AFRICA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES AD FORENSIC BIOTECHNOLOGY (ACENTDFB)
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Center, at inception, experienced some threats due to dysfunctional Management structure which negatively impacted on realization of the project objectives. Subsequently, the University authority thoroughly analyzed and devised a new structure that allows smooth operations and delivery of the Centre's activities. Based on the experience, we intend to periodically assess the management structure and tweak it to address identified problems.

There are other internal risks that are highly probable such as staff/students strikes and non-compliance with academic calendar. The center has proactive plans to mitigate the effects of these disruptive issues especially for MSc and PhD students actively involved in their research projects; the plans have been successfully tested in the last episode of the strike. For example, we are engaging 'Distant Learning Centre facilities for lectures and relocating short courses to collaborating institutions.

A key threat to sustainability of the Centre is the lack of financial commitment by our University in the form of counterpart funding and a dedicated budget line. In this regard, the Center has convinced the University to have a statute establishing the ACENTDFB and an annual budget line to support funding of its activities. This is in addition to the Centre's efforts at improving its internally generated revenue base as well as attracting external grants. Another risk factor that is a serious problem to the center is the difficulty posed by then provisions of the Procurement Act militating against timely procurement of research materials. The center solicits for a waiver from the World Bank that will allow it to purchase specialized equipment, chemicals and reagents directly from reliable manufacturers.

Unstable power supply has been a problem that hampers achievement of the Centre's target for training and research projects. The center currently operates diesel-powered generator as back-up power source. However, the Centre is planning to install an integrated additional solar energy source that will help to supplement the existing source. Another challenge is the wide range of specialists required for the scope of activities of the center. The Center is utilizing the vast human resources available within the University and our collaborating institutions in the short run and staff development in the long run.

The major impediment to expanding our impact regionally is low enrolment of foreign students. The center is addressing the issue by improving its international visibility, improving its timely graduation rate and providing more incentives for the foreign students.

Law enforcement agencies, Ministry of Justice and Disaster Management Agencies, among others, are our major stakeholders in the Forensic Science program that are, potentially, the employers of our graduates. To facilitate actualization of this potential, the Center is making efforts at involving the stakeholders in developing the program. One of these efforts is the organization of the forthcoming Stakeholders Conference on Forensic Science programs later this year.

Implementing activities of the Centre through teaching, research and community service require that staff carry extra workload, often creating demand for some of compensation by staff. The World Bank does not approve payment of honorarium to participating staff. This could potentially de-motivate participating. The Centre has continued to motivate staff by sponsoring their participation at conferences, supporting their travel for research and bench work and grant sourcing