

# University cooperation for development between Indonesia and Flanders (Belgium)

October 2020

Indonesia is a young partner country with an enormous potential for VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2020 VLIR-UOS spent over € 4.8 million in cooperation with Indonesia, including 10 departmental projects.

There are 5 ongoing projects (2020) in Indonesia and others are expected to be selected during the coming years. The country programme 2017-2021 for Indonesia is an **exploratory phase** aiming at motivating researchers to submit project proposals.



## Higher education as a driving force for sustainable development

Indonesia returned in 2016 to the VLIR-UOS list of partner countries -after a few years without project opportunities- because of its **enormous potential for university cooperation** and the **growing interest** of Flemish and Indonesian institutions to work together.

The Indonesia **Country Strategy** fits with the national development strategy and its focus on innovation and research as an important factor for development. This is translated in the country strategy by means of 3 central themes: **'environment'**, **'government & civil society'** and **'food security & agriculture'**. **'Gender'** and **'research support'** have been identified as crosscutting themes.

VLIR-UOS supports interventions that **strengthen higher education institutions** in their role as actor of change by improving education, research and extension of new knowledge, applications and services in various domains. This is in line with the **Joint Strategic Framework for Indonesia**, which was developed in 2016 by the Belgian Non-Governmental Actors active in Indonesia. More synergy and complementarity with other Belgian actors in Indonesia will be sought for.

## Focus on country strategic themes

TEAM and South Initiative (SI) projects are mutually reinforcing projects that aim to strengthen the research and education capacity and to bring into service this capacity to find sustainable solutions to local and global development challenges.

### Food security & agriculture

Two finalized TEAM-projects in Indonesia worked on **organic agriculture** as to improve sustainability of food production and increase food security. The research capacities of leading Indonesian research institutes were strengthened.

One project resulted in the development of **novel course material** for the Soil Science programme at the partner university. A textbook "Pertanian Organik" (Organic Farming) was produced that is used as student textbook during the lectures on organic farming. **New methods** for organic farming were developed as a result of the executed research. Farmers that were involved in a project on fertilisers, were promoting these new methods on TV. The created conditions for uptake of research results provoked a multiplier effect outside with potential impact on the lives of thousands of farmers.

### Environment

A finalized SI-project researched the impact of **deforestation** on the deterioration of **water quality** by measuring sediment loads in rivers. Deforestation has been claimed to negatively impact watershed services, which led to problems with hydropower storage lakes. This even led to violent evictions of thousands of farmers. The project with Brawijaya University developed **training materials** for members of the local water forum: farmers, civil servants and university lecturers. They were trained in assessing sediment load in water, diagnosing possible causes and discussing measures for reduction. Research results gave insight in the effect of land use on water and altered the claim that past land use negatively affected the river discharge.

### Government and civil society

A project started in 2018 focuses on education, democracy and the legacy of conflict but is still in a starting phase.



### Improved research practices

A VLIR-UOS project with the **Indonesian Soil Research Institute** focused on investing in the research capacity of the staff and developing a strategic plan on how to obtain sustainable funding. The institute had the honour to organize the **international Symposium** of the East-Southeast Asia Federation of Soil Science. The fact that the institution organised this important regional event is a proof of their **increasing international visibility** as a high quality research institute. The project played a crucial role in this.





## VLIR-UOS partnerships

VLIR-UOS projects are based on a partnership between a Flemish and Indonesian higher education institution. The goal of these partnerships is **capacity building** based on long term investments in human capital and building up networks.

Capacity building for VLIR-UOS is more than just giving a training. It is about **long term investments** in human capacities in a spirit of true partnership. By focusing on human capital, and especially by focusing on international networks of academics, VLIR-UOS interventions are by nature relatively **sustainable**. Focusing on capacity building and the building of (inter)national networks allows our partners to use expanding networks to sustainably acquire new skills and new sources of funding. This leads to both **academic** and **financial self-reliance**. Indonesian institutions learn how to find international partners, look for international funding opportunities, develop successful project proposals, implement projects, report on them, etc.



## Uptake by stakeholders

A VLIR-UOS SI-project on water quality wanted to facilitate the uptake of the research results by farmers. **Dissemination** in general used to be done in a way communication: researchers present their research results and farmers just listen. The project used insights from adult learning and made the dissemination **participatory**, for example through an interactive quiz or a guided exhibition, which was **highly appreciated** by the farmers. Researchers facilitated farmers to express and share their experiences with others and provided scientific explanation to improve farmers understanding about agriculture activity and its impact to environment. The exhibition also attracted curious schoolchildren, to whom the researcher also explained the results.



## Scholarships

Scholarships are powerful tools. It allows Indonesian students to broaden their horizon, learn to look at problems from the perspective of multiple disciplines and to grow into a skilful researcher. These students become **agents of change** by implementing the newly acquired knowledge and skills in a sustainable and development relevant way in the professional context of their country of origin. Also Flemish students spend time in an Indonesian institution and **create close ties**.



## Main elements of the country strategy for Indonesia

**Environment:** maritime sciences, natural disaster management, natural resources management (including textile), disaster mitigation, climate change, sustainable tourism, conservation, geographical hazards...

**Government & civil society:** interreligious dialogue and religion-based conflicts, decentralisation, urban and rural development, conflict and development, basic infrastructure, good governance, democratization, educational research, sustainable development...

**Food security & agriculture:** sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, fishery, food patterns...

Transversal support themes: **Gender, Research support:** scientific English, academic English, community based research, multidisciplinary research, proposals writing, statistics and data management, promotion of innovation, digitalisation of archives...

## About the country strategy

During the reform of non-governmental development cooperation in 2016, VLIR-UOS updated its list of 20 partner countries, hereby including Indonesia as a partner country. For each partner country VLIR-UOS elaborated a country strategy, to serve as a road map for cooperation going forward.

A country strategy reflects the opportunities for university cooperation for development between the country in question and Belgium/Flanders. A country strategy serves as a reference framework for programming, leading to strategy based calls for proposals.

More information:

[vliruos.be/indonesia](http://vliruos.be/indonesia)

Total budget Indonesia 2003-2020 (in €)	
Projects	€ 1.057.250
Individual scholars	€ 3.719.211
<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 4.776.461</b>

Scholars from Indonesia in the context of VLIR-UOS cooperation (2003-2019)	
PhD*	2
Short Term*	110
Study/Master*	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>

\* Only scholarships outside projects and programmes are shown; a lot of scholarships are included in projects or programmes.

In addition to Indonesian scholars coming to Belgium, 62 Belgian scholars were granted a travel grant (short term) to Indonesia. More information on the scholarships of VLIR-UOS: [www.vliruos.be/scholarships](http://www.vliruos.be/scholarships).

## About VLIR-UOS

VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between universities and university colleges in Flanders (Belgium) and the South looking for innovative responses to global and local challenges.

VLIR-UOS funds cooperation projects between professors, researchers and teachers. VLIR-UOS also awards scholarships to students and professionals in Flanders and the South. Lastly, VLIR-UOS helps to strengthen higher education in the South and the globalisation of higher education in Flanders.

VLIR-UOS is part of the Flemish Interuniversity Council and receives funding from the Belgian Development Cooperation. [www.vliruos.be](http://www.vliruos.be)

**Contact:** Annelien Gansemans,  +32 2 550 19 69,  [annelien.gansemans@vliruos.be](mailto:annelien.gansemans@vliruos.be)