

RUFORUM Quarterly Report July-September 2017

This report describes key activities of the Secretariat of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) during the period 1st July- 30 September 2017¹. Following the mid-term review of RUFORUM's Strategic Business Plan (2015-2020), held in the previous period², this period saw the initiation of the Board recommended planning, through visioning, on how the RUFORUM Network should contribute to the delivery of the sustainable development goals (Agenda 2030). Below are the key highlights for the quarter:

1. RUFORUM developed a draft Vision 2030 document for the network. This Vision 2030 benefits from wide consultations to identify RUFORUM's role in implementing the African Union Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The vision document (still draft form) benefitted from wide consultations with various stakeholders across the Continent. Over 200 stakeholders have provided input into the process to-date. During the period, consultation workshops were held in Gaborone in July 2017 (involving higher education experts and Vice Chancellors); A second meeting brought together Deans and Principals from across the Continent to Morogoro, Tanzania (September, 2017).
2. The Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa regional initiative proposed project (SHAEA) was further refined through a series of stakeholder consultations in August, 2017. In addition, RUFORUM held meetings with the World Bank, and visited eight African countries to hold dialogue with ministers and technical persons responsible for education and agriculture to identify interest from the countries to participate in the IDA supported scheme.
3. The Secretariat developed a draft strategy for scaling out the Community Action Research Programme (CARP+) program of RUFORUM. The purpose of the Strategy is to identify how to widen participation from member universities outside the initial two universities in Kenya and Uganda.
4. The Secretariat provided technical backstopping support, and oversight to on-going RUFORUM supported research and training projects coordinated by member universities. Visits were made to Egerton University, Nelson Mandela Institute of Science and Technology (NMAIST), Makerere University (MAK), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Mekelle University; Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR), University of Swaziland, Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN), Eduardo Mondlane University, Gulu University, Malawi University of Science and Technology, National University of Lesotho, Moi University, Mzuzu University, Sokoine University of Agriculture, University of Eldoret, University of Zimbabwe, University of Abomey Calavi, University of Cape Coast, University of Gezira, University of Nairobi, and University of Cape Coast.
5. The Secretariat issued a call for proposals for strengthening/ establishing Agri-business incubation hubs at member universities. This objective of the initiative is to strengthen agri-entrepreneurship training, support faculty and students to test innovative business ideas and meaningfully engage industry/ Private sector to take viable business models to scale.

Further details of activities undertaken are described within the main report below. The Report is arranged based on the core areas of RUFORUM's Strategic Business Plan (2015-2020).

¹ The period is the first quarter for the 2017/2018 financial year of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM).

² that led to Board Approval of a revision to the organisation's capacity building framework

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 1: TRAINING, RESEARCH AND VOCATIONALIZATION

a) Provide oversight and technical backstopping support for implementation of RUFORUM supported projects including FAPA, GRGs, CARPs and CARP+

During the three month period, RUFORUM continued to provide support to the implementation of over 50 Graduate Research Grants and eight Community Action Research Projects. As part of this support, RUFORUM visited various universities in the 26 member countries where RUFORUM operates as follows: Eastern Africa – Egerton University, Gulu University, Nelson Mandela Institute of Science and Technology, Makerere University, Mekelle University; Southern Africa- Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR), University of Swaziland, Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN), Eduardo Mondlane University, National University of Lesotho, Mzuzu University, Malawi University of Science and Technology, Sokoine University of Agriculture and University of Zimbabwe; and Western Africa -University of Abomey Calavi and University of Cape Coast.

Highlights of the visits to universities were that: 1) The Wheat project in Mekelle university revealed strong engagement with smallholders through local structures resulting in enhanced adoption of elite crop varieties as appraised by farmers themselves; 2) At NM-AIST which also hosts two ACE II centres, there is a visible gradual transformation that has led to emergence of new partnerships as well as retooling of faculty through tailor made short courses and leadership training for university leaders and research managers; 3) the need to enhance supervision of students and ensure timely graduation of students was a common issue across a number of universities and more efforts are required to improve the current graduation rates'; 4) though at initial stages of implementation, the CARP+ teams are allowing universities to explore partnerships with TVET institutions to both strengthen university community engagement and training, as well as support to TVET institutions through various arrangements.

During the quarter, eight field attachments awards were made, bringing the total to 179 awarded attachments to-date. These are aimed at strengthening and reinforcing the dissemination of research findings by students to end users. The field attachments have been instrumental in capacitating students to communicate their research findings to non-technical audience.

Scaling out the CARP+ to the wider RUFORUM network

RUFORUM Secretariat developed a strategy for scaling out the CARP+ to the wider RUFORUM network. The CARP+ has previously focused on two member universities, Gulu University in Uganda and Egerton University in Kenya, in line with the MasterCard@RUFORUM Project strategy. During the period, a [Call for proposals](#) to widen participation beyond the two member universities was released. The CARP+, builds on the CARP³ concept and widens collaboration with mandatory partnership with TVET institutions.

Staff and student training workshops

Many staff and student training workshops were held during the period including:

³ The Community Action Research Program (CARP) is aimed at enabling universities work more closely with rural communities through multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional partnerships involving key stakeholders such as research, extension and development agencies, policy-makers, the private sector and TVET institutions.

- a) Training workshop for 23 academic staff from six departments at Egerton University on community engagement and experiential learning.
- b) Workshop on university transformation for 48 Deans and Principals from RUFORUM member Universities to visualize and develop actions plans for the Transformative Agenda for scientific relevance in Africa.
- c) Training on scientific data management (SDM) for 47 staff and students at the University of Gezira (Sudan).
- d) Conducted a three-week orientation training at Egerton University for 30 students. The orientation was aimed at providing basic training on community engagement, entrepreneurship, leadership and management, and gender to prepare students for their undergraduate and postgraduate programs at Gulu and Egerton universities. A strong emphasis was placed on the need for students to prepare for self-employment.

Strengthening university curriculum delivery

The Secretariat facilitated a review of Masters' degree programs at Egerton and Gulu Universities. The reviewed programmes at Gulu were: Master of Science in Agri- Enterprises Development (MAE), Master of Science in Food Security and Community Nutrition (MFN), Master of Science in Animal Production and Marketing (APM), and Master of Science in Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management (MES). At Egerton University, the review focused on Entrepreneurship courses taught at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The revised programs have a total annual intake of about 1900 students. RUFORUM also facilitated through a nurturing grant curriculum revision of two Master programs in Crop science and in Exploration Geology and Mining at the University of Juba

Strengthening entrepreneurship training

RUFORUM, together with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and other partners convened a workshop on Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship to discuss models, and approaches for entrepreneurship training. The workshop identified knowledge gaps for agribusiness development and opportunities for the youth in agriculture. The workshop was convened back to back with a training for 130 staff and students on entrepreneurship. The training was held at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

RUFORUM during the period finalized a Call for Proposals for universities to apply for funding to establish agribusiness incubation hubs under the RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program (RECAP). A total of four projects will be supported. The program will pilot / strengthen innovation and incubation of student enterprises leading to enhanced entrepreneurship training at universities.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships, Regional training programs/ centres of excellence and academic mobility

Under the Graduate Teaching Assistantship, a total of 13 staff placements were made leading to a cumulative total of 75 GTAs placed since the inception of the programme in 2015. As of this period, there are 122 pending GTA placements and negotiation is underway with various RUFORUM member universities on placement. RUFORUM Vice Chancellors have committed to provide PhD training for 325 faculty staff with Masters Degrees by 2021 (a contribution of \$21 million by the universities). The GTA programme is financed by RUFORUM Member Universities

RUFORUM facilitated staff exchanges of 10 academic staff (6 Nigeria, 1 Ghana, 1 Sudan, 1 Kenya and 1 Tanzania) to Aqua-fish African Center of Excellence at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Technology in Malawi to support teaching, research and graduate student training.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 2: SERVICING THE NETWORK

Strengthen platforms and ICT products to facilitate access to information by the entire RUFORUM network

The Secretariat continued to facilitate online platforms including discussions by the Social Media Reporters and Communities of Practice (CoP) to foster constructive conversations on topical issues on higher education in Africa (Visit <https://dgroups.org/cta/ruforum/ruforum-smr>). The number of online followers continued to increase as follows: Mailing list – from 9,540 to 10,981, Twitter – from 5,182 to 5,320 followers and Facebook – from 21,811 to 21,849 followers.

During the reporting period, the following were achieved;

- a) The Secretariat developed the website for the 2017 RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM) to support the network customers to access information about the upcoming AGM in Malawi. The link can be accessed at <http://www.ruforum.org/AGM2017/>.
- b) Efforts continued to strengthen Secretariat's ICT platforms with the expansion of the internet bandwidth capacity from 6Mbps to 10Mbps for easy communication with the network and the wider global community.

Increase visibility and awareness of RUFORUM's activities

RUFORUM Secretariat produced two documentaries; *Skilling the next Generation of Agri-Leaders for Africa and Meet Muzhange Sarudzai, a MCF@RUFORUM Scholar 2017* (See document at <https://youtu.be/9XUpf4UBKi0> and <https://youtu.be/zHAs7Db3SXA>, respectively). RUFORUM also produced four press releases which included: *Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf receives Delegation from the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture to discuss high level skills development in Africa* <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/06/27/3330/> with 111 views and *African Union Commission Chair calls for the escalation of science, technology innovation in agriculture to stimulate an 'African renaissance* <http://blog.ruforum.org/2017/07/14/african-union-commission-chair-calls-for-the-escalation-of-science-technology-innovation-in-agriculture-to-stimulate-an-african-renaissance> with 147 views. Other press releases include *RUFORUM to hold its 13th Annual General Meeting hosted by the Government of Malawi, 25th-27th October, Lilongwe, Malawi* <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/09/23/ruforum-to-hold-its-13th-annual-general-meeting-hosted-by-the-government-of-malawi-25th-27th-october-lilongwe-malawi/> and *President Sirleaf Meets High-level Delegation from Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)* <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/06/21/president-sirleaf-meets-high-level-delegation-from-regional-universities-forum-for-capacity-building-in-agriculture-ruforum/>

Ten editions of RUFORUM Weekly digest were released during the reporting period and 37 stories and opportunities shared through the blog at <http://blog.ruforum.org/>. Amongst the most viewed post is the “*Strengthening capacity for teaching and research through African Universities*” – RUFORUM/DAAD awards 9 scholarships with 705 views and the *Call for PhD Studies at the African Center of Excellence in Energy for Sustainable Development (ACEESD)* with 621 views. Opportunities for funding continue to attract the most viewership.

The top five countries accessing the RUFORUM information in the last 30 days include *Uganda at 4,396 views, Kenya at 3,361 views, Ethiopia at 1,812 views, USA at 1,556 views and Nigeria at 1,450 views. Other countries include South Africa at 1,369 views, Tanzania at 1,332 views, Zimbabwe at 787 views, Malawi at 635 views, Ghana at 537 views, Rwanda at 502 views, Sudan at 382 views, Benin at 337 views*

Package knowledge and manage knowledge platforms for increased uptake and impact of training and research in African universities

- The Secretariat published [the inaugural edition](#) of RUFORUM African Higher Education Insights Quarterly Newsletter. The newsletter is meant to share reflective information about emerging issues in higher education and agriculture in Africa. The quarterly publication is expected to create awareness on emerging issues as well as influence policy dialogue and decision making.
- During the quarter, the Secretariat published Volume 14 Part 2 of the RUFORUM Working Document Series comprising 147 extended abstracts with an editorial summarising research that was shared during the 5th Higher Education Week held in Cape Town in October 2016
- The Secretariat also supported the publication of Volume 2 Issue 2 of the African Journal of Rural Development which comprised 16 peer reviewed articles.
- A number news articles on RUFORUM related activities were published and featured in Universities World News-Africa Edition including:
 - ✓ [Agricultural PhD programme picks new crop of candidates](#)
 - ✓ [A new model for African partnerships launched](#)
 - ✓ [Creating equal partnerships calls for a paradigm shift](#)
 - ✓ [New programme to produce high-level agricultural skills](#)
 - ✓ [Building capacity and quality through academic exchanges](#)
 - ✓ [E-learning hub a ‘short-cut’ to agricultural knowledge](#)
 - ✓ [Institutional partnerships – Shifting the centre of gravity](#)
- In collaboration with the Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) RUFORUM is co-hosting an [e-learning hub](#) aimed at building capacity of scientists and development practitioners and providing up-to-date quality knowledge on a variety of topics in the areas of food and nutrition security, social and economic development and sustainable management of natural resources.

A book on the status of Agricultural Tertiary Education in Africa

A book on updating the status of Agricultural Tertiary Education in Africa is being prepared by RUFORUM together with key partners, including the World Bank and the MasterCard Foundation. During the period, RUFORUM convened the first author’s meeting on 27-28 July in Gaborone, Botswana. The meeting refined the book purpose, defined the scope, developed the draft chapter outlines and generated the book writing workplan. The team also developed authors’ guidelines to facilitate putting together their initial ideas. In total, 20 book chapters were proposed and allocated to respective authors.

Monitoring and evaluation

As part of developing a fully functional African Agricultural Higher Education Capacities (AgHed) portal, in partnership with IFPRI/ASTI, the partnership completed the second round of data collection from 66-member universities. The portal will be launched during the upcoming 13th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting scheduled 25th to 27th October, 2017 in Malawi.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 3: NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICY OUTREACH

A new regional initiative on Strengthening higher agricultural education in Africa

RUFORUM in partnership with member universities, African Governments and the World Bank, is developing a Programme for Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHA EA) with an overall objective of strengthening the competitiveness of African universities to produce skilled and entrepreneurial agricultural graduates who drive innovative agricultural sector leading to structural transformation of African economies. During the period, RUFORUM visited seven countries and held meetings with Ministers responsible for higher education from seven countries (see below) as well as ministry staff and teams from the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministers met were:

1. Prof. Jorge Nhambiu, Minister of Science and Technology and Higher and Professional Education, Mozambique
2. Prof. Kwesi Yankah, Minister of State for Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education, Accra, Ghana
3. Prof. Odile Attanasso, Minister of Higher Education, Benin
4. Prof Mary Teuw Niane, Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche et de l'Innovation (MESRI)
5. Meeting with Hon. Bright Msaka, Minister of Education Science and Technology, Malawi.
6. Meeting with Prof Collette Suda, Principal Secretary, State Department for University Education
7. Meeting with Hon. C. Muyingo, Minister for State for Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Uganda

The below Consultations were also held on the process including:

- A regional Consultation with higher education and research agencies and their reps /experts (40 participants including African Union, CORAF, AAU, IUCEA etc) in July 2017
- A Consultation with World Bank Agriculture Global Practice team, led by Simeon Ehui, Practice Manager 29 & 30 July).
- On 3-4 August 2017 the concept was endorsed by African Governors of the IMF and WBG who discussed economic transformation and job creation, with a focus on Agriculture and Agribusiness in Africa, in an integrated and holistic approach
- A consultation with a regional group of Deans and Principals was held at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania during the period 14-16 September 2017
- Consultation were held with Deans of south African universities (SALS DA) in Pretoria on 27 September, 2017
- A 2 –day meeting with participation from the African Union, Inter-University Council of East Africa, the World Bank, Nuffic, National Research Foundation of South Africa and Deans and Principals of member universities from southern Africa was convened on 28th -29th September in Pretoria, South Africa to refine the implementation strategy of the SHA EA initiative.

Engagement with the Islamic Development Bank, the African Development Bank and the National Research Foundation of South Africa

During the period the Secretariat initiated discussion with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). RUFORUM met with the Regional Director of the Islamic Development Bank in Dakar, Senegal, to discuss RUFORUM proposed development of concept note for a regional initiative to strengthen higher education, Science Technology and Innovation in African universities.

Two RUFORUM Secretariat officials met with representative of the African Development Bank in Abidjan to discuss partnership between RUFORUM and AfDB. The Bank requested that RUFORUM undertook another visit to Ivory Coast to discuss further engagement.

During the period the RUFORUM Secretariat and the National Research Foundation of South Africa continued to dialogue on how best South Africa could support the continent to strengthen its Higher Education and STI capacity, while at the same time take advantage of the RUFORUM platform for especially South African Universities and Agricultural Research Council to work with universities across Africa. Opportunities for engagement of South African Universities to engage in the World Bank initiative to Strengthen Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA), are also being discussed.

The Committee of 10 Heads of State championing Higher Education, Science and Technology in Africa

During the reporting period, the RUFORUM Secretariat convened the second planning meeting for the Committee of 10 Heads of State (C10) championing Higher Education, Science and Technology in Africa. The meeting was held on 26th July 2017 in Gaborone, Botswana to review the background papers for presentation to the Committee of 10, and deliberated on the draft programme and logistical requirements for the event. The meeting attracted 42 participants including representation from the Inter-university Council of East Africa, Association of African Universities, OCP Policy Centre in Morocco, West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research (CORAF/WECARD), the Centre for Coordinating Research in Southern Africa (CCARDESA), Africa Union Commission and other actors.. In preparation for the event, case studies on the status of higher education, science and technology development in Africa are being carried out as part of additional background information to guide discussions and programmatic actions of the Committee of 10. Ghana, Malawi and Senegal have been selected and African Capacity Building Foundation, the National Research Foundation and RUFORUM are funding the case studies.

Develop fundable proposals to support the implementation of the RUFORUM Business plans

Within the period, RUFORUM developed and submitted over 10 concept notes and proposals to various agencies including to the African Development Bank, Carnegie Cooperation of New York, the National Research Foundation, the OCP Foundation in Morocco; the International Development Research Center (IDRC), among others.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 4: STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Hold regional consultations with key stakeholders to develop a framework for RUFORUM's future vision for agricultural sector transformation in Africa

During the period, RUFORUM developed a draft Vision 2030 document for the network. This Vision 2030 benefits from wide consultations to identify RUFORUM's role in implementing the African Union Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs). The vision document (still draft form) benefitted from wide consultations with various stakeholders across the Continent. Over 200 stakeholders have provided input into

the process to-date. During the period, consultation workshops were held in Gaborone in July 2017 (involving higher education experts and Vice Chancellors); A second meeting brought together Deans and Principals from across the Continent to Morogoro, Tanzania (September, 2017). Consultations were also held with South African Deans of faculties of agriculture (27 September, 2017), key partner institutions, farmers organisations, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Secretariat, Vice Chancellors of Universities, Development Partners, umbrella research organisations including the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR), the Forum on Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); the Centre for Coordinating Research in Southern Africa (CCARDESA); the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (ASARECA), Conseil ouest et centre africain pour la recherche et le développement agricoles/West African Council on Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD/), International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and policy and private sector leaders.

The external audit for the 2016/17 financial year was undertaken from 17th July to 30 September, 2017 by Deloitte and Touche. The external audit report will be presented to the Board for approval and adoption.

Key planned activity for the next quarter

1. Convene the RUFORUM Board Executive Committee meeting and meeting of the RUFORUM Finance and Administration Committee in Nairobi 3-4 October 2017
2. Participate in the African Union Commission Specialised Committee on Education, Science and Technology Meeting, 21-23 October 2017 in Cairo, Egypt
3. Hold the Third Planning meeting for the Summit of the Committee of 10 Heads of State on 22 October 2017 and a meeting with African Regional Economic Commission representatives on 24th October 2017
4. Convene and host a Development Partners meeting on 25th October 2017 in Lilongwe, Malawi
5. Hold the 13th Annual General Meeting 25-27 October 2017 in Lilongwe Malawi
6. Convene the 12th RUFORUM Board Meeting on 26th October 2017
7. Continue consultations on the RUFORUM Vision 2030
8. Finalise and award four CARP+ Grants to the member universities
9. Finalise and release the call for training undergraduate and Masters students under the Mastercard Foundation support to RUFORUM
10. Continue with follow up of the RUFORUM supported Training and Research Projects
11. Planning for the Sixth African Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference to be held 22-26 October 2018 at the Kenya International Conference Centre, Nairobi.