



Botswana Open  
University



# **BOU 2036 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

Towards Global Recognition



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Towards Global Recognition

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## STATEMENT BY THE CHANCELLOR

This Strategic Framework is a momentous yet imperative instrument for the future of the Botswana Open University (BOU). The University, its stakeholders and the country need this Framework for continuity and proactive investment in quality education. I heartily endorse it and invite our diverse stakeholders – students, staff, alumni, and the local and global communities that we serve – to recognize the BOU conceptualisation of its roadmap to 2036.

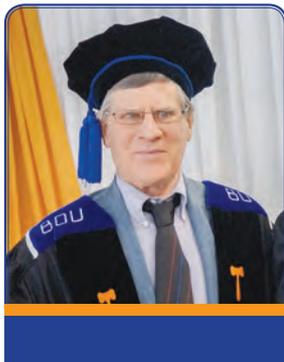
Our mandate is to provide quality education through open and distance learning. We therefore aspire to prepare students to be lifelong learners who are engaged in their communities. It is through the execution of this mandate that we wish to be recognized globally for academic excellence, lifelong learning and societal impact.

This Framework points to the right direction. Our job is to develop greater capacity and capability to ease elegantly through the bumps and blocks in the education space to achieve our noble vision. Understanding and pursuing the five thematic areas in this Framework now becomes the imperative of every BOU staff member. I want to appeal to ourselves to own the Framework and make it part of our work.

I proffer my heartfelt compliments and deepest gratitude to the BOU Council, Management and Staff who diligently crafted this Framework that will see us through the next seventeen years. Let us brace ourselves for the wonderful experiences that come with conscious long-term planning.

Dr. P.H.K. Kedikilwe  
BOU CHANCELLOR





## FOREWORD BY THE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

The University Council is the governing body of the University, responsible for the strategic development and overall performance of the University's business. Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved. It therefore follows naturally that the BOU Council approved a forward-looking Framework as part of the said arrangements to guide the value creation for our stakeholders.

Following extensive consultation within the University and with our partners, our Strategic Framework sets out the roadmap of the University. Looking back to the humble beginnings of the institution, there is a significant trajectory of achievements in terms of access and academic throughput through Open and Distance Learning (ODL). However, the education terrain has changed markedly, with significant increase in technologies that accord the conventional universities an opportunity to compete in the ODL space. Our Framework therefore focuses on a clear mission of providing quality academic programmes, research and innovation, and community engagement. It is our noble conviction that as the Government and the global education agendas make a case for increased access to quality higher education, BOU should position itself as a formidable player in that space.

As espoused in the Framework, everything that we do will be tested through the prism of the commitments we make in our value statements and goals. At the core of our service, we aim to provide a distinct learning experience for all our students, alumni and staff through good governance, stakeholder engagement and research and innovation. This includes academic, entrepreneurial and life skills, which accord them the opportunity

to assume responsibility for their personal and professional development throughout their lives.

It is therefore my singular honour to appreciate BOU Executive Management for initiating and facilitating the whole process of developing the Framework to its approval and adoption by Council. To members of Council, staff, students and our partners, your participation in the consultation process cannot be overemphasised. I implore you to take the same keen interest during the reviews of this Framework.

Thank you.

Charles Coyne  
BOU COUNCIL CHAIRMAN





## OVERVIEW BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR

It is a pleasure to present the Botswana Open University (BOU) 2036 Strategic Framework. The Framework outlines our long-term thinking which is a summation of our vision, mission, values and the five thematic areas we have identified to propel the University into realising its full potential, and to inspire hope in our stakeholders. The process of formulating the long-term Framework gave us the opportunity to appreciate the global challenges and opportunities, and take stock of ourselves in order to position the University in light of what lies in our environment.

This Framework shows our commitment to contributing to a knowledge-based society through our mandate as a public institution charged with empowering learners and communities. As demonstrated throughout the Framework, empowering learners and communities are the most persistent essentials that will shape the future of the University.

The strategic goals seek to improve the learning experience for students, to promote lifelong learning, and to empower students to thrive as partakers of the global movement. Through our student-centred and flexible methodologies, we commit to improve our academic impact as well as addressing the immediate needs of the society. At BOU, we have always maintained that 'Alone, we are a limited resource' – we continuously build and grow functional relationships with public and private sector partners as a collective endeavour to achieve our goals.

The University is committed to building a unique culture around service delivery through a carefully selected set of values. To expedite the delivery of our strategic goals, BOU is committed to a culture of excellence, integrity and equity as well as providing a state-of-

the-art infrastructure to support the national notion of a knowledge-based society enabling prosperity for all. Central to the service culture we espouse, is the care and concern for others which is demonstrated through our quest for promoting collegial engagements and compassionate gestures.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Task Team who worked determinedly from the onset in June 2018, facilitating University-wide consultations and superintending the compilation and development of several drafts of the Framework. Moreover, the BOU 2036 Strategic Framework represents the collective inputs of the University Council, Management, Staff, Students and a wide assortment of contributions and thoughts from Critical Friends of BOU. Upon this realization, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all of you for providing your inputs during the consultation process. As the BOU Executive Management Team, we look forward to working with all our stakeholders to implement this ambitious Framework. The future of BOU is an integral element of the future of Botswana.

I thank you.

Daniel R. Tau - EdD  
BOU VICE CHANCELLOR



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Botswana Open University (BOU) 2036 Strategic Framework articulates the roadmap for the University's contribution to a knowledge-based economy addressed through life-long learning. The global and national contexts shape BOU's journey towards making a contribution to Botswana's Vision 2036. The Framework is also informed by Botswana's commitment to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training, the Africa Union Agenda 2063, the United Nations Agenda 2030 and other international commitments related to education and development. This Framework will inform BOU's 5-year strategic plans until 2036. The BOU strategic plans will be synchronised with the National Development Plans (NDPs) for financing and agenda-setting regarding the University's medium-term alignment to local and global priorities.

BOU will contribute towards the national Vision of **prosperity for all** by 2036 through learning and teaching, research and innovation, and community engagement. It will do so through the following five thematic areas articulated in the Framework:

- Learning and Teaching - the BOU Experience
- Student and Stakeholder Engagement
- Research, Innovation and Sustainable Development
- Open Education, Entrepreneurship and Employability
- Governance and Leadership

## 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

The Botswana Open University 2036 Strategic Framework articulates the positioning of the University in providing quality higher education. BOU was established by an Act of Parliament, No.13 of 2017, which provided for the continuation of the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) under the name Botswana Open University. The policy frameworks that made it possible to transition into an Open University include:

- The Revised National Policy on Education, 1994
- Tertiary Education Policy, 2008

- Human Resource Development Strategy, 2009
- Presidential Directive Cab 37A of 2011, issued to initiate the transition to an open university

BOU's current and future work will depend on the roadmap embodied in this Strategic Framework. The country's *Vision 2036: Achieving Prosperity for All*, the national education policies and National Development Plans (NDPs), determine the academic shape and size of BOU by 2036.

The Botswana *Vision 2036* articulates that:

By 2036, Botswana will be a high-income country, with an export-led economy underpinned by diversified, inclusive and sustainable growth driven by high levels of productivity. In order to develop and deliver responsive programmes and services that will contribute to the aspirations of Botswana's *Vision 2036*, this Strategic Framework is aligned to the national vision pillars, namely:

- **Sustainable Economic Development**

The Framework will promote the development of programmes and services with strong industry linkages, benchmarked globally for graduates destined to participate in a creative and innovative knowledge-based economy. To achieve this, BOU shall adopt, adapt and utilise technology-enabled models, infrastructure and devices to expand access and success through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and lifelong learning.

- **Human and Social Development**

BOU endeavours to empower students with the knowledge, skills and competencies needed for employability and entrepreneurship for improved decent livelihoods and enhanced quality of life. BOU will promote sustainable education leading to **prosperity for all**. Gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue will be applied across its programmes and services.

- **Sustainable Environment**

BOU will endeavour to mainstream sustainable environment issues in all its programmes and services. This will contribute to current and future generations embracing a culture of sustainable utilisation of natural resources for a decent quality of life and wellness for all.

- **Governance, Peace and Security**

BOU will contribute towards achieving the country's *Vision 2036* by respecting and integrating Botswana's constitutional democracy, human rights and rule of law in its programmes and services. This Framework, through BOU's institutional governance system, will promote good corporate citizenship in all campuses and learning centres in accordance with the BOU Statutes and the laws of Botswana.

It is critical for BOU to leverage the policy context to align its academic operations to the *Vision 2036* pillars. This will enable BOU to make a significant contribution towards **prosperity for all**.

### 3.0 MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Framework takes into account major challenges and opportunities in the national and global higher education landscape.

#### 3.1 Democratisation of knowledge and access

Information and the creation of knowledge are at the core of economic growth and development. ODL facilitates the democratisation of knowledge and access to a wider audience. However, this places new demands, opportunities and threats on open universities.

#### 3.2 Competition

Competition provides for enhanced opportunities for efficiency, quality and credibility of programme offering. However, institutions with highly developed technology-enabled models of learning present a challenge as they intrude into BOU's space.

#### 3.3 Digital technologies

Disruptive technologies can bring about efficiencies in BOU's operations. The 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution presents BOU with an opportunity to leverage technology to do business differently in a highly competitive environment to achieve societal impact. However, there are challenges related to costs, uneven availability of connectivity and hardware, and the expertise demands to manage a high quality technology-enabled ODL system.

### 3.4 Global mobility

Universities with big brands are leveraging technologies to penetrate spaces they have never been before. While this might be a challenge, it also presents an opportunity for collaboration on both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

### 3.5 The relationship between the higher education sector and industry

Industry is a key partner, and also a competitor in specialist professional programme development and delivery. The opportunity for BOU is to partner with industry to develop and deliver industry-relevant programmes.

### 3.6 The demand for access for all students and communities

Access to education through conventional means does not allow everyone to participate in higher education. Through ODL, BOU has the opportunity to expand access to all those who wish to engage in lifelong learning.

## 4.0 BOU'S STRATEGIC RESPONSE

BOU is fully cognisant of the challenges and opportunities presented by the dynamics in the global space. The ODL principles of access, inclusivity, relevance, flexibility, quality and affordability inherently make BOU a mass university uniquely positioned to respond to these challenges and leverage the opportunities. This Framework embodies BOU's strategic response.

## 5.0 ASSUMPTIONS

Several suppositions underlie BOU's claim to the institutional space leading to the year 2036, some of which are:

- The Open Schooling entity becomes an autonomous constituent College of BOU.
- Expansion of technology-enabled learning reaches more people within and across Botswana's borders.
- BOU commercialises some of its services without compromising access and affordability.



- BOU collaborates with industry and the labour market for work-relevant qualifications and customised professional development programmes.
- The growth in Botswana's population and the physical limitations of conventional universities significantly increase the demand for higher education through ODL.
- Secondary school graduates enrol for BOU programmes with government sponsorship.
- BOU will grow its current enrolment of 4000 to 25000 by 2036
- BOU develops a research and innovation capacity that can address national development problems and have societal impact.

## 6.0 BOU's STRATEGY

### 6.1 STAKEHOLDER VALUE PROPOSITION

#### 6.1.1 Students

Student success and satisfaction is BOU's core business. The use of diverse, flexible and inclusive ODL approaches underpins BOU's *student-centredness* and its commitment to *high completion rates*. BOU's philosophy of '*work, learn and earn*' promotes lifelong learning for all.

#### 6.1.2 Government

BOU provides affordable market-driven programmes and expands access to quality higher education which speaks to the national Vision 2036 of a knowledge society.

#### 6.1.3 BOU Staff

BOU provides a conducive environment where there is staff appreciation and talent retention. A critical factor in BOU's long-term success will be the acquisition, development and retention of well-qualified academic and support staff.

### **6.1.4 The Community**

BOU strives to achieve quality market-relevant programmes by engaging in stakeholder consultations during the development and review of the curriculum in order to address the socio-economic needs of the country. It undertakes community engagement, research and innovation for societal impact.

### **6.1.5 Regulatory Bodies**

BOU's institutional credibility is enhanced by its continuous improvement and ability to meet national and international qualification and accreditation standards.

## **6.2 BOU MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide quality academic programmes and services through teaching and learning, research and innovation, and community engagement for a prosperous knowledge-based society.

## **6.3 BOU VISION 2036**

To be an innovative Open University globally recognised for academic excellence, lifelong learning and societal impact.

## **6.4 BOU VALUES**

### **6.4.1 Excellence**

Focusing on quality, innovative and relevant programmes and services.

### **6.4.2 Student-centredness**

Shifting the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student by using strategies that address students' distinct needs, interests and learning styles.

### **6.4.3 Equity**

Ensuring equal opportunity and non-discrimination on the basis of personal, ethnic, religious, gender or other social characteristics.

### **6.4.4 Integrity**

Showing honest and strong moral principles in all aspects of the University's work.

### **6.4.5 Academic Freedom**

Guaranteeing the freedom of an academic to inquire, teach, communicate or exercise critical thought without suffering any professional disadvantage at the place of employment.

### **6.4.6 Accountability**

Ensuring all staff and students take responsibility for their actions.

### **6.4.7 Collegiality**

Promoting shared governance, cooperation and due respect amongst colleagues at the workplace.

### **6.4.8 Compassion**

Demonstrating empathy, support, care and concern for others (botho).

## **6.5 BOU THEMATIC AREAS**

To achieve the BOU Mission and Vision, the University focuses on five core themes that will guide its path to 2036:

### **6.5.1 Learning & Teaching – the BOU Experience**

BOU commits to providing a distinct learning and teaching experience to all its students, staff and alumni. This Framework will enable the University to create an intellectually stimulating

and rewarding learning and teaching environment. BOU will leverage ICT infrastructure, and facilitate technology-enabled learning to address learner and staff needs. By adopting and using innovative flexible learning and teaching approaches, BOU will empower students with knowledge, skills and competencies for employability and employment enhancement, and in the process address market needs and develop a culture of lifelong learning.

**Goal 1:**

To facilitate students to acquire the knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences that empower them for a dynamic and competitive world.

**Outcome:**

Students successfully complete their programmes on time, obtain employment or enhance current employment, apply their competencies in the work-place and have decent livelihoods.

**6.5.2 Student and Stakeholder Engagement**

In its pursuit of lifelong learning, BOU will provide innovative programmes and services attractive to its prospective students, alumni and the public. BOU will collaborate with communities to address the country's socio-economic needs. Such collaborations are an integral part of BOU's mission and provide opportunities for research and innovation, student attachments, study visits and internships. These contribute to education and training relevance and success, and to evidence-based research for policy, strategy and practice. Through BOU's Continuing Professional Development programme, Seminars and Public Lectures, the community will be afforded enrichment programmes, services and opportunities to engage and debate issues of public interest and contribute to the life of the Open University and benefit from the same. BOU will pursue a policy on internationalization and engage with international as well as local partners

**Goal 2:**

To be a community-centred and engaged Open University.

**Outcome:**

Communities, alumni, local and global stakeholders are highly engaged by BOU.

**6.5.3 Research, Innovation and Sustainable Development**

Research and innovation will focus on defined thematic areas including indigenous knowledge systems, sustainable development and technology-enabled learning. A culture of research for both students and staff will be promoted. Inter-disciplinary research and close connection with communities and partners for collaborative research will be encouraged. BOU's research and innovation will be underpinned by the desire to generate and disseminate new knowledge with societal impact. This will contribute towards sustainable development and improving the quality of lives of communities.

**Goal 3:**

To promote a culture of research and innovation.

**Outcome:**

Research and innovation that has societal impact.

**6.5.4 Open Education, Entrepreneurship and Employability**

BOU subscribes to open education through the global open educational resources (OERs) agenda as articulated in the 2012 OER Paris Declaration. It also values students' utilisation of multi-platforms. BOU endeavours to provide an enabling learning and teaching environment supported by a robust ICT infrastructure. Its programme diversification will promote work-relevance and work-readiness. Open education, entrepreneurship and employability will be mainstreamed in BOU's programmes and services.

**Goal 4:**

To adopt, develop and use digital technologies for programmes that promote entrepreneurship and employability skills.

**Outcome:**

A culture of lifelong learning through the use of open education, and the acquisition of entrepreneurship and employability skills for societal impact.

**6.5.5 Governance and Leadership**

A culture of good governance and leadership will permeate the entire institution, contributing to sound policy formulation, robust strategic planning, change management, quality assurance, partnerships and reviews. It entails upholding the rule of law, ensuring effective oversight on issues of strategic importance, policy implementation, collegiality, accountability, transparency and effective communication across the University. It also entails prudence in the mobilisation and allocation of resources, including the attraction, development and retention of high calibre human resources.

**Goal 5:**

To promote good governance, ethical and transformative leadership.

**Outcome:**

A thriving and sustainable Open University impacting communities in the area of governance and leadership.

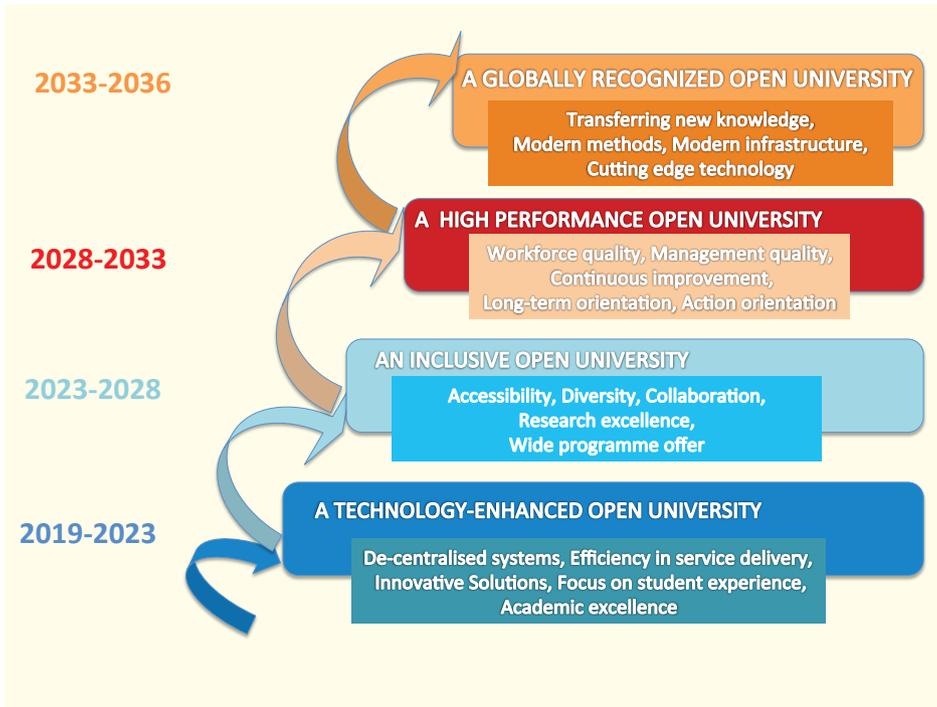
**7.0 CONCLUSION**

This Framework has sought to chart a future pathway for the new University. As a public institution, BOU is inherently obligated to align its strategic thinking at the institutional level to national policy direction and global frameworks relating to education and other development issues. As Botswana commences the implementation of a new 20-year vision (Vision 2036), which will span the four National Development Plan periods to 2036, BOU will link its road map to these plans not only to remain aligned, but also to leverage government funding. With a sufficiently resourced Open University, the country will be able to achieve its goal of wider access to quality higher education that contributes to national development.

## Appendix A - Goals and Key Performance Indicators

	<b>KPIs</b>
<p><b>Goal 1</b> To facilitate students to acquire knowledge, skills, competencies and experiences that empower them for a dynamic and competitive world</p>	<p><b>1.1</b> Student retention and completion rates</p> <p><b>1.2</b> Graduate employment rates</p> <p><b>1.3</b> Rates of enhancement of current employment</p>
<p><b>Goal 2</b> To be a community-centred and engaged Open University.</p>	<p><b>2.1</b> National and global networks and collaborations</p>
<p><b>Goal 3</b> To promote a culture of research and innovation.</p>	<p><b>3.1</b> Number of research outputs</p>
<p><b>Goal 4</b> To adopt, develop and use digital technologies across disciplines</p>	<p><b>4.1</b> Number of industry collaborations &amp; digital solutions/innovations</p>
<p><b>Goal 5</b> To promote good governance, ethical and transformative leadership.</p>	<p><b>5.1</b> Performance on corporate governance indicators</p>

## Appendix B -The Road Map to 2036





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