

## CONCEPT NOTE FORMAT

### **Promotion of Dual System Models of Cooperative Education Universities in 6 ACP regions (Eastern Africa, Central Africa, Western Africa, Southern Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) to develop UCE models in various sectors of engineering and business administration.**

#### **1. Summary of the action**

##### *1.1 Brief description of the proposed action.*

Germany is well known worldwide for the effectiveness of its “dual” education system. Besides the traditional education at the vocational school and technical academy level, Germany has introduced dual higher education at the bachelor and master university degree level. It was first introduced some years ago in the State of Baden-Württemberg in so called Universities of Cooperative Education (UCE) and made more flexible recently in a new regulation in the State of Hessen, two German States where F+U is strongly implanted. In a dual system under an UCE, the training takes place for a half in classroom lectures and for another half in the form of practical on-the-job training activities in sponsoring companies.

Independent students as well as students sponsored by companies can be educated to the level of Bachelor or Master degrees using the “dual” system. The flexible higher education model offers various alternative splitting possibilities: Split week: 2,5 days lectures and 2,5 days practice; Alternating weeks (1 week lecture and 1 week practice); Quarterly rotation (3 months lectures and 3 months practice); Six monthly rotation (during the summer time, students can also study and train abroad).

The main objective of the proposed action is to foster the practical advance of UCE models in ACP countries. The focus of the assistance will be the strengthening of the capacity of a number of top-tiers partner Universities covering the 6 ACP regions (Eastern Africa, Central Africa, Western Africa, Southern Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) to develop UCE models in various sectors of engineering and business administration. This will be advanced through the joint development and the testing on-the-job of new adapted UCE degrees that respond to the practical need for tertiary educated labour at the interface of engineering and business.

To strengthen the link with the EU, a networked cooperation will be orchestrated with a leading not-for-profit private university group in Germany that is a unique model of excellence in advancing “labour-market oriented” UCE bachelor and master degrees in a variety of sectors in close cooperation with the industry.

The activities deployed will be “academic oriented” and essentially focus on the development and the testing of new “Dual System” curricula and the testing of the models in each partner country in a few specific sectors to be agreed upon in each country.

In terms of activities, the project will firstly explore important needs of the labour markets at the interface between engineering and business management in the six ACP regions and the implication for the desirable competences to be acquired by engineers and business administrators at the academic degree level.

In the second phase, the project will through a cooperative effort of key academics from all partners under the guidance of the German partner, brainstorm and develop advanced and adapted dual system degree bachelor and/or master degree that build on the strength of the German partner and the core higher education of the partner universities in the ACP regions.

In the third phase, the project will i) train a first batch of lecturers in Germany, ii) apply on a trial basis the dual system curricula in each of the partner universities and iii) explore the possibility of a programme of international internship by “training companies” in the participating countries.

The project will be concluded with the design of a promotion campaign for the newly established curricula to reach out to a wider circle of ACP universities that may be interested to join the network. The project is expected to last three years.

## **2. Relevance:**

2.1 *How relevant is your proposal to the needs and constraints of the target country(ies) or region?*

2.2 *What are the problems to be resolved and the needs to be met?*

2.3 *Who are the actors involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)?*

The final beneficiaries will be enterprises active in target sectors in the partner countries in each ACP region which will have access to better and practically educated professionals.

The main target group shall be students in the XX universities. Through the developed curricula and the promoted industrial internships, they will gain better understanding and practical exposure to the reality of engineering and practical business development in the target countries.

A secondary target group shall include the universities themselves and the professional lecturers who are active in these universities. They will benefit from the new curricula and the “train-the-trainer” opportunities in Europe to enhance the quality and industrial relevance of the higher education engineering cum economic degrees they are delivering.

2.4 *What are the objectives and expected results?*

The main objectives are to foster the cooperative networking between a number of ACP Universities and a leading private not-for-profit university group in Europe for the enhancement of the quality and labour orientation of the higher education through the development and testing of dual system degrees in the partner countries and regions.

The expected results include commonly developed and validated UCE degree curricula enriched by well trained trainers and the development of a concept for the promotion of industrial internships in target sectors for ACP students in Europe and/or other ACP regions.

2.5 *What is the added value of the action (what adds the action by reference to (central or local) government action and actions implemented by non state actors)?*

The project is uniquely value adding in terms of (i) reviewing and designing practical curricula in key economic sectors marrying engineering fields with business management and economics that can significantly contribute to enhanced regional economic advance and integration and (ii) encouraging academic networking between a number of top-tiers universities in the 6 ACP regions toward “labour oriented” higher education dual system degrees adapted to the needs of each participating countries.

Through the European partner involved (F+U Group), the project is also uniquely positioned to encourage greater cooperation between the academia and the business communities to ensure that trained higher education competences are immediately applicable by the productive economic sectors of the target countries.

## **3. Methodology and Sustainability:**

3.1 *What are the main project activities?*

Main project activities include the following six phases;

**A start up phase:** To establish the rules and contractual arrangement for activities, inputs, outputs, deliverables and technical and financial management and control among the partners. This phase will also include the development of an internet-based platform for information exchange, project results dissemination and project promotion.

**A diagnostic phase:** to assess the current interest of dual system based higher education in the partners universities in each of the ACP regions and define the dual system curriculum and degree to be tested in each country.

**A curriculum development phase:** to develop the curricula and the teaching modules comprising the commonalities and the country specific aspects of the dual system curricula in each target country.

**A testing phase:** to train key ACP trainers in Germany, test then the curricula in the respective target countries and assess the potential equivalence of credits that the curricula can deliver in the perspective of the ECTS Bologna process.

**A promotion phase:** to develop a strategy for wider dissemination of the dual system curricula in a wider circle of ACP universities and a conceptual programme to allow ACP students to benefit from industrial internship in relevant companies or training firms in Europe or other ACP regions.

**A closing phase:** to compile and disseminate the findings of the projects and promote the results beyond the boundary of the participating partner universities in ACP countries.

3.2 *Who will be your main implementing partners, what is the length of your relationship with them and how will they be involved in the project?*

The project consortium consists of X? partners higher education entities covering the 6 ACP regions (Eastern Africa, Central Africa, Western Africa, Southern Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific)

The European partner is the Heidelberg based F+U Group in Germany that is one of the largest private not-for-profit groups of academies and universities active across Europe and is the leading developer of dual system higher education degree in Germany and the source of several models of excellence in deploying “labour-market oriented” bachelor and master degrees in close cooperation with the industry.

Project development will be based on a networked approach with each university contributing ideas to the curricula concept based on a country need assessment and content to the “common” and “country specific” elements of the developed curricula. Frequent exchange between partners will ensure that the resulting validated curricula represent a common ground toward joint curricula development across the partners.

3.3 *How will the project achieve sustainability?*

The completed training modules after adequate review and approval by the academics boards of each university will be integrated in the academic curricula of each institution.

The experience of the assisted train-the-trainer effort in Germany and its impact will serve as basis for exploring further duplication of joint courses between the partner F+U and ACP universities on a cost recovery basis. The conceptual programme for industrial internship in Europe for ACP students under the F+U leadership will serve as basis for exploring the deployment of comparable systems in several other ACP countries.

3.4 *Will it have multiplier effects?*

The experience gained in the project will be disseminated through participation at seminars, a project brochure and information posted on the project website. This is expected to stimulate a multiplier effects within a wider circle of ACP countries.

#### **4. Expertise and operational capacity:**

*Please describe the following:*

4.1 *What is the experience of your organisation in project management?*

4.2 *What is the experience of your organisation and your partner(s) of the issues to be addressed?*