sector of a future IUCs. The use of results-based management approaches to project and programme M&E is also likely to lead to more effective activity performance indicators which in turn are expected to shorten substantially reporting structures due to their more regular application. Real time auditing of financial transactions within a project or a programme may prove to be possible to introduce and begin implementing in some IUCs where institutes enjoy good broadband connection.
6. The invigoration of existing, and possible development of new, VLIR-UOS expert groups is recommended because these create opportunities to share the knowledge and problem solving skills possessed by former experienced and more mature coordinators of IUC-projects. Examples of groupings are: ICT, library and information services, Good Laboratory Practice, Institutional administration and Financial and University Administration Management.
7. Organisational learning within universities in the S needs to be supported to a greater extent in future IUCs by the involvement of appropriate balanced mixes of social and technical science projects within an IUC framework, rather than preponderance of one or the other. In cases where expertise is not available within an IUC programme and where there is a perceived need, consideration should be given to outsourcing certain training functions to commercial sector teams who have the necessary expertise and which can be engaged following open competitive bidding procedures. This will be particularly useful in the areas of financial and personnel management, ICT and other areas represented by expert groups. There may be special opportunities here for staff of the University Colleges who may possess relevant expertise (in language training, financial and personnel management being a few of these) and who could therefore become readily involved as successful partners in future IUCs with the traditional Flemish universities.

8. Research-led teaching especially through the involvement of more postdoctoral scientists, is a recommended strategy towards enriching the development relevance of project research within IUCs. The provision of a number of international postdoctoral internships for tenure in the S within a number of the partnership schemes should be considered as is the establishment of a number of twinned non-tenured Chairs (full professorships) in International Development Studies based in relevant university centres in the N and S.
9. The VLADOC initiative, as a constituent of the proposed IUC toolbox, makes an important contribution towards enabling N postgraduate students to carry out their field studies in the S and to work alongside sandwich degree colleagues based in the S. These shared experiences are enlightening for the young N scientists who, after such experiences, usually wish to continue developing their careers in the field of international development. Regrettably only 6-8 of these competitive fellowships are available every year. Should there be a rise in demand from students based in Flemish universities for these types of scholarships (especially in view of the “academization” of the UCs and greater numbers of Ph.D. students possibly involved), then the number of fellowships should be increased (even doubled if possible).
10. Existing contracts between the ICOS units and the VLIR-UOS should be reviewed and harmonized so that all of the units in the different universities share the same working arrangements with respect to the range of IUCs and their related toolbox components. This will be especially important in the light of the increased involvement of the UCs in future IUC Partnerships and the likelihood that greater numbers of Ph.D. diplomas could be organised in the future IUC partnerships where it will be important to practice common rules of academic and financial management.
11. The review team recommends that VLIR-UOS reconsider its earlier policy of not allowing IUC-endowed institutes to apply for on a competitive basis for successive forms of IUC-mediation, so as to extend the “win-win” for the academics who have already been involved in research and teaching which is relevant to development and to build on previous long-term investments made over the years by VLIR-UOS.
12. The strategy of gradually reducing funding support in a scaling down fashion during the last three years of Phase II of an IUC is, with the benefit of hindsight, a poor one. This is because the policy largely failed to achieve what it was supposed to: i.e. stimulate the search by the local university for new funding sources that could sustain the development of the university along the lines started under the IUC. This practice should therefore be phased out and from now on searches for additional sources of funding carried out possibly as an actual project activity early on in the activity plans of any new IUC.

Annex 1. The twenty countries listed by VLIR-UOS as new partner countries

Africa (10)	Central and Latin America (6)	SE Asia (4)
<u>Burundi</u>	<u>Bolivia</u>	India
<u>DR Congo</u>	Cuba	Indonesia
Ethiopia	<u>Ecuador</u>	Sri Lanka
Ghana	Nicaragua	<u>Vietnam</u>
Kenya	<u>Peru</u>	
<u>Morocco</u>	Suriname	
Mozambique		
<u>South Africa</u>		
<u>Tanzania</u>		
<u>Uganda</u>		

Underlined countries are ones which CUD/CIUF has also identified as partner countries

Annex 2. List of persons interviewed

Mrs	Adriaensen	Inez	f	Belgium-Flanders	Responsible for Development Cooperation, Central Office	HOGent
Dr	Bastiaens	Jo	m	Belgium-Flanders	University College, Lessius Mechelen	University College Lessius Mechelen
Prof	Bastiaensen	Johan	m	Belgium-Flanders	Professor at the Institute of Development Co-operation Policy	UAntwerpen
Dr	Bauer	Hans	m	Holland	VLIR-UOS Country Programme Manager, Ethiopia	KULeuven
Mrs	Bernot-Ullerö	Hélène	f	Holland	Senior Programme Officer, Capacity Building & Scholarships Directorate	NUFFIC
Prof	Berlamont	Jean	m	Belgium-Flanders	Head, Dept of Hydraulics, Director of the Interfaculty Council for Development Co-operation	KULeuven
Mrs	Boderis	Elfje	f	Belgium-Flanders	ICOS	UAntwerpen
Prof	Brendonck	Luc	m	Belgium-Flanders	Professor in Aquatic Ecology and Agriculture	K.U.Leuven
Mr	Butcher	Neil	m	South Africa	Education expert with global experience in academic management	Neil Butcher & Associates
Ms	Carpenter	Julie	f	UK	Director and lead consultant, Education for Change, UK	Education for Change
Prof	D'Haese	Luc	m	Belgium-Flanders	Dept. Agricultural Economy (UGent), Dept.of Bio-engineering (UAntwerpen)	UGent and UAntwerpen
Dr	De Blonde	Jessica	f	Belgium-Flanders	Dept. Uro-Gynaecology	UGent
Mrs	De Cupere	Françoise	f	Belgium-Flanders	Former VLIR-UOS South desk officer	VUB
Mrs	De Coninck	Martine	f	Belgium-Flanders	Head of the Development Cooperation Unit	KULeuven
Dr	De Herdt	Tom		Belgium-Flanders	Institut voor Ontwikkelingsbeleid-en beheer (IOB), Universitet Antwerpen	UAntwerpen
Mr	De Keyzer	Tom	m	Belgium-Flanders	Beleidsmedewerker Dienst Onderwijszaken	UGent

Dr	De Nooijer	Paul	m	Holland	Inspectie Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (IOB), Policy and Operations Department	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands Government
Prof	De Sitter	Jan	m	Belgium-Flanders	Performance Analysis of Telecommunication Systems Research Group	KULeuven
Prof	De Smet	Egbert	m	Belgium-Flanders	Information and Library sciences	UAntwerpen
Prof	De Vries	Wieste	m	Holland	Dr. Wietse de Vries, Senior Researcher in Higher Education Policies and Director of Educational Management at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Universidad de Puebla	Mexico
Dr	De Witte	Karel	m	Belgium-Flanders	Research Unit on Work, Organisational and Personnel Psychology	KULeuven
Prof	Dekkers	Seppe	m	Belgium-Flanders	Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences	KULeuven
Prof	Duchateau	Luc	m	Belgium Flanders	Head of Dept. of Comparative Physiology and Biometrics	UGhent
Prof	Eisendrath	Georges	m	Belgium-Flanders	Dept. of Educational Sciences	VUB
Mrs	Fivez	Marianne	F	Belgium-Flanders	ICOS	UAntwerpen
Prof	Flores	Sergio	m	Ecuador	Vice Rector	ESPOL
Prof	François	Luc	m	Belgium-Flanders	Former head of the University Association and of the Bureau for Educational Affairs of the UGent	UGent
Mr	Gevaert	Rudi	m	Belgium-Flanders	Technical personnel of ICT dept.	UGent
Prof	Hapanyengwi	Gilford	m	Zimbabwe	Director Computer Centre, University of Harare	UNZI
Mr	Ledant	Jean Claude	m	Belgium-Wallonia	Freelance consultant who coordinated the evaluation of 14 IUC's	CUID

Prof	Leirs	Herwig	m	Belgium-Flanders	Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Dept. of Biology	UAntwerpen
Mrs	Leroy	Christine	f	Belgium-Wallonia	Responsable des ressources documentaires	CUID
Mr	Molderez	Dirk	m	Belgium-Flanders	Counsellor at Belgian Ministry for Development Cooperation	BTC
Prof	Popkas	Larry	m	South Africa	Institutional Planner and Exec. Assistant to Rector and Vice-Chancellor	U Western Cape
Prof	Soetaert	Ronald	m	Belgium-Flanders	Dept of Education	UGent
Prof	Taigarino	Darlin	f	The Phillipines	Vice-Rector, Benguet State University	Benguet State University
Sr	Taquechel	Carlos Alberto	m	Cuba	Cooperacion Internacional	Porto, Portugal
Prof	Temmerman	Marleen	f	Flanders Belgium	Head of Dept of Gynaecology	UGent
Prof	Valcke	Martin	m	Belgium-Flanders	Head, Dept. of Educational Studies	UGent
Prof	Van Cauwenberghe	Paul	m	Belgium-Flanders	Rector	UGent
Prof	Van Cleemput	Oswald	m	Belgium-Flanders	Former member of the VLIR Bureau	UGent
Mrs	Van Heule	Kathleen	f	Belgium-Flanders	Responsible for International Relations within Europe, Central Office, HOGent	HOGent
Mrs	Van Madergem	Anne	f	Belgium-Flanders	Senior Desk Officer (South)	DGD
Prof	Van Ranst	Eric	m	Belgium-Flanders	Dept. Geology and Soil sciences	UGent

Dr	Vansteenhuyse	Klaas	m	Belgium-Flanders	Near Eastern Studies, Faculty member, International Office	University College K.H.Leuven
Prof	Vercruyse	Jozef	m	Belgium-Flanders	Head, Dept. of Animal Parasitology	UGent
Mrs	Verheylezoon	Annick	f	Belgium-Flanders	ICOS	UGent
Prof	Verleyen	Steyn	m	Belgium-Flanders	Senior Science Administrator	FWO
Mrs	Vermeiren	Marianne	f	Belgium-Flanders	ICOS	UAntwerpen
Prof	Vinckx	Magda	f	Belgium-Flanders	Head, Dept. of Marine Biology	UGent
Dr	Willems	Hans	m	Belgium-Flanders	Director, Office for Assistance to Researchers	FWO
Prof	Willems	Yves	m	Belgium-Flanders	KULeuven, ICT	KULeuven

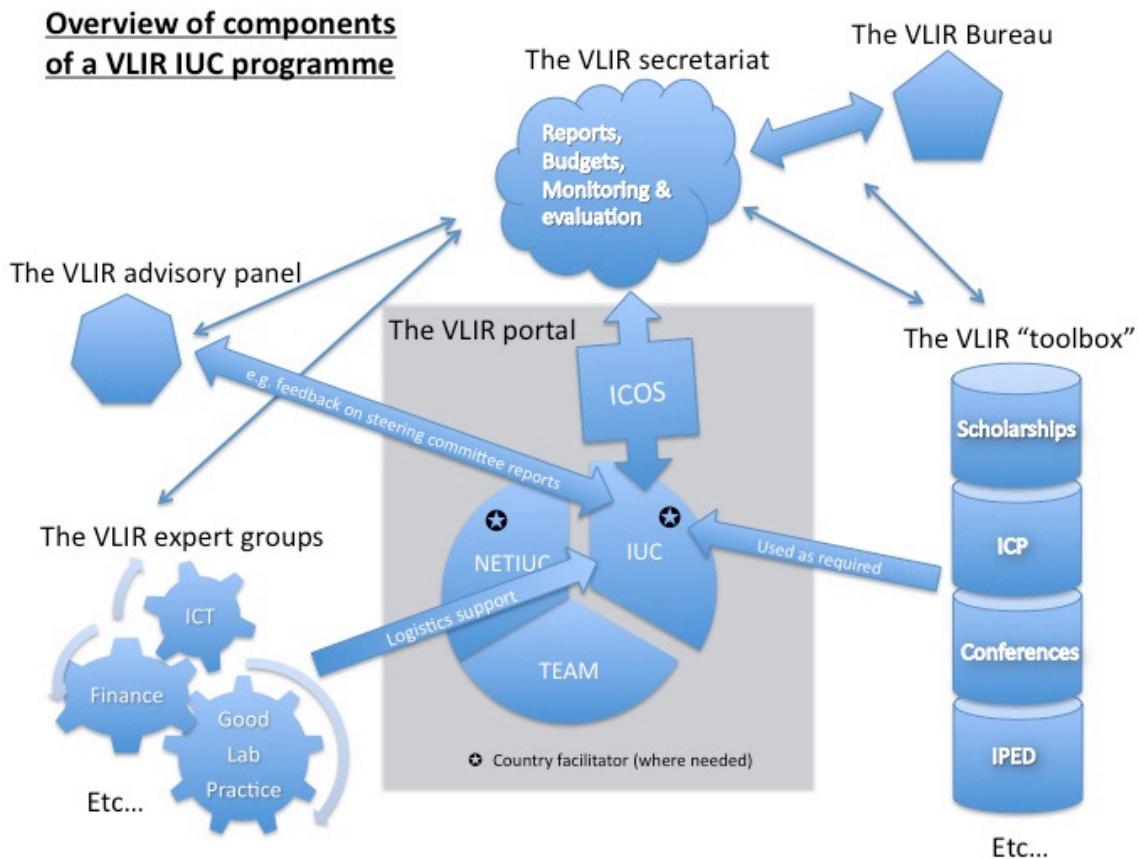
Annex 3: Think Tank No 1: SWOT exercise output

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - long term and institutional - inception & phasing out instruments - focus on the strengthening of an organization - supporting academic institutions as catalyst for regional/national development - interdisciplinary collaboration (integrated approaches) - strong pedigree in university partnerships - ownership + partnerships - comprehensive support - management of the partnership - demand driven - focus on societal change -> poverty alleviation - stronger partnership -> enhanced confidence - > improved collaboration - multi/inter-disciplinary - cooperation N-S of academics + other actors - long term and hopefully sustainable - strong management capacity in the Northern institution - promotion of partnership between N & S academics - values and principles of IUC (VLIR-UOS) - institutional not at individual level - different partners N & S - long term large budget - little overhead (aid money goes to the beneficiary) - promote sandwich method of scholarship - access to supplementary funds and initiatives - long term commitment - South actively participates in identifying areas of collaboration - partnership principle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IUC institutions can not apply for OI - dependency syndrome in Southern institutions - administrative matters “more important” than “research content” - phase out strategy should be “institutional linked” - S-S should be “mandatory” part of the IUC - fragmentation of programmes - capacity/quality/critical mass of VLIR-UOS Staff faced with new challenges - # regulations between # programmes within VLIR-UOS => need for uniform regulations - law on public expenditure -> complicated financial procedures - person related motivation - management development sub-component under HRD component/KRA - extensive bureaucracy - no funding up (for) innovative ideas - no specific strategy for addressing brain drain - sustaining research capability for Southern institutions in terms of resources difficult - planning AP deadline 30/10: too early? (internal deadline: August) How can you plan, based on current AP? - lack of mechanism to multiply lesson - not enough attention to university governance - weak institution structure - organisational/institutional development KRA / programme component - undervaluation of academic work in development cooperation (incentives, publications, etc) - staff capacity / recruitment - language skills - “equal” partnership? / ownership of the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - long term perspective - dynamic program design - long term funding - Long term cooperation - serving both academic and developmental strategic objectives - institutional involvement (top + different entities) - long term institutional collaboration (impact) 	<p>programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no experts in charge of management - changes in institutional leadership - some university groups left out / resentment to colleagues - formal demands (formats + procedures) -> time consuming for academics - bureaucratic & demanding - experience actively in contributing to development / ivory towers?
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - link with Belgian ISP & other Belgian actors - sustained cooperation S-S/N-N/N-S across borders - IUC/VLIR-UOS network - provision of adequate resources for large research projects - spin-offs + outreach - global shift of opinion on HE (now a priority area) - rare opportunities for strengthening research in science + technology in the South - strengthened collaboration with other actors (BTC, NGO, Private sector,..) and development partners - Mutually beneficial academic networking hubs N-S (+ S-S + N-S-S) - strategic partnerships for institutional and global benefits - more coordination and collaboration in the North - shorter term monitoring of performance so that changes can be made where needed - increasing opportunities for S-S-N collaboration - facilitation partnerships N-S, S-S industry institutions - joint curricula masters, PhD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes in local politics - need to reduce PP duration from 10 to 6 years - the organization and operation of other partners (from North) - changes in politics N & S - continuity in leadership - staff retention - aligning IUC aims with bilateral aid priorities - sustain the interest of Flemish interest in IUC programme - internationalization drive + ranking stress + financing - political environment (uncertainty) - little valorisation of involvement of academics IZ / OS - own contribution from collaborating partners - policy changes during implementation internal + external - hidden agenda's - economic crisis - dependency on government funding - incentives young Flemish profs - mobility of staff / staff retention - difficult to identify real demands

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create consortia, partner network (learn from EU! but only + elements) - role of VLIR-UOS for support of Postdocs, research centres, spin off - links with (i)NGO's, bilateral coop., private sector - donor coordination: don't forget US, India, China, Brazil - ≠ between partners priorities/levels/speed => tailor-made programmes? - student exchange N-S, S-N - develop networks; local / regional - joint research papers/projects - developmental impact at society level - addressing need for trained technicians in universities - involvement in QA development - context : networks / synergies / private sector - increased internet facilities - ICT for mentoring & distance learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - policy changing quickly - governmental context - political insecurities of VLIR-UOS - different interests e.g. fundamental – applied research, other? - growing demand to produce short term results - weak management capacity in some southern institutions - Paris Declaration perspective “From the point of view of Southern universities.....” - political instability within some of the institutions especially in the South - inbred = working with same people => avoid new challenges/horizons
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Annex 4. Components of a future VLIR-UOS IUC programme



a VLIR project (example for IUC)

- The grey area in the center is what the outside world sees = the project.
- Thick arrows represent the relationships the project itself sees
- The project has access to the toolbox
- The project is followed up by the International advisory panel
- The project receives logistic support from Expert groups, where appropriate
- The project communicates through the ICOS with the VLIR-sec for admin and budget control
- The VLIR-UOS Bureau selects projects and steers the VLIR-sec