

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND NEEDS STATEMENT

NGOZI UNIVERSITY- March 2008

1. BACKGROUND

Burundi is a small, predominately rural Eastern African country (27.834 km²), with an estimated total population of 7, 1¹ million people. Agriculture is practiced by more than 90% of the population and provides food and incomes to farmers and consumers both in rural and urban centers. Traditional cash crops include coffee, tea, cotton, palm oil, tobacco, and sugar cane and represented 80 % of Burundi's export earning in 2005². While Agriculture is considered the main contributor to the country's economy, the sector contributed only 34.8 % of the GDP in 2005, a decrease from 57.2% from 1996³.

The long civil war, high population density, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the emergence of devastating crop diseases are the main reasons to the decrease in the agriculture sector performance. The war situation heightened challenges faced by Burundian farmers by reducing access to improved agricultural inputs, extensions services, credit, markets, market information, and improved technology. Particularly, a chronic lack of extension and veterinary services as well as a lack of conservation and transformation technologies has significantly impaired farmers' abilities and motivation to increase agricultural production.

Participatory development promises to increase agricultural sector productivity, expand agricultural products value-addition, and empower the poor to fight poverty. Access to sustained income will contribute to a broad-based economic growth and will help the country meet the Millennium Development Goals and achieve objectives set forth by the Government of Burundi Priority Action Plan, adopted prior to the June 2007 Donors Round Table.

The realization of this vision requires a strong partnership among all players, policy-makers, universities, research institutions, communities, farmers' organizations and the private sector. This precept is particularly suited to University of Ngozi's philosophy.

With USAID support to the faculty of agronomics and the CERADER (Research Centre in Agriculture and Rural Development), the "Université de Ngozi" will be able to successfully implement a model of full integration of training, research, and development.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE "UNIVERSITE DE NGOZI"

A. Status

Accredited by Ministerial Order n° 530/265 dated May 7, 1999, the "Université de Ngozi" is a *private and community-oriented institution* founded in 1999 by grass-root organizations from Ngozi Province (population, local communities, religious confessions, communal development associations, and private individuals). As a *private and community-oriented institution*, the "Université de Ngozi" does not benefit from subsidies from the Government of Burundi.

¹ Per 2004 estimates.

² GOB Poverty reduction Strategy Paper, Sept, 2006

³ World Bank stats

The “Université de Ngozi” ensures quality education and life-skills transfer to young people from the Republic of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of Rwanda.

The University also offers technical services to stakeholders from both private and public sectors at national and regional levels.

B. Infrastructure

The “Université de Ngozi” is located in the northern area of the country, in Ngozi Province. It was the first private University to be opened in Burundi. The University is equipped with classrooms and administrative buildings. It has a small library which is available to students and faculty. Many farms are available around the university to carry out scientific research on farm fields. The University has an old computer laboratory equipped with Internet technology but there are no teaching laboratories for subjects such as virology, entomology, microbiology, biology, chemistry, soils, zoology, etc.

The university has a research center which focuses on agriculture, economics and development and owns experimental fields for agronomy students. One of the Center’s recent contributions is research on and dissemination of improved and most appropriate varieties of rice for the Ngozi region.

C. Mission statements and objectives

The “University de Ngozi”’s mission is to:

- provide students with quality scientific and human training
- improve the living conditions of the nearby population
- reduce poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition in the country
- increase the capacity and empower students and rural communities to undertake self-development projects

The “Université de Ngozi” seeks to make significant contributions in above-mentioned areas through classroom training, seminars, field work and when possible internships and jointly implemented projects.

The “Université de Ngozi” is particularly interested in projects that allow technology transfer to farmers through many extension approaches including Farmer Field School (FFS), field visits, demonstration plots, and participatory on-farm trials.

The ultimate goal is to have many young people engaged in community development-oriented agriculture, agribusiness and to transfer technological innovations to improve the lot of poor rural communities while preserving the natural resources.

Through the research center, the University seeks to empower the community, producers’ organizations and individual farmers to make informed and cost efficient choices about their production as well as foster inclusive decision-making regarding agriculture and agribusiness sector performance.

D. Management

The “Université de Ngozi” is managed by a Rector (Chief education officer), a General Secretary, Deans and Vice-Deans for Academic Affairs and Departments Coordinators. They form the Faculties Management Council and are charged with coordinating all activities. The Department of Agronomy is managed by a group of researchers, who are also in charge of research and project design. An advisory board called the University Council also exists and is comprised of Faculty representatives, students’ representatives and representatives of the administrative staff.

E. Academic program

The “Université de Ngozi” has the following faculties: Faculty of Medicine; Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; the Institute of Health Sciences; Faculty of Political, Economic and Administrative Sciences; and the Faculty of Sciences and Technology.

The latter Faculty is organized into two departments: the Department of Computer Sciences and the Department of Agronomy.

The Department of Agronomy offers an “Ingénieur Agronome” degree in Agronomy plus an additional three months internship. The major concentrations are: Phytotechnology, Animal Production, Rural Engineering, Economic and Rural Development, Basic Sciences including entomology, virology and Insect Pest Management (IPM), and Food Science and Technology.

The university uses an annual-based system. After completing a mandatory core curriculum during their first-year, undergraduate students must achieve a minimum grade average to continue their studies. A student will repeat the entire year if the required average is not achieved.

For degree completion, 5 years of study are required. Students are required to take courses in the basic sciences during the first two years of study, general courses in agricultural science during the third year, and specialized courses according to major concentration requirements during their fourth and fifth years. The Department of Agronomy requires its students to prepare and defend a thesis in order to graduate with a degree. Additional three months of internship at an agricultural institution is also required.

F. Department of Agronomy’s Staff

The total number of full-time staff, part-time staff, and lecturers is 25 of which 3 are full-time and 20 part-time/lecturers. Three of the full-time academic staff hold a degree equivalent to a PhD degree and two hold an equivalent to a Masters degree.

Two professors are currently pursuing advance degrees in foreign universities and expect to rejoin the academic staff soon. Currently, only one lecturer has specialized training in agribusiness.

G. Admission Criteria and Students Body

The University currently has 1200 students, including Rwandese and Congolese. Students are admitted upon presentation of a high school diploma.

H. Budget

The main source of funding is student tuition fees. Each student pays € 166 per year. Nevertheless, the cost undergone by the university per student is more €1000 per year. This constitutes a deficit of €834 per year per student.

I. International Collaboration Experience.

The “University de Ngozi” is a member of the association of Francophone Universities (AUF). It is currently looking for establishing a partnership with other Universities and International organisations supporting rural development and Insect Pest Management (IPM) projects.

The university entertains sustained partnerships with universities in the region, including the National University of Rwanda (NUR), the University of Bukavu in the DRC and the Makerere University in Uganda. The University also cooperates with other western universities such as the Health Institute of Verona in Italy and the Technical University of Madrid in Spain. The University also contacted George Mason University in Virginia for possible cooperation but the cooperation has not yet materialized.

III. INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES.

The Faculty of Agronomy has two main priorities: 1) to strengthen and broaden linkages between the agronomy students with other universities and research institutions, the community, the private sector and particularly the agribusiness sector; and, 2) to strengthen its capacity for applied research and agribusiness development.

Particularly, the University would like to develop a program in agribusiness, suited to Burundi’s agriculture sector potential and current enterprise development context. The program could cover the following: entrepreneurship, business regulatory and fiscal compliance, identification and assessment of agribusiness opportunities, business plan development, strategic and operational planning, basic principles of project accounting, basic principles for value addition, market intelligence gathering, quality-definitions, norms and standards, packaging and labeling, client relations, financing, strategic alliances and partnerships, etc.

The University would like to establish mechanisms whereby interested students could spend substantial practice time with producers, producers organizations, primary and secondary processors in the rural and semi rural areas as well as with downstream tertiary enterprises in the urban centers, along select value chains.

Through its Research Center, the University is seeking to expand scientific and on-farm research on improved crop varieties, integrated pest management, soil conservation and fertilization, food processing and conservation technologies and, to foster speakers programs around business models in the Burundian, regional and global business environment.

The University of Ngozi therefore would like scientific and technical assistance in all the above, including identifying courses required for a sound agribusiness program, developing stronger linkages with local population through community-based projects, creation of a

students internship program, speaker programs, reinforcing students' research capacity in agriculture, the development of an appropriate infrastructure for delivery of agriculture courses and IPM project research, strengthening staff capacities and, increased exchanges with other universities, faculties and research institutions.