



BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI
INSTITUTIONAL REGIONAL STRATEGY

FEBRUARY, 2022

A. Rationale

Over the years, Benue State University has been creating profound impact within Africa and beyond through high quality research and graduates working in various spheres of life. Be that as it may, there has been no tailored regional strategy to deliberately impact Africa through enhanced quality of education and skilled manpower. The 2010-2015 and 2016-2020 strategic plans of the University were well conceived and crafted. The process through which they were drawn up, met all the classical requirements of an inclusive and participatory design for an institutional strategic plan.

The current University Strategic plan 2021 – 2025 draws from the successes and challenges in the previous plans. This Institutional Regional Strategy is designed to advance the goals of the current University Strategic Plan which has outlined University's major strengths and key development initiatives as follows:

Major Strengths:

- i. High quality and diverse academic programmes of broad appeal to market
- ii. Qualified, experienced and dedicated staff
- iii. An excellent relationship between staff and student body
- iv. Willingness by University Management, Governing Council and sponsoring government to continue to support the University's quest for excellence
- v. Strategic locations in state capital and Middle-Belt zone
- vi. Firm control over admission explosion
- vii. Peace loving and enthusiastic student body
- viii. Responsive, accountable and transparent leadership in resource utilization
- ix. Expansive land for expansion (outside the existing box)
- x. The abundance of agricultural raw materials

Key Development Initiatives

- i. Expansion of carrying capacity
- ii. Development and strengthening of undergraduate learning
- iii. Strengthening postgraduate learning and research
- iv. Recruitment, retention and development of competent academic staff
- v. Promotion of development-oriented research and learning
- vi. Promotion of a conducive learning environment
- vii. Development of a vibrant Information and Communication Technology Centre
- viii. Library and information services to facilitate teaching, learning, research, general administration and global outreach
- ix. Resource mobilization and utilization
- x. Strengthening the internal administration for effective and result oriented delivery
- xi. Strengthening of public engagement plan for University to remain relevant to society

- xii. Development of a vibrant Centre of Entrepreneurial Programme
- xiii. Promotion of excellence in science and technology
- xiv. Upgrading and development of new physical infrastructure to support quest for academic excellence
- xv. Provision of basic utilities, equipment and maintenance to facilitate quest for academic excellence
- xvi. Engagement of the private sector to participate in physical infrastructural development via BOT arrangement
- xvii. Ensuring physical planning of University
- xviii. Ensuring security of lives and property

The previous University Strategic Plans provided an excellent stepping-stone for the present plan, which this Institutional Regional Strategy is to compliment. This Strategy is designed to specifically meet one of the priority areas of the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan of the University which is “Internationalisation of students and academic staff”. The overall target of this Strategy is to meet the ACE Impact goal to enhance quality of education and manpower in the region.

B. Implementation Team

The Institutional Regional Strategy Team was constituted on the approval of the Vice Chancellor to:

- i) Develop a regional strategy for the Institution aimed at impacting the region through:
 - a. Offer of scholarships to citizens to study in the University;
 - b. Staff/students exchange programs, research collaboration and other relevant ideas that will cause academic impact in the region.
- ii) To consider ancillary matters that may be useful to the success of the assignment.

This document is therefore a product of the Team’s arduous work.

The Implementation Team includes:

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|---|-------------|
| i. | Professor Charity Angya | - | Chairperson |
| ii. | Dr. Terungwa Azende | - | Member |
| iii. | Hon. Mrs. Sarah Mkeryi Amahson | - | Member |
| iv. | Dr. Usman Karim | - | Member |
| v. | Dr. Shadrach Teryila Ukuma | - | Secretary |

C. The Institutional Regional Strategy

This Institutional Regional Strategy document is consistent with the Vision and Mission of Benue State University and all aspects of this document are planned to compliment and advance the Vision and Mission as reproduced below:

Vision

To be the university of first choice in Nigeria and Africa and among the top 200 in the world

Mission

To be a Centre of Excellence in creating knowledge and developing a complete person who is capable of not only responding to the cultural, social, political and economic needs of the environment but also setting the agenda for change

Core Values

- The following core values constitute the University's philosophy and therefore shape its policy and strategy:
- Excellence in research
- Placing the latest knowledge at the disposal of students via teaching and skills development
- Effective engagement with all relevant communities
- Excellence in inculcation of moral values
- To use education as a tool for people's liberation, the University strives to hold itself up as the lamp of the world by upholding moral rectitude, integrity and accountability in all its transactions with its stakeholders.

1. Current Context for Regional Engagement

Benue State University was established by the Benue State Government with the enactment of the Benue State University Edict No. 1 of 1991.

The University took off in the 1992/93 academic year with four faculties, namely, Arts, Education, Science and Social Sciences. Two Faculties, Law and Management Sciences came on stream in the 1993/94 academic year with the Faculty of Environmental Sciences in the 2014/2015 academic Session. The postgraduate school took off in the 1998/1999 academic year while the College of Health Sciences was established in the 2003/2004 academic session.

Benue State University, Makurdi is one out of ten (10) Africa Centres Excellence (ACE) in Nigeria and one out of eighteen (18) such Centres in West and Central Africa Sub-region. Benue State University, Makurdi won this World Bank grant after a stiff competition involving more than 100 Universities in this Sub-region. Through the support

of the World Bank, the Benue State University has established the Africa Centre of Excellence for Food Technology and Research (CEFTER). Through the project, Students in supported institutions and their partner institutions from across West and Central Africa have benefitted and still benefitting from quality research-based education which is in high demand.

In addition, the University has also been at the forefront of institutional software development in Nigeria. Recently, the Software Development Team of the University led a group of developers across Nigeria to develop a home-based Plagiarism Detection System for Nigerian Universities. The project named *EagleScan* is a brainchild of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities. When this idea was conceived by the Committee, Benue State University took the bull by the horn by deploying her Software Development Team to play a lead role in developing the platform. Today, the platform is been used across entire Universities in Nigeria.

Also, the ranking of Benue State University has been progressive. Over the years, the University has carved out a niche for herself globally. Currently, Benue State University is ranked 1st in Benue State, 36th in Nigeria, 196th in Africa and 6, 449th in the World 2021 overall rankings. EduRank's ranking for Benue State University is based on three factors: *research performance, non-academic reputation, and the impact of notable alumni*.

The Nigerian Universities Commission 2021 also ranked the Universities in Nigeria based on the various factors which include their *adaptability and compliance to the latest development in technology, teaching techniques, employment of experts in various fields*. Going by this ranking, The Benue State University ranked 81st with a total of 41.86 points out of 170 Universities in the Country. The highlight here is that the University has consistently been in the top half of rankings in the Country.

Awards and Honours

Being the first State owned university in Northern Nigeria, Benue State University has continued to stay in the top league of universities offering excellent research and manpower training in Nigeria. The efforts over the years have been rewarding and equally recognised as highlighted below.

The Nigeria Universities Commission in 2004 recognised Benue State University as the Best State University in Nigeria.

Benue State University competed with over 100 Universities in Nigeria and won the World Bank Africa Centre of Excellence and now hosts the Centre for Food Technology and Research (CEFTER). This speaks to the academic quality at the University. This Centre is also already making significant impact in the region.

In 2011, the Benue State University team of the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), a global social entrepreneurship organization now known as *enactus*, won the National Competition to represent Nigeria at the World Cup Competition in Malaysia.

Students of the Law Faculty of the University also contested and the following competitions: Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition, Simon Cooper Advocacy Competition and International Children's Rights Moot Court Competition in 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively.

Various academics have won several awards and other distinguished recognitions to the credit and good name of Benue State University.

1. The Regional Strategy

One of our major strategic steps is to impact Africa especially in the area of quality education.

The strategy shall cover specific areas like scholarships, teaching and learning, and research collaborations and partnerships.

a) Scholarships:

Presently there has been undergraduate scholarship for local students as well as scholarship for staff pursuing higher degrees.

Our strategy is to scale up scholarship to cover all categories of students within the region.

b) Teaching and Learning:

There are few staff and students exchange programmes which have not been adequately utilized.

Our strategy is to do a rigorous sensitization with a view to enhancing appreciation of the value of these exchange programmes.

We shall also have enabling support initiatives for those who may wish to take advantage of the exchanges but have challenges.

Staff exchange within the region should be pursued where financial implications allow. An enhanced digital learning environment will also be explored where some of the staff exchanges can take place online.

c) Research Collaborations and Partnerships:

Collaborations have been mostly intra-disciplinary as well as intra-university (i.e. amongst colleagues within the University).

Our strategy is to enhance interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research collaborations as well as regional collaborations.

2. Time frame:

This regional strategy covers a time frame of five years to be reviewed every two years. This means the implantation of this Strategy shall commence from 2022 to 2027 with reviews at the end of 2024 and 2026.

3. Institutional Regional Strategy Framework

S/no.	Specific Area of Concentration	Current Situation	Expected Actions
1	Teaching capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student-lecturer ratio at undergraduate level is not yet standardized - teaching facilities need upgrade - quality of supervision also need improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve student-lecturer ratio - improve teaching facilities. - enhance quality of supervision - involve regional faculty in teaching
2	Research collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local collaboration among faculty members - collaboration at level of disciplines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regional as well as global collaboration - interdisciplinary collaborations
3	Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoU with Wilberforce University, Ohio, USA - MoU with University of Georgia, Athens, USA - Society for Peace Studies and Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to increase partnerships with regional and global academic institutions as well as professional bodies - increase partnerships with non-academic partnerships NGOs, the Private and Public Sectors including Foreign Missions
4	Outreach & communication strategies	<p>The University has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BSU radio station - Information/Public Relations Unit - a functional website - a newsletter - outreach efforts like the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFES) now ENACTUS Nigeria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to structure and modernize our communication and outreaches aimed at telling the Benue State University story. - develop and deploy internet radio - establish social media presence to attract regional students and faculty - ensure regular print and electronic publication of related issues in BSU Newsletter - integrate activities of relevant units onto the University website for ease of access
5	Student recruitment & retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - students are mainly recruited locally; mostly within the state - few are recruited for other states within Nigeria and few from bordering countries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - step up recruitment from other African countries and even beyond - improve conditions like stability of academic calendar aimed at enhancing retention of students. - encourage online processing result and transcript for easy access to improve student retention. - ensure gender parity.
6	Faculty recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - faculty members are mainly recruited within the country; there are some international staff including visiting faculty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - step up recruitment of staff from the region based on areas of need - ensure gender parity.

7	Staff exchange	- staff exchanges with St. Margaret college London.	- step up staff exchanges with regional institutions. - encourage sabbaticals from regional institutions.
8	Digital teaching	- Digital teaching facility not deployed	- enhance existing digital infrastructure - build capacity of staff for online teaching - encourage migration to hybrid teaching - encourage virtual defences and presentations - encourage online processing result and transcript for easy access.
9	Industry engagement	- SIWES (Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme) - engagement of Agro-allied industries in the area of post harvest loses. - capacity building training for teachers for State Universal Basic Education Board - consultancies to donor bodies, government, private sector and NGOs.	- expand the SIWES to cover non-participating departments - curriculum development to suit industry requirement - step up university consultancy services for regional reach.
10	Alumni affairs	- existence of BSU Alumni Association	- create a more enabling environment for students and alumni to tell the BSU story - Alumni involvement in student recruitment at regional level. - adequate training of Alumni to contribute to the University vision - recognize outstanding alumni

4. Outcomes:

The regional strategy document envisages the following outcomes:

- i) Improved ranking
- ii) Improved visibility by publishing in high impact journals
- iii) Improved employability
- iv) Increase in patented research
- v) Improved students performance
- vi) Improved Student enrolment and retention
- vii) Enhanced university-industry collaboration
- viii) Increased visibility of women in STEM related areas as students and faculty
- ix) Developed critical mass of quality faculty
- x) More grants attracted to the university

xi) Enhanced regional collaboration

5. Priority Countries:

The Regional Strategy Document targets the Continent. However, priority will be given countries in West, Central and East Africa. Issues of language barrier shall be given consideration.

6. Priority Topics:

The University research priority areas within the life span of this strategy document include broad based topics that are multi-disciplinary even though researchers are free to self-fund their individual research interests which are outside the University priority areas. The priority research topics include:

- i. **Agriculture and Food Sciences:** emphasis under this topic shall be laid on value addition to food crops and fortified food products. Researches on techniques that will reduce post-harvest losses and prolong the shelf-life of food products shall be deliberately targeted to contribute to the global agenda on Zero Hunger.
- ii. **Arts, Culture and Gender:** this shall cover social relations, poetry, the performing arts, literature, religious and cultural ideals, gender perceptions, treatment of people in the context of gender relations, ideologies and challenges in order to contribute to the SDG targets under Gender Equality.
- iii. **Communication and Information Systems:** research in media and communication is prioritised. Research on the public relations and development communication shall be encouraged. This will include behavioural change communication.
- iv. **Crisis Management, Peacebuilding and Environmental Resource Management:** There are several conflict issues within the region and these have attendant consequences on various aspects on the global agenda for sustainable development. Research in conflict management, disaster management, peacebuilding and environmental protection shall be encouraged. Efforts towards contributing to the SDG targets on strong institutions, peacebuilding, migration and displacement, life under water, life on land, clean energy and so on shall be supported.
- v. **Health and Health Systems:** The University shall encourage researches that strengthen health systems within the region. Focus will be on researches that enhance citizens' access to affordable, integrated and high-value healthcare. Collaborations between health care, public health, social services and indigenous approaches to address many factors which affect health and wellbeing shall be encouraged.
- vi. **Education and Education Systems:** The University will focus and support research that target to improve quality of education in the region as well as positional educational systems to produce highly skilled manpower. Emphasis will be placed on how the researches translate to character formation, development of skills for employment, poverty reduction and inclusion of the disadvantaged and underserved populations.
- vii. **Governance, The Law and Sustainable Development:** political systems and governance in the region are very critical in the advancement of the sustainable development agenda in the region. Questions of ethics, integrity, professionalism. Democracy, economic development,

empowerment and poverty reduction will be given attention. Modern challenges to legal and regulatory matters in the changing social contexts in the region and the global dimension to issues of intellectual property, human and civil rights, criminal justice, social and economic justice, environmental justice, minority rights and all forms of equality and discriminations and dispute resolution mechanisms will be given attention.

- viii. Knowledge Economy and Human Resource Development: the University shall target develop skilled manpower for the overall development of the region. Researches on the knowledge economy base of the region as well as developing the requisite manpower with the right skill set for the various development sectors in the region will be prioritized.
- ix. Science, Technology and Engineering: the University will support and promote researchers in Science, Engineering and Technology that contributes to the development of the region. Such researches may include aspects of Biological, Chemical, Physical, the Earth/Space sciences and related fields. New dimensions in science and technology that relate to renewable energy as well as applied areas of communication, manufacturing, learning, data science and transportation shall be prioritized.

7. Non-Academic Partnerships:

By this regional strategy plan, the University and her Faculties/Centres shall build partnerships with accrediting bodies for patenting researches in the region and beyond. Such partnerships shall see regional collaboration on common research themes that address critical issues within the region.

The Universities shall also engage with funding agencies to enhance publications in high impact agencies as well as other relevant areas of research communication beyond academic audiences.

Partnerships with NGOs, Private and Public Sectors including Foreign Missions will be pursued with a view to enhancing Institution-Industry collaborations. Such partnerships can see to annual pitching fairs in Science, Engineering and Technology as well as the Arts and Culture.

8. Required Resources:

This includes but not limited to all facilities, all staff, equipment, materials, expertise, information and confidential information of the University. Where specific finances are required, same shall be applied for following normal procedures of the University.

9. Structure for Implementation of Document

The Institutional Regional Strategy Team headed by the Chairperson shall be responsible for the implementation of the Strategy. The Deputy Director, Quality Assurance shall be the direct officer responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation.

10. Scholarships:

The strategy is to open up scholarships with a target of awarding up to 15 Scholarships in the region and 10 scholarships locally within the initial five (5) year period of implementation. This scholarship targeting regional impact shall be concentrated on postgraduate studies. The other scholarship schemes supporting undergraduate studies will continue and where possible scaled-up. The Scholarship so awarded by the University shall cover Tuition, Accommodation and a monthly stipend of Fifty Thousand Naira (N50,000) for the PhD Students and Forty Thousand Naira (N40,000) for the Masters

students. The scholarship will also include an economy class return ticket for the regional (non Nigerian nationals) students so awarded. Where the University attracts any scholarship grant, implantation will be based on the guidelines of the grantors. The award of scholarships shall necessarily take into consideration the concerns of gender parity particularly in STEM related subjects.

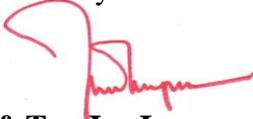
11. Training:

All units relevant to the implementation of the regional strategy plan shall undergo a capacity building training to enable them function properly for the achievement of the set targets in the regional strategy. Specifically, a communications officer from the Information Unit shall be trained to handle outreach and communication issues within the scope of the regional strategy. A registry staff shall also be trained in the area of research management, collaborations and partnerships

D. Conclusion:

This Benue State University Institutional Regional Strategy is designed to deepen the impact of the University within the region in line with the ACE Regional Impact expectations. The carefully thought out ideas are only to the extent of advancing the vision of the University with particular attention to regional impact. Deliberate steps must be taken in the implementation of strategic action points in order to achieve the desired outcomes outlined.

Endorsed by:



Prof. Tor Joe Iorapuu, KSM, FSONTA
Vice Chancellor