



BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI

INSTITUTIONAL REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR DELIVERY OF APPLIED RESEARCH

AUGUST, 2022

A. BRIEF BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY

Benue State University was established by the Benue State Government with the enactment of the Benue State University Edict No. 1 of 1991. Over the years, Benue State University has been steadily making an impact within Africa and beyond through high quality research and graduates working in various spheres of life. The Nigeria Universities Commission in 2004 recognised Benue State University as the “Best State University” in Nigeria. Be that as it may, there has been no tailored regional strategy to deliberately impact Africa through enhanced quality of education and skilled manpower. This established the need for this Regional Strategy.

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 addition, the University has also been at the forefront of institutional software development in Nigeria. Recently, the Software Development Team of the University led efforts in Nigeria to develop a home-based Plagiarism Detection System for Nigerian Universities named *EagleScan*, a brainchild of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities. Benue State University deployed her Software Development Team to play the lead role in developing this platform, which is being used across Universities in Nigeria.

Also, the ranking of Benue State University has been progressive. According to EduRank (<https://www.edurank.org>), Benue State University ranks 36th out of 157 universities in Nigeria and 189 out of 1,104 universities in Africa. EduRank's ranking for Benue State University is based on three factors: research performance, non-academic reputation, and the impact of notable alumni.

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.

B. IMPLEMENTATION TEAM AND TIMEFRAME OF REGIONAL STRATEGY

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 regional students 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.

The Implementation Team includes:

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| 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 |

The Team has set a mandate for monthly meetings with the understanding that situations may arise for emergency meetings. The Deputy Director, Quality Assurance shall be the direct officer responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation. 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.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Benue State University, Makurdi hosts 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 are still benefitting from quality research-based education. Private sector interests in the region are also benefitting from the outcomes of researches at the Centre communicated in journals and through public events such as the biennial West and Central Africa Post Harvest Congress and Exhibition.

In 2014, Benue State University developed a strategy to engage with international and regional institutions of higher learning with focus on research partnership, Faculty exchange and increase in non-national student numbers. To achieve this, the university sent delegations of very senior Faculty members to Ghana, Kenya, Denmark, Cameroon, Hungary, UK, USA and The Gambia. The teams engaged top University Management and education policy makers in the stated countries and sought collaborations in the areas of joint research/training, Faculty exchange and regional student recruitment. Some top management officials also visited the embassies of Liberia, Sierra Leon and Zambia in Nigeria.

The interactions led to several MoUs that have yielded huge successes some of which include:

- i) Institution of the a Lecture Series with the University of Georgia, USA
- ii) Review of Curriculum by experts at the Liverpool John Moore University, UK
- iii) Training of Faculty members on Effective Postgraduate Supervision and Innovative University Learning by the University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- iv) Engagement of Benue State University by the ministry of Higher Education, The Gambia to train 10 of their staff at Masters Level and 2 at PhD level
- v) Joint implementation of two research projects between Benue State University and University of Greenwich, UK. The projects are
 - a. Food and Nutrition Security valued at £7 Million
 - b. Cassava bag for Garri valued at £35,000

- vi) Award of 1 PhD Scholarship to Benue State University staff at the University of Greenwich, UK
- vii) Contribution to course delivery by 5 professors from the University of Greenwich
- viii) Training of 7 academics at the University of Uganda in grant proposal writing and management
- ix) Training of 5 Benue State University staff in monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- x) Participation of the University at the All Africa Postharvest Congress in Kenya and Ethiopia
- xi) Training of displaced Cameroonians on basic food hygiene and safety, and food processing
- xii) Obtaining international accreditation in three programs

On the overall, the University was able to increase the number of non-national students from under five in 2015 to about 55 in 2022. These students come from Ghana, Liberia, Cameroon and the Gambia. The number of faculty visits to the University has also increased and the number of foreign Faculty has increased by 7 with participants from the UK, India, Brazil, Malaysia and Cameroon. The University has presently awarded 7 scholarships to Masters and PhD indigent students from Cameroon.

The University plans to maintain the on-going collaborations and seek more partnership on joint research and to expand more into Central and West Africa sub regions. This will be done through aggressive student recruitment, strategic Memoranda of Understandings, and implementation of more joint research projects in the region. The University will offer support to institutions of higher learning through Faculty exchange leveraged on existing linkages and support frameworks.

D. DETAILS OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Stakeholder consultations were carried out at the internal and external levels. Faculty members and administrative staff of the University were consulted through a questionnaire and phone calls. Results from the questionnaire administered on internal stakeholders indicate that 40.2% are in favour of the objective on “delivery of applied research”, 38.5% considered the “Training and Development” objective as focus area for regional impact while 21.4% think the focus should be on “Academic Partnership”. Opinions from private sector stakeholders were also sought for both within and outside Nigeria through questionnaire and

phone calls. Respondents were from the sectors of agriculture and food science, health and health systems, communication and information systems, science, technology and engineering, education, humanitarian service, power, and business administration. A desk review of the report on an earlier workshop on curriculum development held in January 2022 was also done. The result of the analysis of the opinions sampled informed the objectives and activities outlined in this Regional Strategy.

E. SWOT ANALYSIS

Analysis of Benue State University's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats was done to inform the design of action plan. Activities in this Regional Strategy to be implemented are based on capacity as reflected in the annexed SWOT table (see Annexure 1)

F. REGIONAL VISION OF THE INSTITUTION

Benue State University has a vision "to be the university of first choice in Nigeria and Africa and among the top 200 in the world. The mission is 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". In this Regional Strategy, the following outcomes are envisaged for the next 5-10 years: improved ranking and reputation in the Region, improved visibility by publishing in high impact journals, improved employability of students from the University through strategic university-industry relations, increase in patented research, improved students' performance, improved student enrolment and retention, enhanced university-industry collaboration, increased visibility of women in STEM related areas as students and faculty, developed critical mass of quality faculty, increased grants attracted to the University, improved regional collaboration and joint researches. These outcomes will cut across the Universities engagement in the region including regional manpower development and training.

G. REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

The overall target of this Strategy is to meet the ACE Impact goal to enhance quality of education and manpower in the region. To achieve the regional vision and mission, this Regional Strategy is therefore linked to the following key development initiatives in the Strategic Plan:

- i. Expansion of carrying capacity: new undergraduate, masters and PhD programmes to be mounted in line with Policy Goals 1, 2 and 3 in the Strategic Plan (pp. 55-65). The Regional Strategy will ensure the deliberate targeting of regional students and industry needs. The Centre for Open and Distance Learning will also be leverage to enhance reach and accessibility to quality training.
- ii. Development and strengthening of undergraduate learning: curricular strengthening to reflect regional industrial needs in order to attract regional students and also produce manpower that is relevant to regional industrial needs.
- iii. Strengthening postgraduate learning and research: Strategic Plan contains Policy Goal 3 (pp. 62-65) with specific mention of partnerships, scholarships, new programmes, industry-relevant researches as the specific objectives. This Regional Strategy will target recruitment of and collaboration with international faculty for postgraduate teaching and supervision, workshops and conferences for postgraduate students and their supervisors in the region. Regional Scholarships for indigent and exceptional students will also be offered. The Centre for Open and Distance Learning will be leveraged for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC).
- iv. Recruitment, retention and development of competent academic staff: a deliberate focus on regional spread in line with Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan (page 66).
- v. Promotion of development-oriented research and learning: regional university-industry collaborations will be the key driver for this. Short courses for industry workers and executives will also be mounted to enhance quality of service delivery in the region. The University Strategic Plan (page 69) provides for dedication of 5% of IGR to research funding. The Regional Strategy is to ensure the mainstreaming of regional research focus in the allocation of these funds.
- vi. Promotion of a conducive learning environment: A Support Centre for International Students will be established, provision to be made for hostels and other facilities for regional students

- vii. Development of a vibrant Information and Communication Technology Centre: this will include e-learning platforms to enhance blended learning and international faculty participation
- viii. Library and information services to facilitate teaching, learning, research, general administration and global outreach: the e-library resources will be up-scaled to include more subscriptions to critical databases with relevance to regional needs
- ix. Resource mobilization and utilization: university-industry collaboration will target endowment of research funds for regional needs. There is also a Law on contribution of 1% of Local Government revenues to the University (Strategic Plan page 81). The Regional Strategy will mainstream consideration for regional objectives in the allocation of these funds.
- x. Strengthening the internal administration for effective and result oriented delivery: 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.
- xi. Strengthening of public engagement plan for University to remain relevant to society: collaboration with regional non-academic institutions for strengthening industry relevant research and public engagements on topical issues in the region.
- xii. Development of a vibrant Centre of Entrepreneurial Programme: This Centre will build manpower in the region and enhance the capacity of regional industrialists through short courses.
- xiii. Promotion of excellence in science and technology: regional focus will be on award of scholarships to exceptional students and the showcasing of exceptional talents and research breakthrough at Regional Science and Technology fairs.

H. ACTION PLAN, TIMELINES AND FUNDING

To achieve the above regional objectives, the following action plan shall be implemented in the region:

Regional Goals	Objectives (Link to University Strategy)	Activities	Baseline	Target	Deliverables	Timeline	Vision in the Region (5 - 10 years)	Budget (\$)/Annum	Funding	Partner Institutions to Achieve Set Goals
				2022 - 2027						
Delivery of Applied Research for Regional Development	Incentivize research and publications (5.2.5 Goal 5: Promotion of Development-Oriented Research and Learning)	Provide Platform subscription of eBook resources for Student and Staff	Nine (9) databases annually domiciled on the virtual library portal.	Increase faculty access to research and publication activities	Increased attendance of Seminar/Workshop	2022 – 2027	Subscription to fifteen (15) databases	10,000.00	Industry (Private Sector), Benue State University, Project partners	1. University of Agriculture, Makurdi, 2. Akperan Orshi College of Agriculture, Yandev 3. Seraph Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 4. Mikap Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 5. Benue State University, Makurdi. 6. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) 7. University of Cape Coast, Ghana 8. Partnership for Africa Social and Governance Research (PASGR) 9. African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), 10. The Open University (OU), UK, 11. Institute of Education Technology (IET) and 12. Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) 12. University of the Gambia, the Gambia 13. University of Bangui, Central Africa Republic 14. University of Yaoundé, Cameroon
		Sponsorship of regional Seminar/Workshop attendance	25 participants/Annum	50% increase in attendance of Seminar/Workshop			Sponsorship of two hundred (200) participants across the region in different area of study	24,700.00		
	Increase Master's and PhD Students (5.2.3 Goal 3: Strengthening postgraduate learning and research)	Develop new Masters/PhD programmes for regional impact	200 Postgraduate programmes	10% increase in Masters/PhD programmes for regional impact	Increased Masters and PhD programmes for regional impact	2022 - 2027	Develop twenty (20) more Masters/PhD programmes for regional impact	15,000.00	Benue State University	1. Benue State University, Makurdi. 2. The German Academic Exchange Service 3. University of the Gambia, the Gambia 4. University of Bangui, Central Africa Republic 5. University of Yaoundé, Cameroon 6. University of Cape Coast, Ghana
		Recruitment and offer Scholarship to indigent and exceptional, regional applicants with consideration of gender inclusivity	7 students / Session	50% increase in student admission	Increased student admission		Scholarship for fifty (50) regional students	20,000.00		

		Provide Visa Support and airport pickup of regional applicants	7 students / Session	50% increase in student admission	Increased student admission		Provide Visa Support and airport pickup of twenty (20) regional students	5,000.00		
	Enhance capacities of faculty/PG Students in training (5.2.3 Goal 3: Strengthening postgraduate learning and research, 5.2.4 Goal 4: Recruitment, retention, and development of competent academic staff & 5.2.6 Goal 6: Promotion of a Conducive-learning environment)	Organise annual training and capacity building of students through workshops towards Applied Research for sustainable development.	1 Workshop / Session	100% increase in research publication	Increased research and publication activities	2022 - 2027	Organize ten (10) workshops	10,000.00	Industry (Private Sector), Benue State University, Project partners	1. University of Agriculture, Makurdi, 2. Akperan Orshi College of Agriculture, Yandev 3. Seraph Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 4. Mikap Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 5. Benue State University, Makurdi.6. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), 7. Songhai Farm, Benin Republic 8. Grand Cereals Limited 9. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) 10. University of Cape Coast, Ghana
		Sponsor Research and Publication in relevant journals by staff, and students	10 Research sponsorship / Session	30% increase in research and publication	Dissemination of ideas, innovations and techniques amongst stakeholders.		Sponsorship of seventy five (75) research and publication in different areas of study	26,000.00		

	Ensure quality staff for enhanced academic performance and research (5.2.4 Goal 4: Recruitment, retention, and development of competent academic staff)	participation at and Organization of conferences/ seminar for presentation of research results	1 conference biannually and 1 seminar per session	100% increase in organization of conference and seminar	Increased organization of conference and seminar	2022 - 2027	Organization of ten (10) conferences and seminar	100,000.00	Industry (Private Sector), Benue State University, Project partners	1. University of Agriculture, Makurdi, 2. Akperan Orshi College of Agriculture, Yandev 3. Seraph Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 4. Mikap Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 5. Benue State University, Makurdi.6. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), 7. Songhai Farms, Benin Republic 8. Grand Cereals Limited 9. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) 10. University of Cape Coast, Ghana 11. University of the Gambia, the Gambia 12. University of Bangui, Central Africa Republic 13. University of Yaoundé, Cameroon
		Participation of conferences/ seminar	25 conference sponsorship and 40 seminar sponsorship per session	10% increase in sponsorship to conferences and seminar	Increased sponsorship of conferences and seminar		Sponsorship of One hundred and twenty five (125) participants at conferences/ Seminars	53,200.00		
		Provide financial incentives for collaborative work among the faculty	Five (5) collaborative work among faculty	25% increase in collaborative research and publications within the region	Increased collaborative research and publications within the region		Thirty (30) collaborative work	24,000.00		

		Provide external mandates for collaborative work (establishing accreditation standards around collaboration)	Nil	25% increase in research and development of new technologies and patents	Increased research, development and patent of new technologies		Develop and patent fifteen new technologies	16,000.00		
	Ensure Faculty/students exchanges with other research and non-academic institutions in the region (5.2.3 Goal 3: Strengthening postgraduate learning and research, 5.2.8 Goal 8: Resource mobilization and utilization)	Sign MoUs with relevant institutions, Develop improved academic curriculum, Distance Learning, Programmes, Massive Open Online Course	10 improved academic curriculum, Number of MoUs signed and Faculty/Student Exchanges	50% increase in the University student admission as a result of reviewed and improved academic curriculum	Increased student admission	2022 - 2027	Develop five (5) more improved academic curriculum for regional impact	23,000.00	Industry (Private Sector), Benue State University, Project partners	1. University of Agriculture, Makurdi, 2. Akperan Orshi College of Agriculture, Yandev 3. Seraph Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 4. Mikap Nigeria Limited, Makurdi, 5. Benue State University, Makurdi.6. Songhai Farms, Benin Republic 7. Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) 8. University of Cape Coast, Ghana 9. University of the Gambia, the Gambia 10. University of Bangui, Central Africa Republic 11. University of Yaoundé, Cameroon
		Sign MoU with regional partner research institutions	Nil	Improved university ranking and status,	Increased student admission		Sign ten (10) MoU with regional partner research institutions	2,000.00		
		Develop Short Term regional Courses	10 Short Term regional Courses	20% increase in Short Term regional Courses	Increased Short Term regional Courses		Develop ten (10) Short Term regional Courses	20,000.00		

		Joint Research	Five (5) joint research in the region	25% increase in joint research	Increased collaborative research and publications within the region		Thirty (30) collaborative work	26,100.00		
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I. PRIORITY COUNTRIES

The Regional Strategy targets the West and Central African Region. However, priority will be given five (5) countries including Ghana, The Gambia, Benin Republic, Cameroon and Central African Republic.

J. PRIORITY TOPICS

For the purpose of regional objectives, this Regional Strategy shall prioritize the following topics: Agriculture, Health and Health Systems, Communication and Information Systems, Science, Technology and Engineering.

K. 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.

L. REQUIRED RESOURCES

This includes but not limited to all facilities, all staff, equipment, materials, expertise, information and confidential information of the University. The Strategic Plan of the University provides for expansion, improvement and acquisition of physical, human and financial resources. The Regional Strategy will leverage these resources for specific regional objectives. A physical structure will be provided for regional activities including students support services, communication unit and general administration. The regional action plan

also has a budgetary component which will be applied for following normal financial procedures of the University.

M. 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

ANNEXURE 1 – SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT ANALYSIS	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>1 High quality and diversity of the academic programme</p> <p>2 Qualified, experienced, and committed staff ready to place their expertise in the services of the region</p> <p>3 A strategic geopolitical location</p> <p>4 A committed leadership</p> <p>5 A friendly and supportive sponsor – The Benue State Government</p> <p>6 Well-trained academic and non-academic staff</p> <p>7 Availability of University capacity development policy programs</p> <p>8 A highly rated College of Health science</p> <p>9 An ICT unit subscribed to NG-REN (NUC) with a well-equipped language laboratory with translators</p> <p>10 An equipped information and communication unit with its own radio station for dissemination of information across the state</p> <p>11 Committed academic and non-academic partners</p> <p>12 Committed research institutional partnerships</p> <p>13 Quality assurance unit for monitoring and evaluation of programs and academic activities</p> <p>14 Good learning environment with modern academic facilities.</p> <p>15 Strong student recruitment drive</p> <p>16 Strong industrial and sectorial partnership</p> <p>17 Availability of scholarships, grants, and other financial support for both faculty and students.</p> <p>18 High-impact research publications in Science journals indexed by Scopus, Makurdi Journal of Arts and culture, Faculty of Arts Journal, Journal of Educational Management, Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences and Journal of Contemporary Urbanology.</p> <p>19 Strong institutional commitment</p>	<p>1 Poor reward system for all categories of staff by the University and by funded project donors</p> <p>2 Weak mentoring between older and younger scholars</p>

Opportunities		Threats	
1	Capacity building has enhanced grant proposal writing and afforded the university some grants and external funding	1	Dwindling revenue of by the Benue State Government
2	Strengthening of public and private sector engagement plan by the University	2	Uncertain and insufficient funding pattern due to the pandemic which affected the economy of the Country and State
3	Development of the Regional Strategy	3	Academic staff do not enjoy any reasonable break
4	Internationalization through increased international accreditation of programs and the university. Continued engagement of international faculties in teaching, research, and participation in curriculum development	4	Unstable academic calendar due to labor crises with the Government
5	Availability of the University Research policy	5	Cumbersome process in accessing grants from TETFUND and NEEDS assessment to support the University
6	Potentials to generate income via consultancy and professional services		
7	The cooperation of partners in achieving objectives and goals set by the University		
8	Availability of training/research grants from TETFUND		
9	Leveraging on the Centre for open and distant learning to develop and deliver massive open online courses and blended learning		