

Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)

RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program (RECAP)

Call for Establishment of Agribusiness Incubation Hubs 2017/2018

Guidelines for Grant Applicants

Application Deadline 30th December, 2017 (23:59 East African Standard Time)

**Call Summary**

The RUFORUM Agricultural Enterprises Challenge Program (RECAP) is designed to strengthen university entrepreneurship education and impact by supporting the development/ strengthening of Agri-Enterprise Innovation Hubs (AIHs) at universities that will support the development of agricultural enterprises through entrepreneurial skills development. The RECAP Call for Proposals is described in this document with deadline date for receipt of all Proposals by 5pm on 30th November 2017. A transparent, competitive process is proposed to select four university based projects with maximum grants of up to $50,000 each to establish/strengthen AIH and implement support to agribusiness development in Africa.

1. Background

Young African business innovators and enterprise developers require strong support and networks to support their growth and profitability. Networks that support skills enterprise skills development and relevant linkages are one means of supporting small businesses to grow. African universities are well placed to sustainably support growth of enterprises particular when linked to skills development and generation of new knowledge for development (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0djQUUuJcuo>;<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDw9AF9uxwA>)*.* Universities are well placed to link the training of youth with forward-thinking environments that exposes them to new advances in technologies and systems (e.g. ICT, CD printing, reorganized resource sharing systems, such as Hello Tractor, etc.). They require training, mentorship, market linkages, financing opportunities and an enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship.

1. RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Programme (RECAP)

The RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program (RECAP) aims to support and promote innovation and entrepreneurship at African universities. The RECAP seeks to develop a supporting environment where startups, innovations and disruptive ideas are nurtured to grow with focus on agriculture. The RECAP is built around four specific objectives that are:

1. Provide RUFORUM network universities with opportunity to develop and or strengthen agri-incubation hubs to support agri-enterprise development in Africa by providing relevant skills development for entrepreneurs and linkages with key stakeholders;
2. Provide universities with the opportunity to create an enabling environment through which students and university academics and private sector work together to support students to design, develop and validate their business ideas, models and products and translate them into meaningful and viable enterprises.
3. Support universities to develop an innovation ecosystem; social, technological and business innovation that supports students’ mentorship in entrepreneurship and enterprise development. The AIH will also enhance technical support, skills development, networking and engagement with industry and with policy-makers to support an enabling environment for small agri-businesses and youth empowerment.
	1. **Call for Establishment of Agribusiness Incubation Hubs 2017/2018**

 RUFORUM, based on lessons from successful models and entrepreneurial universities,[[1]](#footnote-2) has resolved to fast track the establishment of incubation hubs as part of increasing the vibrancy of entrepreneurship in member universities. The RECAP supports the establishment of **Agribusiness Incubation Hubs (AIHs)** that will nurture innovative start-up businesses and support the exploration of establishing based on innovative ideas among university students within Africa.

This Call for Proposals requests interested RUFORUM member universities to submit proposals (See Annex A for relevant template) to RUFORUM Secretariat to support up to Four (4) Agribusiness Incubation Hubs (AIHs). Proposals can be broad or can relate to any particular topical agri-systems area, provided it responds to identified need and is supported by relevant interest and expertise of the faculty in that area. The proposals must show how the funds will be used to develop platforms and processes that will enhance innovation and the development of small agri-businesses that take advantage of available technologies, and link them and the university more closely with the private sector. For example, hubs may include:

1. **Youth business incubation,**
2. **Agro-processing business incubation**
3. **Seed business incubation,**
4. **Livestock business incubation**
5. **Agri-services and extension incubation**
6. **Ag-technologies incubation**
7. **Agribusiness financing and financial inclusion incubation**
	1. **Agribusiness Incubation Hub implementation arrangements**

The 2017/2018 Agribusiness Incubation Hub call for proposals is a competitive call for proposals that is open to RUFORUM member universities. The projects will be expected to run for a maximum period of 24 months. You should submit your proposal on the RUFORUM RIMS (see below for details). The proposals submitted undergo a double-blind peer review and evaluation and assessment to identify the most competitive AIHs project propositions. Taking these reviews into account the RUFORUM Technical Committee will select the four projects that best meet the RECAP objectives **Each University shall only be eligible to receive a maximum of one grant**.

## Project proposal preparation guidelines

These guidelines on proposal development and submission include information covering expectations in relation to proposals. These guidelines will inform the review process. You need to provide a compelling case for your project to be funded. Highlight what else, in addition to the technical detail, makes your proposed project actions merit funding

* 1. General guidelines for proposal format

The complete proposals must not exceed 15 typed A4 pages, 1.15 spacing, Times New Roman, font size 12 with standard margins specifications.

* 1. Main proposal

The main proposal should not exceed 10 pages maximum (excluding attachments and should be submitted by December 30th, 2017) and should be structured as follows:

1. Cover page
* Title of the proposal
* Call ID (………….)
* Names of the lead applicant and institutional affiliation with full addresses including email and telephone.
* Team composition and names including full addresses of team members.
* Innovative agribusiness platform start date and duration (……….);
* Total Budget requested in US$.
1. Abstract (1 paragraph) on cover page

Please include a short specific abstract of no more than 250 words (respect the word count; anything beyond the word count will not be read). Indicate exactly what you will do in the proposed agribusiness incubation hub and why (do not provide general problem statements or over-ambitious expected outcomes). This should provide the evaluator with the summary of the proposed project action, its innovativeness, model to be used and expected outputs and outcomes.

1. Background (1 page)

Provide background information relating to the agribusiness incubation hub that you seek to establish. What innovative business propositions does your incubation hub seek to address at regional or national level (Hint: do not provide very general background about entrepreneurship in Africa – ensure that the background highlights the demand for the proposed businesses, and/or the need for the incubation hub). Include the focus, rationale and expected contribution of your proposed incubation hub to addressing the entrepreneurship and business innovation to resolving the problem/s identified. Demonstrate the demand for, or importance of, and show what platforms/models can provide opportunities to tap into strong business networks.

1. Associated initiatives (one page max)

The AIH seeks to build on existing initiatives as part of taking these efforts from universities beyond their current level by translating some of these loosely existing efforts into more of institutional processes and established institutions/facilities. Accordingly, it is vital for the applicants to point out effort that the proposed Agribusiness Incubation Hub (AIH) that is being proposed builds on. Partnership with the private sector and other important partnerships will be critical for success. The Project should demonstrate how the project will be linked to on-going educational programs and how it will link student incubation with incubation of SMEs form outside the universities (see also next section).

1. Linkages with student entrepreneurship training and impact at university level (half page)

Describe which faculties, departments and the various undergraduate and/or post-graduate students will be involved and how they will be mentored and supported. What are the needs and challenges of each of the target groups identified and how do these relate to the action proposed. What value proposition does your action make e.g. promotion of private-public partnership, university-business partnership, innovation and best practices, giving opportunity to the disadvantaged communities and what cross-cutting issues does your action address within the entrepreneurship and enterprise development continuum.

1. Objectives (half page max)

What are the overall and specific objectives of your proposed innovative agribusiness incubation hub?

1. Conceptual Framework (1 page maximum)

Please describe the model for your AIH and how it will function. Clarify the linkages and sustainability aspects. Clarify the theory of change. You need to specifically outline which business paradigm will guide the operations of your proposed AIH. Provide an illustrative Figure as a conceptual framework to guide interpretation.

1. Methodology (2 page maximum)

Clearly describe the proposed action to be implemented for the AIH. Describe how you will develop your innovative AIH, where the students and other partner agencies are involved and in particular identify the main concepts that underpin your approaches that can increase innovation, support high-growth entrepreneurship and accelerate business growth. Please outline how your students and other SMEs will be trained and on what, how will they interact, clarify the elements and stages of the support provided in the AIH. It is especially important to indicate how will you engage and involve private sector participation in the hub and also interest those outside the university to work with your hub. Also indicate the methods needed to determine demand, determine the best production methods etc. to ensure profitability. Indicate how you will address issues related to production, distribution and financial management as well as the IPR issues of the student projects. Clarify how the incubator will be managed.

RUFORUM will assess the success of these AIH on how well they stimulate students to be innovative, how well they link them with the private sector and the communities/consumers and to what extent the ideas are creative and meet demand.

1. Dissemination and communication (1/2 page maximum)

Indicate how your Hub will make available information on its work and share its success stories.

1. Sustainability (half page maximum)

RUFORUM is providing a one time grant of maximum US$50,000. As such, a clear plan for sustainability is required from the outset. The AIH proposal must address the core concern of ensuring the AIH existence beyond the life time of the current project and how it will be integrated into the university. How will you seek to mobilise additional resources to support the AIH after project funding ends? How does the project integrate within the wider and long term strategy of the university? Will there be any cost sharing by the university?

1. Project Management and Impact
2. Results Framework and time line (1 page maximum)

Provide a results framework for the project using a logical framework approach. The RECAP projects are max two year projects. The timeline should incorporate deliverable milestones. The timeline should be developed with discrete staged outcomes and deliverables for each year of the project.

1. Monitoring and evaluation (1/2 page maximum)

Describe how the project will (a) monitor progress towards milestones and (b) evaluate the impact of the AIH, including the effectiveness of the partnerships and sustainability of the solutions.

1. Team organization and qualification (1 page maximum)

Entrepreneurship is an area that requires great specialization and experience. It is expected that the Project implementation Team will include the required expertise to manage the project. The role of each team member must be clearly demonstrated. In particular show what other team members will do and their qualifications. Include an organogram.

1. References (1/2 page maximum)

Include only references that you have quoted in the proposal and this should be within the ten-page limit.

1. Financial Details
	1. Budget allocation and Budget of each AIH project

RUFORUM has allocated US$ 200,000 for the establishment of four (4) Agribusiness Incubation Hubs (AIHs) under this call for proposals. Each Agribusiness Incubation Hub project is entitled to a **maximum budget of US$50,000** for a period of two years.

* 1. Budget items

The following cost items among others are eligible to be budgeted:

1. Technical and expert support, evaluation and resources essential to the implementation of the project;
2. Facilitating expenses for the establishment of the agribusiness incubation center;
3. Dissemination activities, including demonstrations either as pilot plants and/or agribusiness incubations;
4. Local travel associated with the implementation activities within the AIH;
5. A maximum of up to 5% is allowable for the University administration costs and overheads;
6. Purchase of capital assets such as vehicles and/or construction of building is not allowed.

Give the anticipated cost of your project, with explanatory notes where necessary. The budget, broken down on an annual basis, must be submitted on an Excel spread sheet, as a separate attachment. Applicants must observe their institution’s procurement procedures. **C**o-funding is highly encouraged and time allocation of the Faculty to run the AIH will be considered as part of co-funding. **Applicants are particularly encouraged to secure commitment from University administration for allocation of space and staffing for the establishment of the AIH**. All budgets must be in United States Dollars. Where appropriate include the resources or support the institution/s will contribute.

1. Concept notes and proposal submission

All proposals shall be submitted through the RUFORUM information management system (RIMS; <http://rims.ruforum.org/>). The documents to be submitted should include the Proposal, the budget, and a letter of support for the proposal from your University, abridged CVs of team members and where available supporting letters from partner institutions. The support letters from partner institutions are a required item as proof engagement and understanding as well as joint proposal development.

* How to create an account in RIMS
	+ Open this website link: [http://rims.ruforum.org](http://rims.ruforum.org/)
	+ If you don’t have an account you will be asked to register here: <http://rims.ruforum.org/contacts/register/>
	+ After registering successfully you will be taken to your dashboard. What you see on your dashboard depends on the permissions that you have been assigned by the RIMS Administrator.
	+ For most members of the RUFORUM network we have captured your emails in RIMS. So the system might tell you that your account already exists. If this is the case then follow the steps related to resetting your password / forgotten your password
* How to log on if you have an existing account
	+ Open this website link: [http://rims.ruforum.org](http://rims.ruforum.org/)
	+ Click to log into RIMS by entering your email as the username and your password
	+ After successfully logging on you will be taken to your dashboard. What you see on your dashboard depends on the permissions that you have been assigned by the RIMS Administrator.
* What to do if you have forgotten your password or need to reset your password
	+ Open this website link: link: <http://rims.ruforum.org>
	+ Instead of logging on Click "Forgot Password"
	+ You will be asked to enter your email address and then click reset password
	+ The link to enable you reset your password will be sent to your email address. Please also check for this link in your spam folder in case it is delivered to your spam. Follow the instructions to reset your password
	+ Use your email and the new password to log into RIMS
	+ After successfully logging on you will be taken to your dashboard. What you see on your dashboard depends on the permissions that you have been assigned by the RIMS Administrator
* How to submit a Grant application
	+ After successfully logging, you will be taken to a view where you will see a link called “Apply for a Grant” Click on this link and begin the application process
	+ Choose correct call ID **(RECAP 2017)**
	+ Complete the online application form
	+ Where there are required fields do provide all the required information in the right fields.
	+ You can begin the application process, save and return to it at a later date / time.
	+ As you work online please remember to save your work. You will also be reminded to save if you take time without saving your work.
* For any queries and inquiries do send an email to The MCF@RUFORUM Unit: mcf@ruforum.org

1. Timelines from proposal development to award
	1. Deadline for FULL Proposals to RUFORUM Secretariat by 30th December, 2017
	2. Compliance Review and send to External Reviewers by 15th January, 2018
	3. External Reviewers return proposals with comments to Secretariat by 15th February, 2018
	4. Secretariat to compile proposals for review by Technical Committee by 25th February, 2018
	5. Technical Committee meeting to be held by April 20th, 2018
	6. Results from the selection will be communicated to PIs by 30th April, 2018
	7. Submission of revised proposals by 10th May, 2018
	8. Grant Agreements received by 25th May, 2018
	9. Funds Disbursed by 9th June, 2018
2. **REVIEW, SELECTION PROCESS AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

RUFORUM relies on the professional expertise, experience and judgment of the reviewers in the Project review process.

1. **Compliance checks**
2. Completeness of the application template
3. Submission of all required supporting documents.
4. Adherence to budget limits
5. Adherence to page limits
6. Clear evidence of private sector involvement with the AIH.
7. **Criteria for selection by Technical Committee**
	* 1. Good external reviews and, where appropriate, effective revision of the proposal
		2. Alignment with RUFORUM objectives and priorities
		3. Clear articulation and evidence of quality approach to develop an innovative agribusiness incubation platform and evidence of the value-added by this AIH to students learning environment in terms of identifying demand, preparing business plan, running a small business successfully.
		4. Potential for impact on the communities
		5. Proposals with recognition and steps to promote women and/or marginalized groups will receive some preference
		6. Proposals that are inter-disciplinary and address issues along the value chain will receive some preference
		7. Responsiveness to expressed demand of farmers/rural communities/governments/civil society
		8. Partnership and the effective integration of partners in the process
8. **Criteria for external reviewers evaluating proposals**
9. Alignment with regional and national priorities
10. Feasibility of the overall project design, including value added by the project
11. Potential for impact on the quality and relevance of students will be the most important factor
12. The potential to provide an enabling environment for students to be creative, learn business skills and take risks
13. Potential to develop innovations and small business that serve rural communities
14. Engagement of multi-stakeholders along a value chain and clear role of partners in the AIH
15. Evidence that gender issues are addressed and that gender will be taken into account for developing enterprises and responding to demand
16. Integration of the AIH approach into the university and student curricula and the steps to publicise the approach and create a hub where rural consumers, students, private sector and regulatory and development agencies can meet
17. A clear Results Framework reflecting outputs and outcomes,
18. Clearly outlined and achievable dissemination plan
19. **Formal agreement and payment of Grants**

Universities (through the Vice Chancellor) will be required to enter into an agreement with RUFORUM Secretariat. If there is any inconsistency between an agreement and these guidelines, the terms of the agreement will prevail. The conditions of the grant will be specified in the agreement. The agreement will specify the outcomes of the project to be achieved, the payment arrangements, conditions of the grant including financial and performance reporting requirements, requirements regarding variation to agreements, acquittal of grants and other related issues. On signing of the grant award letters (Vice Chancellor), the lead applicants are expected to submit a request for funds, on faculty headed paper and endorsed by the faculty dean or delegated authority. RUFORUM Secretariat makes annual disbursements on the presentation of all the necessary documents by the lead applicant. The subsequent year project instalment is disbursed on the presentation/submission of a satisfactory technical and financial project report as well as an audited report from the University accounts unit/section.

1. Gulu University and Egerton University piloted the student’s enterprise scheme and found it to be a key component in increasing student entrepreneurial abilities and enterprise development among graduate students. **Refer to**: Kalule, S. W., Mugonola, B., & ONGENG, D. (2017). The student enterprise scheme for agribusiness innovation: A University-based training model for nurturing entrepreneurial mind-sets amongst African youths. African Journal of Rural Development, 2(1), 55-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)