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Report on the Preparation and Submission of Proposals by the University of Ibadan for the World Bank's African Centres of Excellence Initiative

The University of Ibadan Research Foundation (UIR-Foundation) and the Research Management Office (RMO), are pleased to present a summary report on the submission of proposals for a World Bank's initiative for creating African Centres of Excellence (ACE), moderated in Nigeria by the National Universities Commission (NUC). The report provides details of the activities and process utilized by a Committee constituted by the Vice Chancellor, University of Ibadan. The objectives of the Committee are to facilitate the development of highly competitive proposals to be submitted by the University of Ibadan for the regional World Bank's ACE Initiative. It is anticipated that this report would be useful to acknowledge the positive responses of the academic community of the University. The report is also intended to express gratitude to the commendable efforts of the members of the Review Committee, Principal Investigators, Dean of the Postgraduate School who hosted the Committee and University staff who contributed to the process.

Background

A call for proposals for the creation of African Centres of Excellence to be supported by the World Bank and seven countries in Central and West Africa was announced by the National Universities Commission at a workshop in Abuja, on 16 July, 2013. The aim of the World Bank's initiative is to create Centres of Excellence for capacity building, research and applications of research results useful in meeting challenges of development in Central and West Africa. The initiative called for proposals in 3 priority areas- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Health and Agriculture. The call for proposals was open for competition by all Universities in Nigeria during the first phase and a final competition among Universities from Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo. Liberia and Gambia are designated as beneficiary countries but could not submit proposals. The deadline for the submission of the proposals was 16 August 2013.

The Vice Chancellor immediately constituted a Committee to facilitate effective response of the academic staff of the University of Ibadan to the call for proposals. The Vice Chancellor's vision was to ensure that the University of Ibadan would be successful in the completion of competitive proposals. The expressed vision is to ensure the creation of at least one or the maximum allowed two of the African Centres of Excellence (ACE) at the University of Ibadan. Both the University of

Ibadan Research Foundation (UIR-Foundation) and the Research Management Office (RMO) were mandated to assist the Committee in meeting this objective. The Postgraduate School was requested and generously accepted to host the Committee and its activities.

Summary Report

The Committee received 50 LOI/Concept Papers in response to the call for the initiative despite the short deadline for submission. The interest expressed by the faculty members necessitated an extension of the deadline for the submission of LOI/Concept Papers by one (1) day ending on Monday 4 August, 2013. A few LOI/Concept Papers forwarded after 12 midnight after the extension were not processed to avoid compromising the rules and transparency of the exercise. This response from the faculty members is remarkable and it confirms the strong foundation for research that exists at the University of Ibadan.

At the end of the first round of review and assessment, 12 LOI/Concept Papers were selected for further consideration as prospective proposals that could represent the University of Ibadan for the ACE initiative.

A second review session was organized for final selection and development of full proposals to be submitted to the NUC for the ACE competition. The 12 LOI/Concept Papers were reviewed during this round based on stringent criteria outlined in the guidelines provided by the World Bank and the NUC. The criteria for the evaluation included:

- Relevance of the concept to the objectives of the World Bank Initiative;

- Relevance of the proposed Centre to the strategic plans of the University of Ibadan;

- Innovation of the proposed concept; and

- What is unique and competitive about the concept?

Five of the twelve(5/12) LOI/Concept Papers were selected for development to full proposals with recommended modifications. Additional 3 LOI/Concept Papers focusing on agriculture research were selected to be merged because of overlapping objectives and interests. The eight LOI/Concept Papers are listed below.

Members of the Selection Committee were requested to work with the investigators of the eight teams in developing the proposals. The full proposals from the teams were reviewed on 9 and 10 August, 2013. The participation and contributions of the members of the review panel to the review and process for selection of the LOI/Concept Papers for the initiative is commendable.

A. The five Concept Papers selected for development of full proposals are numbered 1, 5, 10, 20 and 23

- No 1- Proposed Centre of Excellence for Non-Communicable Diseases
- No 5- The Establishment of West African Centre for One-health Education Initiative in Infectious Diseases
- No 10- The Establishment of an Inter-Disciplinary Centre for Mathematical Modelling and Computation
- No 20- Consortium for Strategic Translations of Research for Innovation and Development of Economies in West Africa (STRIDE)
- No 23- The Establishment of Africa Centre of Excellence (ACE) for Advanced Agricultural Training and Translations Research

B. The three Concept Papers proposed for rearrangement and merger are numbered 33, 44 and 47

- No 33- Development of a Centre of Excellence for Ecological Organic Agriculture Research, Entrepreneurship, Training and Development: Responding to the African Heads of State and Government's Decision EX.CL/Dec.621 (XVII) on *Organic* Farming
- No 44- Assessing Sustainable Agricultural Production and Food Security in Mining Communities: Cases of Nigeria, Ghana and Zambia
- No 47- Information Management Project for Agricultural Development in Nigeria

Strengthening the University of Ibadan proposals for submission to The National Universities Commission

Arrangements were made to facilitate strengthening of the five selected Concept Papers for development and submission to the NUC. Members of the Selection Committee agreed upon request to assist the investigators in finalization of the proposals. Selected members of the Review/Selection Panel met three times with the representatives of each team responsible for LOI/Concept Papers. The objectives were to ensure that the proposed Centres adequately represent the University of Ibadan and are competitive against other Universities' submissions at the NUC and the World Bank. It is commendable that the five teams worked extremely hard to finalise the proposals for submission within the short deadline set by the NUC.

Submission of the University of Ibadan Proposals to the National Universities Commission, Abuja

Five proposals were submitted on behalf of the University of Ibadan at the NUC by two Officers of the University to meet the deadline. The NUC acknowledged that the University of Ibadan submitted the highest number of proposals (five) among Universities in Nigeria.

The NUC subsequently invited the Vice Chancellor, and the Principal Investigators of two of the proposals submitted by the University of Ibadan for discussions. The NUC meeting recommended:

- i. Further strengthening of one of the University of Ibadan proposals to include other national stakeholders and partners
- ii. Merger of one of the University of Ibadan proposals with a similar proposal from the Redeemer University of Nigeria.
- iii. Submission of the updated proposals by 26 August, 2013.

One proposal was updated immediately and submitted to the NUC as requested. The second proposal was finalised after extensive discussions and negotiations involving the Vice-Chancellors of both Universities, the Principal Investigators and other officers of the Universities. The proposal was submitted to the NUC later.

The University of Ibadan Research Foundation (UIR-Foundation) and the Research Management Office (RMO) will continue to follow up on the submissions to the NUC.

The University Management appreciates all the Faculty members for their participation in this exercise and will further encourage UIR Foundation and RMO to continue working with members of staff on developing other concept papers and research ideas for other opportunities and initiatives.

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Registrar