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

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

ACENTDFB had to re-strategize to ensure its sustainability after cessation of funding from the World Bank. These activities involve courses, training, routine analysis and non-therapeutic alternative to disease control and prevention.

Core Funding

At its inception and before the release of funds from the World Bank, the University released the sum of N20m Naira as seed money. Thereafter, another tranche of N20m is being made available to the centre to facilitate its operation. A major contributory funding of the University to the Centre has been the payment of salaries to all the academic staff involved in the teaching and supervision of the students of the programme. Similarly, salaries of the administrative staff of the Centre namely the Project Accountant, Project Auditor, Procurement Officer, Communication Officer, Centre Secretary and members of Project Audit Committee) are being paid by the University. These have ensured that only a minimal portion of the project sum is being spent on the administration of the Centre annually.

Tuition Fees for professional programme

Students enrolled in the programme pay annually tuition fees to the University. Arrangement is being made to transfer these amounts paid by the students to the account of the Centre. For the short-term workshop trainings, training charges and fees are paid directly to Centres account. Where the trainings are joint programme of the Centre with other collaborating partners, sharing formula are worked upon to ensure that the Centre legalise some revenue from this.

Consultancy Fees

ACENTDFB has recently entered into agreements to offer consultancy services. One of such is analysis of samples from various institutions (public and private) at a commercial rate. One of such arrangement that is the agreement with Sightsavers to be analyzing its field samples, which hitherto used to send to Noguchi Memorial Institute of Medical Research, Accra, Ghana. This ACENTDFB is expected to earn about $100,000 annually from this. Similar arrangement is being made with African Field Epidemiology Network to offer basic hands-on training on biotechnology techniques to its students. ACENTDFB is also developing custom training modules targeted various organisations. The Center will work towards raising $200,000.00 per annum.

Research Funding

A major source of funding being targeted is grants. ACENTDFB will continue to engage some of its international partners in writing joint research proposals. ACENTDFB intends to put up joint grant application with Institute of Biomolecular Interaction, University of Bremen for a DfG grant, University of Nagasaki, Japan for TST/TSPS grants, J-WEL, Massachusetts, Cambridge, Boston, USA and a host of other collaborating institutions in the future and as they come on board. Students are also being encouraged to apply for research grants and in this regard, a three-man committee has been set up to coordinate it. To enhance the capacity to source for grant, six researchers were sent for a high impact research design workshop training at MIT, Boston, USA. Applications will continue to be submitted to TETFUND group researches. In the long term, as the profile of the Center rises due to output of collaborative research results published in high impact journals, funding applications will be submitted to other international funding bodies. **Meanwhile, the University policy on grants will guide the Centre's grant sourcing and management activities and implementation.**

The MSc degrees in Forensic science is expected to draw more revenue. ACENTDFB is the first to mount Postgraduate Diploma in forensic biotechnology and will be the first also mount MSc in Forensic Science in the West African region. This will undoubtedly open a lot of funding opportunities to the Centre.