



From Vision to Action: RUFORUM Operational Plan, 2018 - 2022

...diverse ideas
...relevant outcomes
...real impact

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INTRODUCTION

This first Operational Plan (OP) for the RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy (The African Universities' Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation - AHESTI) consolidates and builds upon the achievements of RUFORUM which was guided by the previous Strategic Business Plan (SBP 2015-2020). The SBP sought to attract and nurture (through the transformative process of learning and knowledge accumulation) superior postgraduate talent into agriculture in Africa to achieve significant economies of scope and scale in rigorous and relevant training. The OP spells out the processes and actions that RUFORUM with support from, and collaboration with, partners will undertake to achieve its intended results. The OP articulates the business case and rationale for investment in Africa's higher agricultural education and training.

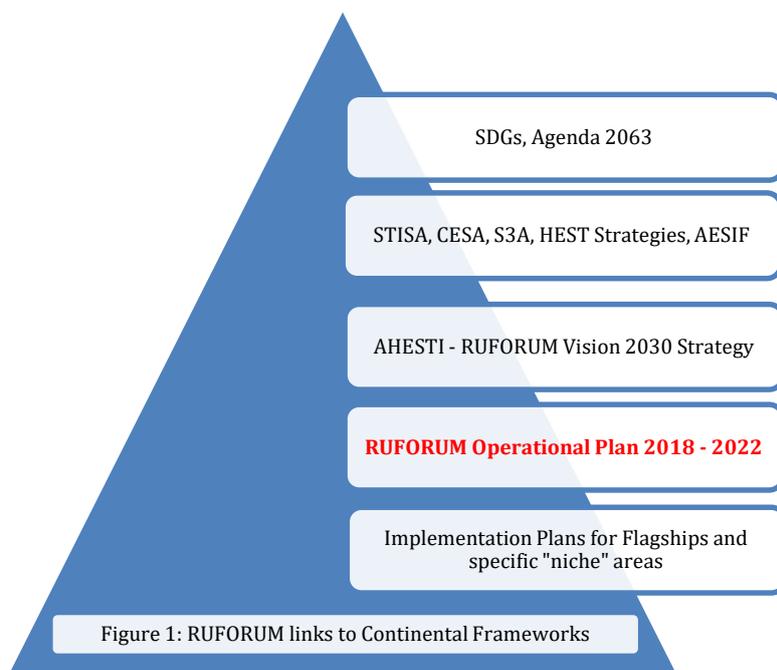
VISION 2030 STRATEGY

The RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy seeks to harness the discovery, engagement and learning of *'vibrant, transformative universities to catalyse sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa'*. The predominant attribute of a vibrant university is agility, meaning the ability to quickly respond to unexpected changes, rapid advancements or sudden shifts in the circumstances taking place in the market. The OP is built around the three strategic objectives of RUFORUM which are:

- a) Building synergy from networks of specialisation to develop quality human resources and capacity required to intensify and increase Africa's agricultural productivity and competitiveness;
- b) Ensuring the products, processes and knowledge developed through university research directly respond to and are used by value chain actors in the agri-food system to catalyse transformation; and,
- c) Marshalling resources and strategically allocating them to enable African universities to transform into viable institutional entities responsive to national aspirations and conditions through intensive knowledge-sharing and collective action.

LINKAGES AND CONTRIBUTION TO MAJOR CONTINENTAL AND GLOBAL OBJECTIVES

Reforming and transforming higher education systems in Africa to energize and unlock the minds for brighter economic prospects is currently at the core of strategies for increasing Africa's competitiveness, through the provision of the needed expertise in science and technology, including intermediate and higher level vocational and technical skills. Technical and vocational training is an important factor in skills development and in fostering science, technology and innovation, in particular in the application, adaptation and use of technologies. The RUFORUM Operational Plan 2018 – 2022 (OP) is based on a conceptual hierarchy of objectives that identifies the targets for ensuring that Vision 2030 is able to achieve its long term objective of establishing *"vibrant, transformative universities to catalyse sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa"*.



The OP is aligned, through its results, to other initiatives (Figure 1) such as the implementation phase of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), the wish of African Heads of State and Government outlined in the Malabo Declaration on sustaining CAADP, the Higher Education, Science and Technology (HEST) Strategies of Development Partners and Multilateral Agencies, the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), the Continental

Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), the Agricultural Education and Skills Improvement Framework (AESIF) and the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA).

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES

The OP is designed around four (4) flagships, underpinned by activities to support regional collective action and learning to give impetus to achieving the RUFORUM objectives.

TAGDev: Transforming African Agricultural Universities for Africa's Growth and Development

The flagship “*Transforming Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa’s growth and development (TAGDev)*” seeks to transform African agricultural universities and their graduates to better respond to developmental challenges through enhanced application of science, technology, business and innovation for rural agricultural transformation. Universities and their partners will through the flagship promote opportunities in agriculture for an intellectually stimulating and economically sustainable career. Through engaged action research, universities will contribute to improvements in educational and community outcomes and to economic growth.

The flagship is focussed on attracting and supporting youth into agricultural education to acquire skills for employability and entrepreneurship – as *skilled, adaptive and proactive graduates responsive to the labour market needs*. Avenues include changing curricula to make agriculture-based courses more attractive to young people and more relevant to the skills demand and opportunities they now seek. In particular, new agricultural education models that connect tertiary agricultural education to communities through “*student-centred agricultural extension approaches*” and strengthening agribusiness and entrepreneurship through “*student and/or community enterprise schemes*” will be promoted amongst universities and BTVET institutions.

Additionally, TAGDev will provide opportunities for transformative research and outreach to enhance active engagement with community and industry in teaching. Engaged research for universities as a scholarly and teaching activity will involve the community and industry as genuine partners and apply universities’ research capacity to address community problems and aspirations. This approach to

research promotes uptake of results, knowledge transfer and exchange, the commercialisation of intellectual property, the establishment of spin off companies, and joint venture activity between universities and community partners.

The key activities for the OP are:

- ***Strengthening capacity of universities and BTJET institutions to develop, deliver and scale innovative training curricula and new models of agricultural education:*** Dynamic curricula, in conjunction with skilled professionals, engaged students, and supportive community members, contribute to excellence in learning that TAGDev targets to achieve. TAGDev will support the development, design and review of existing curricula and facilitate curriculum innovation in HAE institutions in order to: respond to national needs assessments; establish student learning expectations in each curriculum area; respond to student needs; provide a process for continual improvement of the curriculum to meet changing educational demands; establish consistency and progression within, between, and across grade levels and subjects, and professional development for staff and faculty to implement the new curricula and education models.
- ***Facilitating universities and BTJET institutions to attract, recruit, train and skill Africa's new age of development practitioners and cadres:*** TAGDev will promote student selection procedures, alternative entry programs and academic culture that mitigate institutional and personal barriers to HAE. It will support mechanisms (curriculum and pedagogy) and learning approaches that make agriculture more attractive and rewarding, both economically and intellectually, to the younger generation. Instead of focusing on just educational certificates, the TAGDev will support reorientation of training towards vocationalisation to create employable skills and competencies relevant in the labour market.
- ***Supporting the design and scaling of effective models for agribusiness and entrepreneurship training at selected universities and BTJET institutions:*** TAGDev will facilitate universities to recruit youth into agriculture, engage Africa's college educated youth in innovation and investments in agriculture, leverage university competencies to improve quality of BTJET programmes, and link higher education, science and technology (HEST) to the productive sector. Institutions will be facilitated to profile investment opportunities for youth engagement in the agricultural value chains and mount programmes that turn young graduates into agricultural entrepreneurs who undertake agricultural and allied activities.
- ***Supporting and scaling out university-community engagement and field/industry attachment models that engage students in experiential learning while also delivering complimentary agricultural advisory services:*** TAGDev aims to mobilise partnership involving university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. It also seeks to deepen the use of student-centred agricultural extension models to complement public agricultural extension and advisory services. Additionally, the pool of technical expertise resident at universities will be harnessed not only to provide content to cloud-based agro-advisory services.
- ***Supporting Community Action Research to strengthen agri-food systems:*** TAGDev will facilitate universities to devise joint research projects, in partnership with the community and industry. In this approach, the community's own knowledge is integrated into the design and conduct of the research. New research by students/teachers gets conducted and students complete

their thesis/dissertation and research papers to complete their academic requirements (which can later be published), and at the same time the community's knowledge is systematized and integrated in the research. Community Action Research Projects (CARPs) provide avenues for experiential learning to graduate and undergraduate students. CARPs will support new approaches to outreach in the universities and encourage the integration of research across the value chain in interdisciplinary and multi-agency teams. These will largely be supported through competitive grants.

RANCH: Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education

RANCH aims to facilitate and escalate setting up networks of linked universities with relevant high-level skills and strengthened integration with research. Regional Anchor Universities (RAUs) are being established as hubs of excellence and academic leadership in higher agricultural education, science, technology and innovation. This model presents a sustainable instrument and fruitful path for developing relevant high-level agricultural skills while strengthening integration between agricultural higher education, research, entrepreneurship, and extension services for knowledge generation and innovation. The Anchor universities are a mechanism for greater engagement across universities in the same country and across countries in the same "key gaps areas" and other technical fields in agriculture and Science, Technology and Innovation using the academic mobility approach. The RAUs will typically be geographically concentrated and focused on high potential/growth areas in agricultural science and industry (but they may also be virtually distributed) and consist of a network of co-operative partners with a co-ordinating centre. Staffing will be anywhere from the local R&D group up to regional-level semi-cohesive triple-helix networks consisting of hundreds of researchers.

The major activities for the RANCH flagship are:

- **Identifying and supporting transformation of selected universities into regional anchors to provide leadership in HAE and research:** These centres will promote regional specialization and collective action among participating universities in areas that address specific common regional development challenges, to strengthen the capacities of these universities to deliver high quality training and applied research, and to meet the demand for skills required for Africa's development. The RAUs will be required to engage other universities that will be regarded as associates. Anchor and associated universities will bring together their collective capacities and competencies to take leadership in a strategic thematic area as a strategy for transforming teaching, research and outreach for greater relevance and the stimulation of inclusive and sustainable rural development.
- **Facilitating universities to design and deliver strong and relevant research-inspired training and skilling programs for generating the next generation of science leaders for Africa's agriculture:** The RAUs will be the engines for HAE strategic visioning and action planning to enhance competitiveness of African universities to produce skilled and entrepreneurial graduates who drive innovation leading to structural transformation of African economies. The RUFORUM Academic and Research Chairs (RARC) will be the key future of RANCH.
- **Facilitating universities to design and deliver impactful research, and to strategically pursue opportunities, partnerships and industry linkages to scale out and commercialise research innovations:** RANCH will support the development of capacity to deliver applied research to address the regional agricultural transformation challenges, in particular to unleash the unique breadth of skills, expertise and facilities available at universities to work collaboratively and for mutual benefit with businesses and other organisations. Collaboration will be through student projects and internships, funding PhD research, secondment of researchers into business entities or professionals from the private sector into the university, co-funding

academic positions, carrying out a funded collaborative project, and working with public, community and non-commercial organisations. Universities will be supported to spin out start-ups based on commercialisable research outputs and knowledge products and work closely with “Angel Investors”, “Alumni” and “Social Capital Investors” to provide early seed funding for new early-stage high growth businesses.

CREATE: *Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence*

CREATE aims to realign universities’ research and teaching functions into a more integrated model with a focus on problem solving and enhancing the capacity of the entire university academic practice and outreach system. Universities are incubators for Africa’s youth, transformational ideas, and cutting edge innovation. CREATE shall be RUFORUM’s continuing professional development scheme for academics at member universities, and a mechanism for linking the delivery of teaching and research through RANCH and TAGDev to the Knowledge –Hub (K-Hub). Investment will strengthen the ability of member universities to attract and support the best faculty and students, who share the RUFORUM commitment to research excellence and innovative, experiential learning. It shall provide academic staff an opportunity to enhance their practice within world class research-intensive universities (linkage to the RAUs) and to gain national and international recognition for their commitment to developing their role. CREATE will be directed at strengthening graduate training with much stronger relevance to local, national and regional stakeholders needs. It will also strengthen the creative and entrepreneurial skills of graduates and the ability of faculty to facilitate knowledge and life-long learning. Research and training shall increasingly be informed by engagement with community and industry, and students and faculty should find it more rewarding to become more engaged with communities and industry in their quest for improved knowledge and skills.

The major activities for the CREATE flagship are:

- ***Facilitating universities to realign their research, education and outreach functions into a more integrated model that enhances the capacity of the entire university system to produce high calibre agricultural scholars and researchers, and create superior learning outcomes for students, faculty and community:*** The CREATE flagship will facilitate universities to host post-graduate training programmes to address the human capital needs of Africa’s agriculture and STI. Central to the development and delivery of the regional educational programmes will be the institutionalisation of mechanisms for developing and reforming curricula to promote continuous response to stakeholder needs in a rapidly changing environment. National Forums for policy engagement, and university stakeholder advisory groups for community engagement along education and agricultural value chains, will be promoted to ensure strong communication between universities and the broader national environment. Particular attention will be paid to professional development of staff and the establishment of *Regional MSc and PhD Training Programmes*, deepening university-community-industry partnerships, and supporting unique projects that create local solutions with global impact, and enhance universities’ response to community and producer-driven desires to grow agriculture and agri-food research.
- ***Engaging universities and partners to create and reconfigure human capital, physical and virtual spaces to provide more capacity for research and teaching:*** CREATE will support regional academic mobility to promote access to quality academic programmes, strengthen inter-regional, inter-cultural exchange and collaboration in the field of higher agricultural and STI education and research. It will facilitate Academic Staff Development (ASD) through innovative approaches that ensure the continued upward trajectory of faculty with regards to skills, research output and impact. The Regional Academic Mobility (RAM) and Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) schemes shall, in particular, promote cooperation between African higher

education institutions (AHEIs), support mobility in Africa, and enhance excellence in academic practice at member universities across leadership and management, professional skills, research, teaching and learning.

K-Hub: Knowledge Hub for University Networking, Partnership and Advocacy

The K-Hub will be a dynamic and adaptive platform for accelerating the acquisition of knowledge (information, facts, principles, skills and understanding acquired through education and experience) by its members and partners. The K-Hub will support mechanisms and platforms for convening members and partners to develop innovative ideas, and demonstrate the power of university-generated analytics and knowledge to provide decision-support tools, policy advice, systems that enable universities improve their operations, and influence communities as users of knowledge. The knowledge hub will provide support to universities and their partners to fully comply with open data and open access principles, to address technical and organizational challenges, and to enable university students, researchers and faculty to strengthen analytical and knowledge-sharing capacity and develop practical, knowledge-use cases in a coordinated way. In particular, the K-Hub will focus on contributing to optimizing research and teaching outcomes by facilitating the exchange of information among the actors, moving the knowledge gained in scientific studies into real world situations, and exploring ways of translating university research into practice. It will also facilitate the application of scientific and technological excellence in agricultural practice as an everyday reality in communities, and create critical mass in given thematic areas via networking of excellent researchers with complementary expertise. A strong focus on IT architecture will form the backbone of the K-Hub as an essential ingredient in RUFORUM's knowledge-based dynamism.

The major activities for the K-Hub flagship are

- ***Developing, hosting, maintaining and integrating the RUFORUM online and offline IT platforms to facilitate and enhance systematic access to information:*** The RUFORUM blueprint for the KMCS is to manage a process to understand the network of actors in the HAE sector in Africa towards initiating closer collaborations of stakeholders and providing them with information and decision-support tools to enable them perform effectively and efficiently. The RUFORUM platforms to be integrated include the Higher Agricultural Education Capacity Indicators (HAECI) portal and database, Online Impact Portal (OIP) and platform, Ideas Bank, Management Information System (MIS), Knowledge Repository, Website and Blog, and digital communication and social media platforms. The K-Hub will facilitate further mapping and analysis exercises in addition to fostering dialogues for action together with specific focus groups. It is for growing and optimising a vital and needs-oriented network.
- ***Facilitating universities to innovatively use ITs to improve university teaching (e-Learning), research (e-Scholarship) and community outreach (e-Extension):*** As a knowledge hub, RUFORUM constitutes a continental universities-led innovation system that is a node in networks of knowledge production and knowledge sharing. The K-Hub will be characterised by high connectedness and high internal and external networking and knowledge sharing capabilities. As a meeting point of communities of knowledge and interest, the K-Hub will fulfil three major functions: to generate knowledge, to transfer knowledge to sites of application, and to transmit knowledge to other people through education and training. Through the K-Hub, RUFORUM will facilitate universities to provide relevant and practical training, not only through innovative and creative teaching, but also by using the latest electronic means to deliver and enhance the student learning experience. The K-Hub will facilitate the establishment of customised user-friendly Virtual Learning Environments - "Moodle Platforms" - for students to access learning materials, post assignments, enter discussions with their peers, check their university email accounts, search, download, and read in the

RUFORUM and various universities e-libraries, and keep in constant contact with their course tutors. The RUFORUM repository (e-library) will be built into an extensive collection of resources that can be accessed by staff, students, and the general public. The K-Hub will also facilitate universities in the use Open Access software to provide complimentary agricultural extension and advisory services.

- ***Facilitating universities, stakeholders and key partners to synthesise emerging lessons and best practices, and to document and disseminate information, knowledge and innovations:*** The K-hub will facilitate the creation, capture, organizing, sharing and refining of information and content across teams and geographic locations - ensuring that knowledge delivery by RUFORUM is strategic and of “good fit”, and inputs, products and engagement are sound and influential in promoting, encouraging and extending knowledge and information exchange among HAE leaders, academics, researchers, students and value chain participants and actors. Dissemination types will include scientific papers, theses, policy and technical notes, special publications, sector and thematic papers, good practice notes, opinion pieces, and books and monographs, and the signature African Journal of Rural Development, among others. Special attention will be paid to capturing and sharing successful location-specific experience and international experiences and providing policy suggestions or recommendations.

PROGRAMME SUPPORT: Technical, administrative and logistical support

The Secretariat shall provide an adaptive coordination system that supports member universities to work together, facilitate efficiency in the measures used to deliver on the flagships, and facilitate universities to perform beyond RUFORUM support and become more transformative. A key success element of RUFORUM has been its mechanisms that enabled universities to access research grants and scholarships that guarantee impact, and galvanising universities for regional collective action by hosting regional programs, and the well-established universities supporting newly established partners through GTAs and other collaborative and/or joint undertakings. While the Secretariat will retain some of these functions, it is desirable to devolve some of the functions to partners willing and able to host and run them for the collective good.

RUFORUM will maintain an effective governance structure with clear roles, accountabilities and responsibilities across the network so as to enable effective supervision, decision making and necessary controls and management. Guidance will be provided through the Annual General Meeting (AGM), meetings of the Board and its committees, the International Advisory Panel (IAP), and the Committees of Principals and Deans. RUFORUM, through its Secretariat and drawing from the collective pool of skills, techniques and expertise of its members and partners acquired through practical experience, will facilitate universities to influence development actions by providing valuable advice and support, advocacy, consultancy, training, public speaking, publishing, engaging with policymakers, communicating via traditional and social media, and advising or training others. In particular, RUFORUM will broker alliances and partnerships to assist universities establish delivery networks for scaling-up research outputs, knowledge products and innovations, in the form of - federations and membership models, communities of practice, branding and quality marks, licencing, franchising, delivery contracts, collaborations, representation, advocacy and awareness raising, transferring knowledge, codifying processes, sharing good practices, providing tools, training, support and quality assurance, and community capacity building and empowerment.

The Secretariat will be staffed with a dedicated specialist team of managers and programme leadership professionals who have the knowledge, skills and experience to lead, provide advice, and support the network of universities and partners to build the capabilities that support challenges of the anticipated complex transformational change, and the delivery of benefits within tight time and cost constraints whilst minimising risk.

Programme leadership will take a holistic approach to ensure that the flagships deliver the Vision 2030 objectives, the benefits set out in the OP are delivered, and that work packages described for each flagship are delivered to time, cost and quality. Technical delivery and assurance will be with the universities with the Secretariat providing proactive intervention and advice, through technical specialists, where necessary. Programme implementation will entail deploying intelligent processes, procedures and tools including but not limited to planning, risk and issue management, budgeting and financial control, change control, and quality management.

FINANCING REQUIREMENTS AND STRATEGY

The estimated cost is USD 266,362 for the 5-year period, 2018 – 2022, with 86.9% of the budget estimated for the flagships and 13.1% for programme support and management.

Flagship	Broad Activities by Result	Indicative Budget ('000 USD)
TAGDev - Transforming African Agricultural Universities for Africa's Growth and Development	<p><i>Skilled, adaptive and proactive graduates responsive to the labour market needs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen capacity of universities and BTJET institutions to develop, deliver and scale innovative training curricula and new models of agricultural education. Facilitate universities and BTJET institutions to attract, recruit, train and skill Africa's new age of development practitioners and cadres Support the design and scaling of effective models for agribusiness and entrepreneurship training at selected universities and BTJET institutions to recruit youth into agriculture, engage Africa's college educated youth in innovation and investments in agriculture, leverage university competencies to improve quality of BTJET programmes, and link higher education, science and technology (HEST) to the productive sector. 	64,832 (27.4%)
	<p><i>Universities more actively engaged with community and industry in teaching, research and outreach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and scale out university-community engagement and field/industry attachment models that engage students in experiential learning while also delivering complimentary agricultural advisory services Support Community Action Research to strengthen agri-food systems 	
RANCH - Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education	<p><i>Regional Anchor Universities with capacity to address the regional agricultural transformation challenges, including the design and strengthening of research programs in Key Gaps Areas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and support transformation of selected universities into regional anchors to provide leadership in HAE and research Facilitate universities to design and deliver strong and relevant research-inspired training and skilling programs for generating the next generation of science leaders for Africa's agriculture 	54,890 (20.5%)
	<p><i>High impact, demand-driven research outputs and innovations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate universities to design and deliver impactful research, and to strategically pursue opportunities, partnerships and industry linkages to scale out and commercialise research innovations 	
CREATE - Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence	<p><i>University scholarship and instruction that is grounded in the academic principles of research and evidence, enables students to excel academically, and supports a campus-wide culture that values, fosters, and rewards continuous improvement in teaching and learning.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate universities to realign their research, education and outreach functions into a more integrated model that enhances the capacity of the entire university system to produce high calibre agricultural scholars and researchers, and create superior learning outcomes for students, faculty and community. 	53,125 (20.0%)
	<p><i>High impact infrastructure: novel curricula approaches, cutting-edge research and teaching facilities and highly skilled faculty</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage universities and partners to create and reconfigure human capital, physical and virtual spaces to provide more capacity for research and teaching. 	
K-Hub - Knowledge Hub for University Networking, Partnership and Advocacy	<p><i>Open access portal with multiple functionalities and systems that support and improve knowledge generation, management and sharing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, host, maintain and integrate the RUFORUM online and offline IT platforms to facilitate and enhance systematic access to information Facilitate universities to innovatively use ITs to improve university teaching (e-Learning), research (e-Scholarship) and community outreach (e-Extension) 	29,283 (11.0%)
	<p><i>Knowledge products that inspire RUFORUM, Universities and other stakeholders towards finding sustainable and well researched solutions and impact</i></p>	

Flagship	Broad Activities by Result	Indicative Budget ('000 USD)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate universities, stakeholders and key partners to synthesise emerging lessons and best practices, and to document and disseminate information, knowledge and innovations <p>Regular convenings around common interests to share and use information, knowledge, best practice experiences and evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene the RUFORUM Triennial Conference and thematic dialogues of Communities of Practice/Interest to showcase research and training outputs, discuss strategies to enhance the use of university-generated research and evidence, influence public policies, support stakeholders' feedback mechanisms, and enhance demand for HAE products and services. 	
PROGRAM SUPPORT – Technical, administrative and logistical support	<p>A governance structure and processes that provide effective stewardship and oversight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Governance, stewardship and oversight:</i> Statutory organs and meetings that enhance ownership of RUFORUM by the member universities, guide the network to fulfil its corporate mission and undertake relevant and effective transformations, and provide leadership in thought leadership <p>A facilitative, effective and efficient management structure and systems for program elaboration, implementation, and responsibility for results and their quality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Advocacy:</i> Organise and/or facilitate high level meetings and dialogues to advocate for political commitment to support and increase investment in higher agricultural education, science, technology and innovation <i>Programme Management:</i> build in-house and network-wide capacities, structures and systems to: define realistic programme objectives; dynamically allocate, utilize and direct resources; manage and deliver programs. <i>Partnerships and Alliances:</i> Facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement, dialogue and resource support for the implementation of core programmes, operational costs and improvement of HAE infrastructure. <i>Resource diversification and investments:</i> Mobilise funding for RUFORUM projects and programmes, including establishing sustainable funding mechanisms and instruments <i>Secretariat Capacity:</i> Assemble and integrate the human resource, administrative and technical infrastructure required to improve practices, offer better services and more effectively prepare RUFORUM for the future [<i>Staff and Operating Costs</i>]. 	34,948 (13.1%)
Total		266,362

Financing Strategy: Diversifying Revenue Streams

Apart from the traditional support from development partners and members' contributions, RUFORUM will explore new ways to add new income streams to support the implementation of the operational plan. RUFORUM in its fundraising strategy shall understand which of its programme areas are close to its target investors' hearts and develop pitches around these areas. Financing the OP will build on existing capacities resident in member universities and at the Secretariat. Resource mobilisation teams will be clustered around strategic objectives and research themes. Each flagship is expected to draw resources across the spectrum of potential sources of financing. RUFORUM targets four main sources of financing: (i) *Contribution from member universities* in form of membership subscription fees, agency/capacity development fees, and monetary and technical contribution to the activities implemented; (ii) *National governments of member universities* will be engaged in dialogue to increase annual recurrent and development budget support to universities, provide direct financing and commissioning of research, establish Research and Innovation Funds, provide a framework and resources for replication of research outputs through incubation centres, creation of technology parks, borrow and/or guarantee research grants from international and continental financial institutions, and provide annual budget subvention to the RUFORUM Secretariat; (iii) Contributions from *development agencies* around key areas of global concern; and (iv) *Investment* to create an Endowment Fund with self-reinforcing replenishments.

The TAGDev, RANCH and CREATE *instructional initiatives* target new markets of learners, focusing on people seeking non-degree, pre- and post-secondary (BTNET) certification as well as those seeking degrees. *Pricing initiatives* will include providing discounts on tuition for students with certain desired characteristics, to generate a student body providing more revenue overall. *Franchising, licensing,*

sponsorship, outsourcing, and partnering arrangements in non-instructional activities with externally based partners can also provide new revenues, in addition to institutions allowing other parties to use their resources, such as the expertise of faculty members or brands in exchange for additional revenue. RUFORUM will assist in building capacity at member universities in proposal writing and in brokering partnership and sponsorship arrangements that provide more explicit incentives for faculty revenue-generating activities and engagement. The most direct method of generating income by universities and faculty is through teaching and sharing their knowledge, or through consulting services or by becoming virtual assistants to provide hands on business expertise to creative entrepreneurs.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

As its value proposition, RUFORUM guarantees *'highest satisfaction and success to its partners and stakeholders driven by the collective unrivalled experience and know-how, dedicated service, consistency and reliability, at the lowest acquisition cost'*. RUFORUM satisfies a broad range of clients and their needs in three ways: it creates gains through collaboration, provides products and services that help them be more relevant or productive, and it reduces some of their burdens by serving them all collectively. Implementing the OP is set to rely on mechanisms bringing together diverse actors to actively align their efforts and work together towards a shared objective - to solve a problem or exploit a promising new opportunity, while nonetheless having different interests or 'stakes'. The complex multi-stakeholder arrangements (ranging from coalitions, alliances, and platforms, to participatory governance, stakeholder engagement, and interactive policy-making) anticipated for implementing OP call for a distinct type of host. RUFORUM Secretariat as an interlocutor will combine, amongst others, skills and practices associated with facilitation, convening, communications, and brokering. This will demand quantitative growth and qualitative improvement, where dedicated investment and local ownership will be critical for effective implementation.

Secretariat roles and responsibilities

The Secretariat shall perform the administrative and executive services for RUFORUM, setting the agenda for the deliberative and decision-making organs of the network and implementing the decisions made and policies laid down by these bodies. It shall manage the coordination and dialogue mechanisms necessary to address the formal technical and administrative requirements of the partnership-based implementation arrangements, including additional investment in applying, strengthening and adapting existing leadership and managerial competencies in order to use these mechanisms effectively.

Roles and responsibilities of member universities

Universities have the primary responsibility for uplifting and maintaining the quality and value of HAE. The new RUFORUM dispensation will require faculty members to use active and collaborative learning techniques, engage students in experiences, emphasize higher-order cognitive activities in the classroom, interact with students, challenge students academically, and value enriching educational experiences including community engagement. The universities will undertake leading research, working closely with industry to generate near-market solutions and start new businesses. Their generic collective responsibilities include: providing education to the required standard; providing facilities for, and encouraging, study and research; encouraging the advancement and development of knowledge, and its application to government, industry, commerce and the community; providing courses of study or instruction, at levels of achievement considered appropriate, to meet the needs of the community; conferring higher education awards; disseminating knowledge and promoting scholarship; providing facilities and resources for the wellbeing of staff, faculty, students and other persons undertaking courses at the institution; and, exploiting commercially, for the institution's

benefit, a facility or resource of the institution, including, for example, study, research or knowledge, or the practical application of study, research or knowledge, belonging to the institution, whether alone or with someone else. The flagship interventions aim to deepen these functions – universities and BTVETs as educational establishments and as generators of knowledge, skills and technology.

National, regional, continental and global partners

The RUFORUM network operates within the national, regional and global framework. Governments are expected to provide the appropriate policy and functional environment for the network to thrive. This will include but not be limited to the legal framework for autonomous but guided higher agricultural education, reforming funding systems to raise revenues for HAE and guiding the rational use of investments, expanding the scope of national qualifications frameworks and ensuring that training content corresponds to work requirements, and providing new or expanding/upgrading existing infrastructure. Regional, continental and global partners provide benchmarks and help in capacity development.

Communities and value chain actors

A demand-responsive skills system requires greater engagement of employers and users of products and services. Of the HAE and BTVET system, a more flexible structure of training supply and better information about labour market demands. Involving communities and industry will help the HAE system adjust enrolment targets, content and training methodologies, and the range of occupations and skills needs for modern productive sectors. Equally important are partnerships in the delivery and financing of training and research.

MEASUREMENT EVALUATION AND LEARNING

In the proposed new dispensation, RUFORUM will build on its established culture of creating value for its stakeholders from every single investment. In order to do this, each investment, process and product shall be monitored and evaluated from a multi-dimensional lens. This calls for a robust and comprehensive results measurement agenda with “learning and adaptation from objective evidence” mantra as the centrepiece. The RUFORUM results measurement system will therefore be framed around key strategic and operational learning questions.

RISKS AND RISKS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

RUFORUM has a Risk Management Framework 2016-2020 that sets out the key principles guiding how risk management is embedded at all levels of the Secretariat and supported partners. The RUFORUM Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) provides for three management expectations: (a) turning governance and strategic directions into results and performance; (b) a culture supported by strong corporate values, learning, innovation and change management; and, (c) management excellence in the areas of stewardship, policy and programmes, risk management, people-focused service, accountability and people management. The implementation of the interventions proposed in this OP faces three principal risks that will be monitored and managed appropriately: inadequate financial and technical resources for the implementation of the proposed interventions; inadequate staffing capacity within RUFORUM Secretariat; and donor changing priorities, which may limit availability of financial resources.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of RUFORUM and other related HAE institutions networks was a significant leap forward and a source of renaissance in higher agricultural education in Africa. They have facilitated the development of structures that advocate for increased support to HAE. Their guidance and further development of enabling structures has helped to highlight the situation of HAE. These organisations have brought focus, and initiated debate on various concepts of HAE transformation. RUFORUM, in particular, has been instrumental in promoting university reforms as a means of getting them to be more relevant and engaged in national development programmes.

This OP represents an expression of the need for an enhanced knowledge-driven transformation in agriculture on the continent. There is a compulsive need for the continent to make substantial progress in developing skills and competences to make technologies and innovations work for development. It is this challenge that this OP seeks to address in the agricultural sector. RUFORUM therefore calls on African stakeholders and development partners to support the efforts to realize the objectives of this OP to enable the continent to leap onto the path of a knowledge-driven transformation in Africa's agriculture and give the continent a much-needed head-start in the implementation of the SDGs and Africa's Agenda 2063.