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# Internationalization Policy and Strategy

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# **I. Introduction**

## **I.1. The global context**

Amidst a fast-changing global context and technological progress, internationalization has become one of the key ingredients of success for universities that aspire to advance their missions and position themselves within the increasingly competitive sphere of higher education. It is a key component of ensuring quality, attracting best talent, generating resources, enhancing research collaborations, promoting global citizenship, and institutionalizing flexible educational delivery with wider implication for students, staff and stakeholders involved in the promotion and conduct of the teaching, research, and service missions of universities.

Global experience demonstrates that the success of universities in their internationalization endeavors hinges on several factors, primarily on well-defined strategic directions. With the increasing demand for leveraging international strategies and initiatives, universities cannot fully rely on ad hoc approaches to manage their international efforts. Successful and sustainable international engagements of a university are contingent upon systematic analysis of institutional strengths and weaknesses, refining existing strategic partnerships, and diversifying its areas of engagement.

Implementing internationalization plans at the institutional level similarly necessitates establishing appropriate structures and systems, deploying effective leadership, and establishing a dedicated office and team to spearhead and coordinate efforts within the University and with international partners. Adequate resource allocation is equally crucial to translate plans into actionable initiatives. Effective communication, marketing, and promotion schemes also play a pivotal role in achieving success.

It is within these broader considerations that this document has been developed to serve as AAU's roadmap for realizing its aspiration of becoming a reputable research university through well planned and directed internationalization initiatives.

## **I.2. The National context**

The experience over the last 75 years indicates that Ethiopian higher education institutions (HEIs), like most institutions in the region, consider internationalization as a crucial tool for promoting teaching and research collaborations, mobilization of international resources, and enhancement of academic quality and standards. Many Ethiopian institutions of higher learning have in fact employed internationalization as a key instrument of promoting their academic and research interests.

However, their efforts have been influenced by a variety of challenges, chief among which is the consistent lack of policy and/or strategy designed to translate ambitions into realities. In most institutions the way in which internationalization efforts are initiated, led, and monitored leaves much to be desired. Gaps are observed in infusing leadership commitment and creating the needed organizational frameworks. Offices responsible for internationalization are expected to play a significant role in advancing internationalization, but the way they are organized, and function is far from satisfactory. Lack of resources, capacity limitations, and continuing structural inequalities in partnerships are also common challenges. Equally serious is the paucity of data on many aspects of internationalization which is compounded by poor knowledge management systems that impinge on information flow and communication.

Ethiopian HEIs also received little government assistance until very recently when improved policy directions have started positively influencing the road to meaningful internationalization. The 2019 Higher Education Proclamation establishes the need for preparing knowledgeable, skilled, and attitudinally mature graduates with the capacity to be internationally competitive. In 2020, a national policy was developed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education to elevate the internationalization of higher education to a more strategic posture. This has been followed by the recent issuance of Public University Autonomy Proclamation #No. 1294/2023 which sets clear directions for institutions that aspire to become more autonomous and develop their own strategic plans and advance their aspirations.

Notwithstanding the government's encouraging effort, the need for practical actions in addressing the national directions set remains paramount if Ethiopian universities are expected to perform well on the international arena. Ethiopian universities should also understand that their active engagement with the government is an important aspect of their internationalization strategy since without such engagement their plans might be easily derailed.

The foregoing global and national experiences indicate that treading a successful internationalization path requires a continuous probe into its various dimensions and the quest for mechanisms that can propel internationalization from its ad hoc status to a more organized and coordinated undertaking that has wider implications for the effective delivery and quality of AAU's education, research, and public service missions.

### **1.3. The AAU in context**

As the oldest institution of higher learning in the country, the history of internationalization in Ethiopian institutions of higher learning is closely linked with the establishment history and growth trajectory of Addis Ababa University.

Among the early recorded outbound student mobility patterns of Ethiopian institutions of higher learning, most of the students who completed their studies at the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA) were recruited for foreign studies immediately after graduation. In a

similar vein, the first organized move to enroll international students at an Ethiopian institution of higher learning was perhaps the one initiated by the late Emperor Haile Selassie I who made a pledge at the Conference of Independent Countries held in Ghana in 1958 to offer 200 scholarships for college studies in Ethiopia, with the promise that fifty students would annually join the UCAA. This led to the creation of the Haile Selassie I Scholarship Program benefitting many African students from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan Tanzania, and Uganda.

The recruitment of foreign scholars at Ethiopian institutions of higher learning also started at UCAA. During its establishment in 1950, UCAA's president and academics were all expatriates. In fact, UCAA had no Ethiopian faculty until 1954; and in 1961 expatriates accounted for 75 percent of the AAU staff. Recruitment of foreign staff at AAU and other institutions continued after the Dergue, which ruled from 1974 to 1991, though the country profile of the staff changed. In the earlier years of the UCAA, textbooks and their contents were often directly borrowed from foreign universities.

AAU is also known for its international and research collaboration since its formative years. Foreign governments, embassies, bilateral agencies, and multilateral organizations have been at the forefront of providing financial and technical assistance to the University. International cooperation has especially played an important part in the institutional development of AAU enabling it to leverage research funds for projects and PhD programs.

AAU's over seven decades of engagement in internationalization has been driven by its desire to enhance knowledge exchange, improve the quality of its educational delivery, enhance its research facilities and equipment, develop the capacity of its staff and students, and facilitate extensive connections with global partners. This desire has been repeatedly indicated in the past in AAU's policy documents such as The Report of AAU Revitalization Plan Study Committee ( July 2020) and the Ten-Year Strategic Plan (August 2020) which identify internationalization as one of the major strategic directions the university had to pursue. However, despite its multifaceted efforts and patterns of engagement, a few aspects of internationalization remain less developed. Internationalization at home (IaH) and transnational higher education (TnHE) are typical examples.

AAU's internationalization efforts have also been undermined by the lack of sound planning, coordination and comprehensive strategies which are critical to maximizing internationalization efforts and gains. This policy and strategy sets out to revitalize AAU's past tradition and transform its internationalization drive to meet its aspirations of becoming a reputable autonomous research university in the region and beyond.

#### **1.4. Alignment with AAU's 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan**

Internationalization is identified as one of the major imperatives of AAU's latest Strategic Plan of 2024 – 2028. Slated under its Strategic Theme 6, Strategic Partnership and

Internationalization, the AAU seeks to advance strategic and impactful partnerships and sustainable collaborations that enhance academic networks and research, strengthening student and staff exchanges, and global engagements.

The corresponding objectives set in the Strategic Plan aim at promoting a comprehensive and integrated internationalization effort that promotes global partnerships and seeks to co-create opportunities for research, education, and outreach. The specific strategic interventions set in the plan include the following:

- i. establish “AAU Global” or “AAU International” Office, preferably at a vice president level;
- ii. design strategic direction and policy framework for partnership and comprehensive internationalization;
- iii. enhance, publicize, and increase visibility of the “AAU Global” branding;
- iv. support and facilitate student and faculty exchange, and recruitment of best international talent based on institutional need and capacity;
- v. develop a plan to attract international students – focusing on the Region first;
- vi. promote the concept of global citizenship through internationalization at home and abroad;
- vii. set up and develop efficient information and data management system as regards university internationalization plans and activities;
- viii. develop funding and incentive schemes for promoting the various modalities of partnership and internationalization;
- ix. develop an institutional policy/guideline for international partnership/collaboration for education, research, and innovation;
- x. develop an implementation plan to enhance international strategic partnerships;
- xi. establish an overseas campus to enhance international partnerships;
- xii. solicit, establish, and promote networking and partnerships with international (multilateral and bilateral agencies, foundations, among others) and regional development partners and actors; and
- xiii. engage in and promote networking with local, African, and international universities.

Closely aligned with the above strategic directions and the other directions in the 2024 Strategic Plan such as excellence in teaching and research, collaboration, talent acquisition, and resource mobilization and diversification, this policy and strategy envisages a more expansive, “comprehensive” and coordinated approach toward internationalizing the AAU in line with the establishment of Addis Ababa University as an autonomous university through (“AAU”) Establishment Council of Ministers Regulations #No. 537/2023.

The policy and strategy further considers the university’s ambition of becoming a leading research university in Africa, that “advances national needs and is responsive to global development” as expressed in its vision statement. AAU recognizes internationalization as

a distinguishing feature of successful flagship universities and seeks to advance it as a tool towards realizing its ambitions.

## 2. Definition

**Articulation-** The process of developing a formal, written agreement that identifies courses/programs (or sequences of courses/programs) from a "sending" campus/university that are comparable to, or acceptable in lieu of specific course/program requirements at a "receiving" campus/university.

**Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)-** A type of virtual exchange or telecollaboration that involves connecting two or more classes in various locations under the guidance of faculty or trained facilitators to facilitate sustained student collaboration and increase intercultural competence.

**Complementarity-** A match on institutional characteristics that are different in kind yet interrelated, such that when combined, the need or achieving mutual goals can be strengthened.

**Comprehensive internationalization-** A strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate the international strategy, directions, programs, and a wide array of relevant actions initiated by the AAU to position itself as a more globally oriented and internationally connected university.

**Credit transfer-** An arrangement in which a credential earned at a college/university is later transferred to and accepted by another institution to enable students to avoid unnecessary repetition of courses and coursework.

**Experiential learning-** The process of learning through experience often known as 'learning by doing'.

**Franchise-** A formal arrangement in which a university subcontracts out the delivery of its course/s or program/s to another provider.

**Global citizenship-** Social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities who recognize that every person is a citizen of the world.

**Global competencies-** A combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values successfully applied to global issues or intercultural situations and necessary for individuals to thrive in an ever-changing and complex world.

**Global engagement-** A form of engagement in which the academic community is actively involved in learning about, experiencing and contributing to an increasingly complex, multicultural, and multinational world.

**Global learning opportunities-** The knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students and staff acquire through a variety of experiences that enable them to understand world cultures and events, analyze global systems, appreciate cultural differences. and apply this knowledge and appreciation to their lives as global work force and citizens.

**Interculturality-** Mutually respectful interactions and dialog between people from diverse cultures, which promote mutual understanding while preserving the cultural identity of everyone.

**Internationalization at home-** The purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of the AAU within domestic learning environments.

**Internationalization-** The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of AAU's programs, structures, and processes, to enhance the quality of its educational delivery and research and meaningful contribution to society.

**Partnership/Collaboration-** A bilateral or multilateral cooperative relationship characterized by the commitment of two or more partners to reach a common goal with the formal requirements of pooling together assets, resources, and capabilities.

**Policy imperative-** A critical priority or obligation dictated by policy objectives, mandates, or circumstances signifying a compelling reason or necessity for implementing specific measures to address identified issues or achieve strategic goals.

**Qualification recognition frameworks-** Frameworks that recognize systemically described qualifications of an education system by classifying them to different competence levels based on learning outcomes.

**Reciprocity-** The respectful nature of relationships and mutual exchanges that are essential in international cooperation and research partnership.

**Satellite/branch campus-** A campus that is physically at a distance from the original university and where the university functions are decentralized for purposes of efficiency and improved access.

**Service learning-** A structured academic experience in another country in which students participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs, intercultural interactions and understandings, and a broader appreciation of the host country and the discipline.

**Soft diplomacy-** The ability to co-opt and influence the friendship, disposition, and action of others through appeal and attraction.



**Transnational/Cross- border higher education-** Education delivered through branch/satellite campuses or program mobility in a country other than the country in which the awarding institution is based.

### **3. Rationales**

This policy and strategy intends to advance AAU's aspiration to become a flagship research university in the region and beyond through sustained and effective internationalization efforts. In particular, the document seeks to:

- i. enhance institutional quality and intellectual caliber in the academic, research and public service engagements of the AAU;
- ii. build on AAU's achievements as a research university and advance its visibility, competitiveness, and global reputation through meaningful and sustainable international collaboration and partnerships;
- iii. attract best talent from around the world with a view to enhancing the quality and diversity of the student and faculty population at AAU;
- iv. encourage mobility and multicultural experiences within the University and beyond through the creation of an internationalization mind-set and sense of global citizenship;
- v. contribute to the public good through the impact of AAU's research and innovation on society; and
- vi. contribute to diversifying income generation efforts of the University.

### **4. Scope of Applicability**

This policy and strategy pervades all dimensions and scope of work at AAU where internationalization initiatives are planned and practiced. Aiming at comprehensive internationalization, the policy and strategy seeks to embed and harness the benefits of internationalization in the major tasks of the University including knowledge production, dissemination, and public service at all levels of the University strata where internationalization efforts are initiated, coordinated, promoted, and implemented.

All stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and external partners are recognized as having pivotal roles in formulating, translating the policy and strategy into implementable actions, and fostering enduring and impactful international relationships.

### **5. Principles**

The planning and implementation of interventions in AAU's internationalization efforts must subscribe to the following general principles that should guide university-wide thinking and actions.

**Quality-** All internationalization activities planned at AAU should primarily aim at improving the quality and delivery of the university's major functions of teaching and learning, research, and service to the community.

**Autonomy-** Any form of engagement in internationalization should respect the ultimate powers and responsibilities vested on the AAU as an autonomous research university.

**Equity-** Institutional engagements in internationalization should be conscious of the equity challenges in the area and should seek mechanisms for addressing them through fairness and impartiality.

**Ethical foundations-** The design and conduct of internationalization activities at AAU should be guided by clearly defined ethical considerations set in this and other relevant policies of the University.

**Accountability-** Engagements and responsibilities in all areas of internationalization should be accompanied by clear lines of accountability that are critical to improved progress and success.

**Reciprocity, respect, and complementarity-** Partnerships and cooperation forged with international partners/collaborators should be based on mutuality, respect, and complementarity.

**Legal compliance-** AAU's internationalization initiatives/interventions should be bound by the legal frameworks and limitations set at institutional, sectoral, national, regional, or international levels.

**Risk mitigation-** All necessary care must be taken to mitigate various forms of risks, such as financial and reputational, in the design and implementation of the internationalization initiatives/interventions of the University.

**Funding and support-** Successful internationalization efforts demand adequate funding, resources, and continuous support. AAU should allocate the necessary resources from its own coffers and draw substantive additional resources from a range of different internal and external funding options and opportunities to support its internationalization drives.

## **6. Policy Imperatives and Strategic Initiatives**

AAU's internationalization plans focus on six critical policy imperatives, identified as (1) forging impactful and sustainable strategic international collaborations and partnerships, (2) promoting and supporting academic mobility of staff, researchers and students, (3) enhancing transnational and collaborative provision of higher education, (4) promoting internationalization at home, (5) Creating appropriate governance system and integrated structures, and (6) Establishing systems and processes that embed, promote, and strengthen internationalization

efforts at AAU. This section offers these policy imperatives with their policy justifications and interventions.

The policy imperatives and initiatives demand setting priorities and undertaking systematic interventions in concert with envisaged aspirations and existing institutional capacities. It is only through informed choices that AAU can eventually grow to meet its internationalization goals, roles and responsibilities.

### **6.1. Policy Imperative 1. Forging impactful and sustainable strategic international collaborations and partnerships**

AAU values the role of international cooperation in connecting the University with the global knowledge system and responding to key local and global challenges. This policy imperative intends to solicit, establish, and promote strategic, sustainable, and impactful international research collaborations and partnerships with key external stakeholders and in regions and countries of strategic importance to the AAU based on its mission, values, ethos, strength, and needs. This will be undertaken with the purpose of augmenting the university's internal capacity and promoting its stature as a renowned flagship university in Ethiopia and beyond.

AAU shall implement the following interventions to accomplish this Policy Imperative.

- 6.1.1. develop an AAU Global Engagement Database that outlines a catalog of the existing international partnerships and collaboration schemes and utilize the database to review, streamline and standardize the existing international collaboration and partnership schemes;
- 6.1.2. identify AAU's research niches and priority areas to discern interdisciplinary research initiatives that can attract international collaborations and partnerships and address pressing socio-economic, political, and environmental challenges at global, regional, and local levels;
- 6.1.3. broaden and strengthen AAU's membership and participation in international institutional and scholarly networks, consortia, research centers, and membership associations;
- 6.1.4. foster and expand partnerships with institutions in the Global South, particularly in the East African region, through a clear and specific regional strategy;
- 6.1.5. seek and establish staff and student exchange opportunities within AAU's existing international collaboration and partnership schemes, including short-term study abroad programs, summer programs, workshops, international service/experiential learning, fellowships, and research opportunities;
- 6.1.6. engage in collaborative technological and scientific discoveries and innovations and technology transfer activities that have significant societal impact and commercial implications;

- 6.1.7. encourage and support staff and student participation in international research conferences and meetings, research-capacity development initiatives, joint-publication schemes, joint benchmarking exercises, services in advisory/editorial boards, and supervision of graduate students;
- 6.1.8. employ AAU's scholarly journals and publication outlets as preferred platforms for research collaboration and joint publication by drawing international academics and researchers;
- 6.1.9. develop a catalogue of national indigenous knowledge systems and practices to serve as platforms for international collaborations and partnerships;
- 6.1.10. engage in international collaborative initiatives that focus on regional and global agendas such as African Union's Agenda 2063 and UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and
- 6.1.11. offer professional training for staff and faculty on key areas that enhance the University's capacity to initiate and manage international research collaborations and partnerships.

## **6.2. Policy imperative 2: Promoting and supporting academic mobility of staff, researchers, and students.**

AAU understands the value of attracting best talent from across the world and promoting inbound and outbound academic mobility to facilitate the quality of its educational delivery and research capacity. This policy imperative intends to enhance the recruitment of qualified and talented international students, academic staff, and researchers across a diverse range of disciplines and countries and provide the requisite support to facilitate their integration into the university community and beyond.

AAU shall implement the following interventions to accomplish this Policy Imperative.

- 6.2.1. develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment plan, strategy and guidelines for international students and staff with particular focus on the region and the University's strategic niche areas;
- 6.2.2. forge and sustain relationships with recruitment agencies, foreign agents, and facilitators, the Ethiopian diaspora, and Ethiopian embassies to enhance and support AAU's international recruitment and mobility drives;
- 6.2.3. encourage international mobility through short-term and long-term education abroad programs, and international service learning and internship opportunities;
- 6.2.4. incorporate student and faculty cross-border research collaboration, and experiential and service-learning opportunities as components in the development and delivery of research partnerships and collaboration schemes with key stakeholders and partners of the University;

- 6.2.5. provide academic, professional, and personal support services to international students and staff to enhance their working and living conditions, fostering their integration, retention, and success;
- 6.2.6. undertake regular surveys to gather feedback about AAU's performance on the recruitment of international students and staff and make relevant interventions; and
- 6.2.7. conduct regular desk reviews to glean insights from global best practices, enhancing the perceived effectiveness and impact of international student and staff recruitment at AAU.

### **6.3. Policy Imperative 3. Enhancing transnational and collaborative provision of higher education**

AAU intends to gain recognition for its academic programs worldwide and bolster its global stature through the provision of international education. Based on the relative strength and niche of the university, this policy imperative underscores the importance of enhancing opportunities for AAU students and staff to pursue studies abroad, participate in student and staff exchange programs, offer selected academic programs beyond Ethiopia's borders and promote the university as an active agent of public diplomacy or 'soft diplomacy.'

AAU shall implement the following interventions to accomplish this policy imperative.

- 6.3.1. catalog AAU's existing transnational education partnerships for the purpose of documentation and to determine the University's future strategic directions;
- 6.3.2. identify and initiate selected academic programs with international partners through joint or dual academic programs, twinning arrangements, foreign branch/satellite campuses or franchise arrangements;
- 6.3.3. develop and initiate academic programs through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), and other forms of academic program delivery through online mode; and
- 6.3.4. promote the international accreditation of AAU's academic programs and facilitate degree articulation pathways through an exploration of systems and institutions that enable credit transfer and qualification recognition frameworks, thereby enhancing further study and employability opportunities for students.

### **6.4. Policy imperative 4. Promoting internationalization at home**

Given the challenges of physical mobility and the advantages of internationalizing its non- mobile students, AAU aspires to become a globally recognized university where internationality and interculturality are widely promoted and opportunities that facilitate the integration of international and domestic outlooks and discourses are encouraged. This policy imperative aims to enhance global learning opportunities for AAU students, researchers, and academic staff through actions that broaden their understanding of how the world works, educate them as

active global citizens and facilitate their career opportunities or employability in a globalized economy.

AAU shall implement the following interventions to accomplish this Policy Imperative.

- 6.4.1. conduct a review of existing activities and experiences related to AAU's profile in internationalization at home;
- 6.4.2. incorporate the importance of actions that develop global competencies in AAU's academic policies, programs, processes, and graduate profiles;
- 6.4.3. infuse global content in the AAU curricula by introducing a comprehensive, cohesive, and coordinated approach to international and intercultural content, program offerings, teaching methods and assessments of course work;
- 6.4.4. incorporate global learning as a core course in AAU's academic programs, and establish an optional 'Global Engagement/ Cross-cultural Competency Certificate';
- 6.4.5. introduce, promote, and strengthen the teaching of foreign language courses, language tests and other relevant skills, such as communication skills, in partnership with the language and training centers of the University;
- 6.4.6. organize social, cultural, and educational events; and dedicate special occasions that cultivate cultural exchanges and foster the integration of diverse perspectives in collaboration with embassies, international NGOs, donor agencies, among others and the cultural center of the University;
- 6.4.7. provide professional development and training opportunities for faculty, staff, and institutional leaders on intercultural competency and development, and other relevant skills vital in advancing a culturally inclusive study and work environment; and
- 6.4.8. conduct research on global best practices to identify strategies that promote the intercultural skills and global experiences of faculty, staff, and students.

## **6.5. Policy Imperative 5. Creating appropriate governance system and structures**

AAU recognizes that the implementation of its internationalization effortshinges on putting in place appropriate governance structures and a sound organizational arrangement and functional mechanisms commensurate with the University's aspirations of becoming an internationally reputable research university in the region and beyond.

AAU shall implement the following strategic initiatives and interventions to accomplish this policy imperative.

### **6.5.1.Strategic initiative I – The AAU Global Office**

As envisaged in the approved Strategic Plan of the University, AAU shall establish the AAU Global Office (“AAU Global”) as the principal entity for internationalization at the University, upon approval by the University Board of Governance.

The Office shall be headed by a Vice President for Global Engagement and shall be responsible for the following tasks:

- i) develop policy, strategy, procedures, and guidelines to facilitate effective management of the internationalization initiatives and strategic directions of the university and implement the same when approved by the Board;
- ii) render advice and advocate for internationalization across the University and beyond;
- iii) serve as a focal point and provide support for international students, staff, visitors, and partners;
- iv) assist in international student admissions and staff and student recruitment;
- v) initiate and facilitate international partnerships and research collaborations with reputable universities and key stakeholders;
- vi) search for and forge relationships actively with funding agencies, donors and national and international partners;
- vii) initiate and coordinate internationalization-at-home activities and facilitate the social and cultural integration of international students and staff;
- viii) establish and coordinate schemes for information and communication and digitalization of internationalization initiatives;
- ix) develop and coordinate marketing strategies and branding of AAU’s internationalization plans and achievements;
- x) monitor and evaluate institutional progress toward implementing internationalization plans and initiatives;
- xi) evaluate and adjust the current governance structure of the University; develop distinctly integrated structures, processes and associated responsibilities that embed internationalization in the different institutional plans, goals, structures, management schemes and reporting standards;
- xii) create full-time staff positions and job descriptions for the Office of AAU Global;
- xiii) review, as relevant, job descriptions of all academic and administrative leadership positions to include responsibility for undertaking the University’s internationalization initiatives; and
- xiv) integrate an international dimension in the annual plan, budget, and performance review of the AAU, setting specific goals, targets, and reporting standards.

### **6.5.2.Strategic initiative 2- Directorates under the AAU Global Office**

AAU Global shall have directorates with the following major areas of focus:

- i) Directorate for Global Learning, with units responsible for international mobility of faculty and students, internationalization at home, and transnational education and research;
- ii) Directorate for International Partnerships and Research, with units responsible for international partnership, research collaborations, and outreach and communication; and
- iii) Directorate for Information Management, Digitalization and Evaluation, with units responsible for information and data management, digitalization and monitoring and evaluation, and other Directorates established by the AAU Board of Governance, as deemed necessary.

## **6.6. Policy Imperative 6. Establish systems and processes that embed, promote, and strengthen internationalization efforts at AAU.**

AAU believes that its internationalization efforts will not be successful unless they are fully integrated into all the plans and activities of the institution with tangible and quantifiable measures in organizing, promoting, documenting, and monitoring the policy imperatives set in this document.

AAU shall implement the following strategic initiatives and interventions to accomplish this policy imperative.

### **6.6.1.Strategic Initiative I – Digitalization and information management system**

AAU endeavors to modernize its information management system and digital platform. This strategic initiative intends to create a university-wide, integrated data management system and digitalization to advance, sustain and enhance wide-ranging internationalization initiatives.

To accomplish this strategic initiative, the University shall implement the following interventions.

- 6.6.1.1. set up a university-wide, integrated data management system to enhance and sustain the university's internationalization efforts;
- 6.6.1.2. implement a Global Engagement Database to capture all the international partnerships and collaboration schemes for the purposes of information sharing, documentation, and strategic decision-making;



- 6.6.1.3. develop a user-friendly and integrated web portal that portrays the international dimensions of the University and offers information on various international opportunities available at the University; and
- 6.6.1.4. leverage and enhance digitalization to manage and facilitate the various internationalization efforts and activities of the University, including recruitment of international faculty and students, virtual academic mobility of students and faculty, international supervision of students, joint publications, e-conferences, among others.

## **6.6.2. Strategic initiative 2. Funding and recognition schemes**

AAU recognizes the paramount importance of adequate resources and active contributions of its faculty, staff, and students for the realization of its internationalization plans and activities. This strategic initiative aims to contribute to the University's effort to diversify schemes for generating income and ensure sustainable funding and recognize and reward productive contributions of researchers, academic staff and students involved in the University's internationalization endeavors.

To accomplish this strategic initiative, the University shall implement the following interventions.

- 6.6.2.1. increase the amount of external funding at AAU through alignment of opportunities with the goals and strategies of funders and partners;
- 6.6.2.2. identify existing sources of income derived from internationalization endeavors and diversify their contributions based on the nature and relative strength and advantage of the University;
- 6.6.2.3. promote collaborations with multinational corporations, industry and businesses that could help transform the University's ideas and practices into innovative technologies, innovations, and resources;
- 6.6.2.4. advance patenting of inventions, emanating from the University's international research collaborations, and intellectual property rights to generate income;
- 6.6.2.5. generate revenue internationally through various means such as providing short educational programs for incoming students and staff; and
- 6.6.2.6. develop university-wide award systems and schemes for celebrating and rewarding the contributions of faculty, staff, students, alumni, diaspora, and partners actively involved in promoting AAU's internationalization agenda and the success of its internationalization initiatives.

### **6.6.3.Strategic initiative 3- Marketing and Communication**

AAU aspires to augment its international stature through effective communication and planned and structured marketing strategies. This strategic initiative primarily aims to establish shared understandings of internationalization and its institutional value among the University community. It also seeks to promote internationalization initiatives, opportunities, unique niches, and brand within the University community and beyond.

To accomplish this strategic initiative, the University shall implement the following interventions.

- 6.6.3.1. develop a detailed marketing plan and targeted communication, promotion, and branding strategies to improve the international reputation and visibility of the university;
- 6.6.3.2. organize a university-wide awareness and briefing sessions on internationalization concepts, practices and plans to create common understanding among the university community;
- 6.6.3.3. provide information on the range of international activities undertaken by the University and success stories, if any;
- 6.6.3.4. use diversified means and outlets, including traditional and innovative promotion mechanisms such as radio, TV, and social media to enhance international visibility;
- 6.6.3.5. employ appropriate marketing strategies to promote a range of courses and programs offered by the university; and
- 6.6.3.6. identify and profile selected alumni, the diaspora, returnees, and Ethiopian embassies in targeted countries to enhance their engagement as ambassadors, advocates, and promoters of the University.

### **6.6.4.Strategic initiative 4- Monitoring and evaluation**

The progress and success of AAU's internationalization efforts can be achieved only through a well-built monitoring and evaluation system embedded into the policy and strategy. This strategic initiative intends to institute a monitoring and evaluation scheme for internationalization initiatives and activities so that their implementation, regular review, and monitoring lead to the achievement of the desired outcome.

To accomplish this strategic initiative, the University shall implement the following interventions.

- 6.6.4.1. institute a monitoring and evaluation system for all internationalization endeavors and ensure that this policy and strategy is implemented, monitored, and regularly reviewed;
- 6.6.4.2. develop data collection instruments, indicators, targets, and quality assurance schemes to help measure activities and performance in internationalization;

- 6.6.4.3. undertake a regular audit on performance on internationalization to identify strength and weaknesses to guide future planning and decision making; and
- 6.6.4.4. produce annual reports on the implementation of the internationalization plan for dissemination and communication with relevant internal and external stakeholders, as appropriate.

## **7. Amendment**

This policy and strategy may be amended or repealed by the AAU Board of Governance.

## **8. Effective Date**

This comes into force on the date the AAU Board of Governance approve it.