

# How to build sustainable partnerships

- Practical experiences from AUSTRIAN funded projects

Prof. Rhoda Birech

OEAD - Alumni

University-Industry Liaison Officer

Egerton University

# The APPEAR funded WATERCAP

## IS A PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- WATERCAP is a partner for research between Universities (PhD, MSc, MA and BSc)
- WATERCAP is a partner for learning with communities
- WATERCAP is a partner for policy participation at regional and national levels
- **WATERCAP has taught us practical steps in formation and execution of partnerships at different levels**

**WATERCAP** is “**Strengthening Universities Capacities for Mitigating Climate Change Induced Water Vulnerabilities in East Africa-WATERCAP**” by Ugandan, Kenyan and Austrian Universities



# Background to WATERCAP

## Start with the problem

- Devastating impact of CC
- Uncertain water supply for Agriculture
- Universities decided to act

## Seek support

- APPEAR (Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development)
- OeAD administered funds
- Others

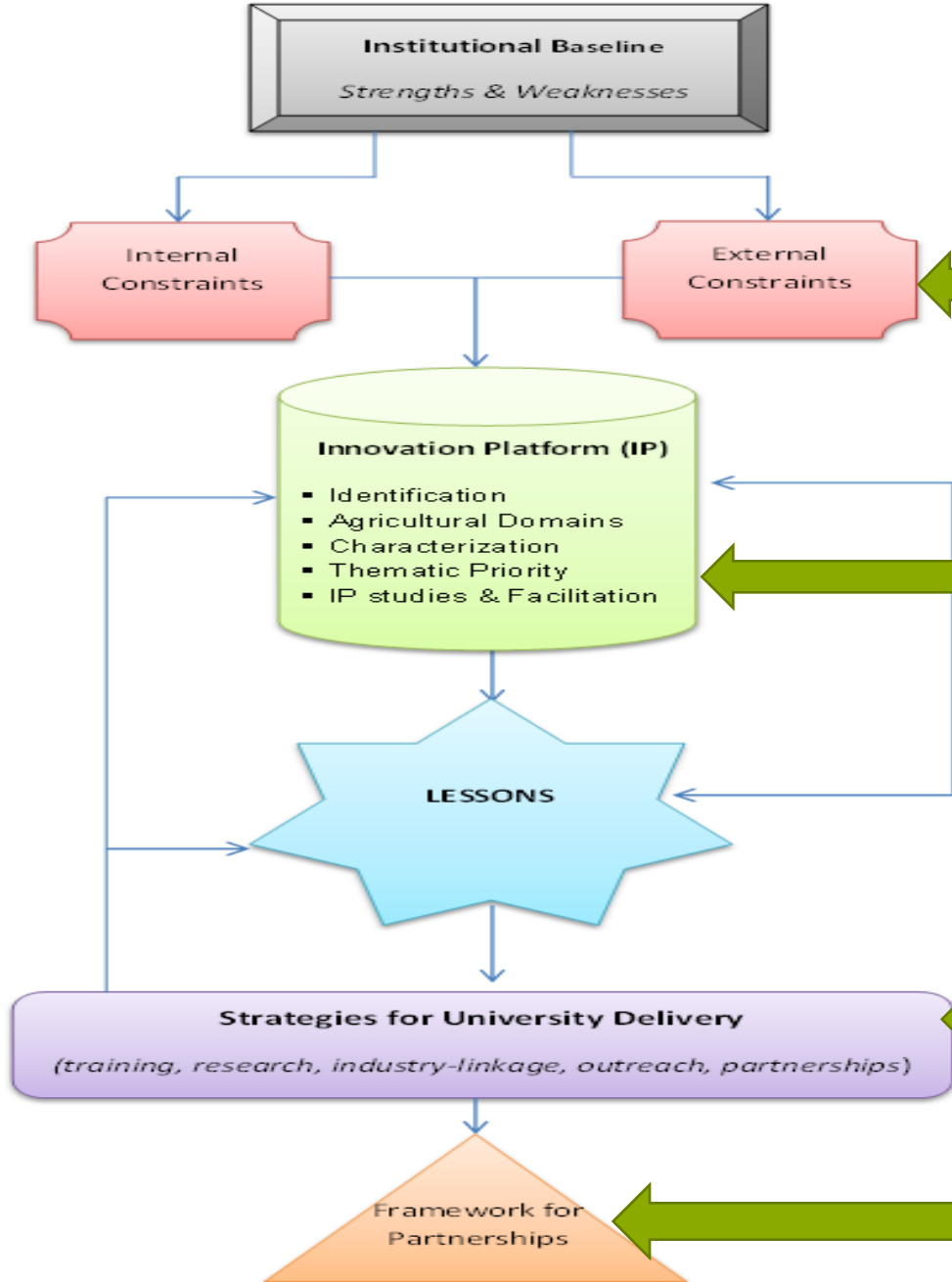
## Form the research team

- RUFORUM (Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture) bring 17 Univ. together
- EU, MAK (East Africa)
- BOKU

## Identify the beneficiary

- Smallholder Farmers
- Graduate Students
- Other Stakeholders

# WATERCAP Operational Framework



Obj. 1: Identification of internal and external constraints to effective partnerships



Obj. 2: Form water innovation platforms for mutual learning on efficient use in small holder agriculture



Obj. 3: Climate Change responsive curricula, training, research and outreach approaches



Obj. 4&5: Sustainable partnerships for responding to and mitigating climate change



# Step 1: Understand your country's development challenges

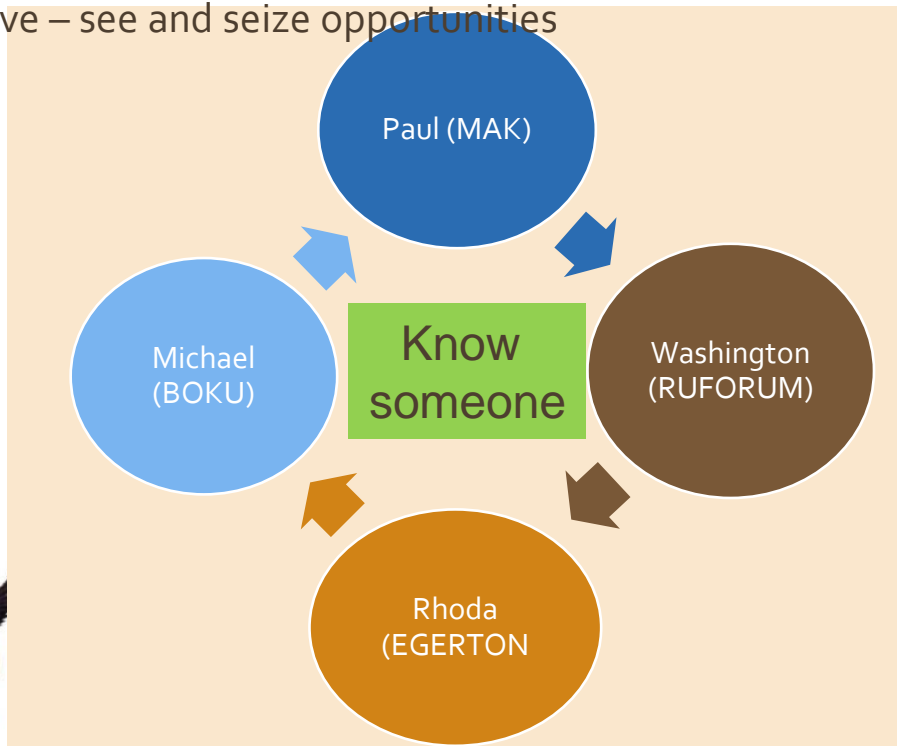
- Understand development goals of your country
  - It can be agriculture, education, technology, ICT, health sector etc.
- Know the critical problem in a sector within your discipline
- Always propose home-grown solutions

In the case of WATERCAP,  
the problem was *Water  
vulnerability induced by  
Climate Change*



# Step 2 - Identify a partner/ form a research team

- **Initiating partnership with individual researchers while in Austria**
  - Know someone
  - Share your thoughts with your Professors
  - Starting from your supervisor
- **Initiating partnership with an institution**
  - Talk to the international-cooperation' office of your University in Austria
  - Seek the support of the linkages office in your home institution
  - Let your supervisor help you
  - Be aggressive – see and seize opportunities



## Step 3 – Start with basics

- Do consultations through meetings, email etc
- Do agenda which should focus on the win – win for all partners
- Develop trust
- Share roles based on areas of strength and common interest of each partner
- Identify a strong coordinator to do administrative work

- In the case of WATERCAP, our team exchanged emails on possible proposals
- We all met in Makerere one fine Saturday – each of us has been in Uganda for other missions
- We identified RUFORUM as coordinator because of its influence in East and Southern Africa





## Step 4 - Develop cooperation instruments with:

- Objective of the partnership
- Benefits for each partners
- Data management and information sharing
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- Supervision of students
- Contribution from each partners
- Institutions to be realistic in what they can contribute
- Put mechanisms for streamlining communication
- Incorporate aspects of institutional of penalties in case of poor-performance
- Have a reporting mechanism
- Activities, outputs and reports should be time bound

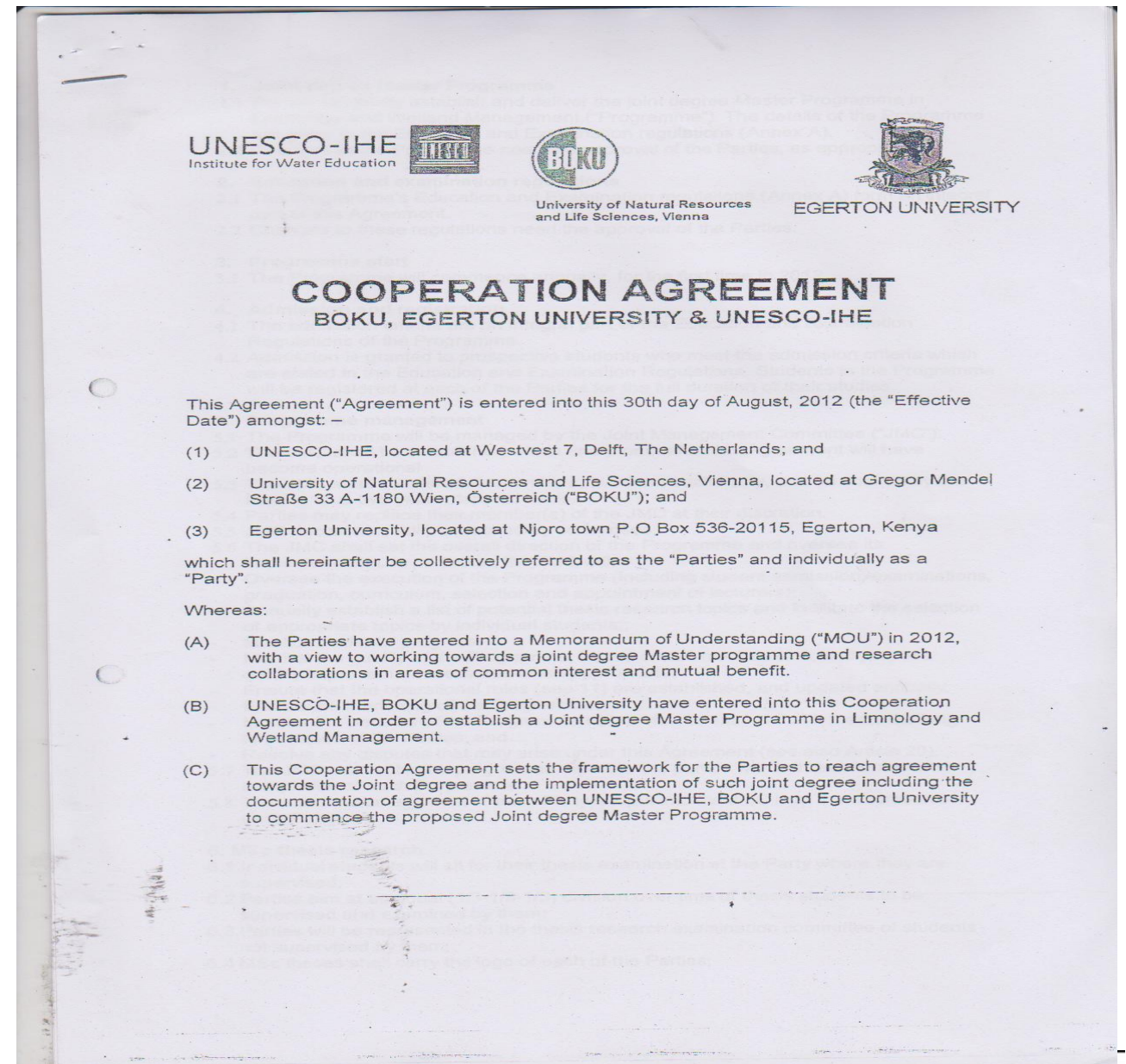
I had helped Egerton renew its MoU with BOKU  
There was an existing MOU between EU and MAK  
EU was already part of RUFORUM

Do project specific agreements, each to make a  
commitment and get support of your institution's legal  
advisor



# Egerton – BOKU – UNESCO MoU (Support student exchange, joint degrees)

# Egerton – BOKU MoU (supports student and lecturer exchange)



## Step 5 - Sourcing for funds

- Be vigilant on the call for proposals by different donors
- You can initiate a dialogue with a donor
- Do internal sourcing for funds also
- Show how to sustain the projects after the funding period ends
- Be open to get extra support but inform your initial donor(s)

• In the case of WATERCAP, APPEAR call was on partnership

- The call came when academia has awakened to the need for partnership to address community problem
  - APPEAR call emphasized that we put country's priorities first, which we did
  - We convinced our government to contribute to the budget – which it did



## Step 5 *continued*: Budgeting

- Do reasonable budgets avoiding wastages, but should be motivating to workers
  - Uphold financial transparency (involve your Institutions Finance Department)
- Put aside some money for coordination

- In the case of WATERCAP, each of the partners institutions had a lead person and a trusted, hard-working project assistant
  - Graduate students are greatly helpful in doing some side jobs

# Step 6: Write a good proposal

- Jointly develop a strategy documents, master plans, strategic plans or proposals
- Follow the donor interest but your country's priority be clear
- Be innovative – show from literature where the gaps are and why your idea is a good solution to the problem
- Clearly link the topic - to the objectives – to the tasks (activities) – to time bound deliverables – show outcomes

## Step 7 - Implementation plans and execution of common projects

- Have a strong coordinator and involve dynamic research assistants
- Always try to bring a student on board
- Share activities depending on institutional advantages
- Hold regular meetings or communication forums
- Do regular reporting
- Manage the finances well
- Publish your work to make you to be known by the scientific world
- close any source of weakness and misunderstanding

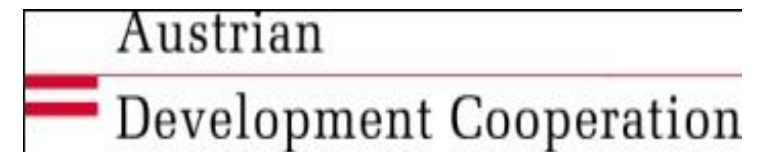
In the case of WATERCAP, we specified the following:

- How the students are hosted and supervised
  - Who pays for their field work
- How to contribute to scientific publications
- However, we had changelings in coordinating international meeting

# Step 8 - Sustainability

- Draw a clear exit strategy
- Create spin-off projects (new projects)
- As you close up the project, strategically position yourself and sell-out your capacities to new partners

WATERCAP has been a spring board to many initiatives:  
At the community  
At the region



# *GROW WITH YOUR PARTNER*



*THANK YOU*

