

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building (RUFORUM)

Priority Area One: Eradicating Hunger and Achieving Food and Nutrition Security



3rd SUMMARY REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF STISA 2024

Submitted: November, 2016

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a network of 66 African universities in 26 African countries with mission to *'strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers and value chains through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact-oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, market actors, national agricultural research and advocacy institutions, governments and industry'*. The supply of agricultural scientists with quality postgraduate education, together with the skills and commitment to improve rural livelihoods, is a critical need that underpins the development of effective programmes, institutions and leadership across the agricultural sector. Entrepreneurial and problem solving human capital is central to RUFORUM's agricultural development strategy. It goes beyond enhanced productivity through the results of solid research and development (R&D) – to innovation and links to small-holder producers; expanded and improved functionality of commodity value chains; and impact at scale through robust NGO and private-sector growth. RUFORUM members increase the contribution of universities to the productivity and profitability of small farmers through knowledge generation, knowledge-sharing and more effective policy formulation. In this way, RUFORUM contributes directly to the African Common Position on post 2015. RUFORUM's mandate is underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the African Union Commission signed in 2014 to support the implementation of the African Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA -2024), Priority One **"eradication of hunger and achieving food and nutrition security"**. This report presents a summary of progress, key achievements for the year 2015/2016 for the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM).

In the reporting period, RUFORUM reports the following key achievements:

1. Expanded programmatic (community engagement, entrepreneurship, policy work) and geographical scope of the Network with presence in each of the eight regional economic communities of the African Union.
2. Developed a flexible reporting framework for Priority One of the Science, Technology Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024), aligned to a previously developed continental implementation plan in line with RUFORUM's MoU with the African Union Commission.
3. Initiated an Africa-wide initiative to support curricula to better respond to developmental challenges through improved university community engagement and entrepreneurship to foster value addition, agribusiness and entrepreneurship through science led approaches to address African socio-economic challenges. This initiative is supported through a secured USD27.1 million grant from The MasterCard Foundation.
4. Strengthened engagements with African national governments to support higher education and further grounding RUFORUM's role as a network that fosters university engagement with African agriculture, science and technology stakeholders, continent-wide.

A key challenge during the period continued to be the escalating demand for RUFORUM membership without significant increase in the resource base to effectively service the extensive network. Below are the key highlights of achievements on each of the Strategic Action Areas.

Summary of Key Results as of October, 2016

Strategic Action	Key results by October 2016
<p>Strategic objective 1: Enhance effectiveness of STI in addressing/ implementing priority areas [for STISA-P1 by aligning with and implementation to advance the CAADP targets and the Africa's Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation agenda (3AGT)]</p>	
<p>Strategic Action 1.1: Set priorities, develop and implement prioritised multidisciplinary flagship programmes supported by efficient management to meet the needs of society within context of the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convened a special information session to provide update on progress of implementing STISA 2024 Priority One during the 7th Africa Agricultural Science Week and in partnership with the AUC. As part of this session, RUFORUM also co-convened with AUC an information session on the African Union Research Grant Programme. 2. Expanded programmatic (community engagement, entrepreneurship, policy work and TVET) and geographical scope of the Network to 66 member universities with presence in each of the eight African regional economic communities of the African Union to better support implementation of STISA Priority One. 3. Supported universities to strengthen entrepreneurship education through transformation of curricula, inclusive rural agricultural-led growth and to better respond to developmental challenges in the agricultural sector.
<p>Strategic objective 2: Improve technical competencies and institutional capacity for STI development [for STISA-P1 – build and improve systemic capabilities at national level to a sufficient critical mass - human capital, technical competencies, infrastructure, enabling environment, innovation and entrepreneurial mindset and institutional capacity]</p>	
<p>Strategic Action 2.1: Support building, upgrading and/or enhancing quality of agricultural R&D and AET infrastructural assets core for scientific</p>	

Strategic Action	Key results by October 2016
	<p>and technological developments to support</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supported the development of additional 10 new PhD and 4 MSc¹ programs based on emerging regional capacity demands, modelled on Centre of excellence approach to support skills development in strategic areas required for implementation of CAADP, S3A and STISA. This is in addition to the 8 PhD and 7 MSc programmes developed in the previous reporting period. 2. Awarded 91 doctoral scholarships to African Scholars to support a mix of research, tuition and thesis write-up. 3. Supported a further 41 PhD and 60 Master students to enrol in regional collaborative MSc and PhD programs. Cumulatively trained 1433 Masters and 356 PhD students over the 10-year period. 4. Developed an Africa-wide Knowledge Management Strategy to guide dissemination and access to agricultural knowledge products by targeted end-users. 5. Strengthened the Agricultural knowledge hub through collating and disseminating outcomes of RUFORUM supported research. <p>Strategic Action 2.2: Develop and connect human and institutional capacities – enhancing technical and professional competencies, response capacities and capabilities to manage and govern the advancement of STI, integrate and co-create new knowledge to drive Africa’s agricultural transformative agenda</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supported the alignment of university research to STISA by providing oversight, guidance and mentorship to 108 university-led agricultural research projects/teams and 96 student field attachments. 2. Supported intra-African academic staff exchange between East and West Africa regional economic communities to strengthen training and research collaboration, and experiential across the continent. 3. Launched and produced two editions of the African Journal of Rural Development that publishes both academic and non-academic action research issues to share knowledge on all aspects that contribute to sustainable rural development in Africa. The Journal is multidisciplinary in nature and it aims to share lessons and experiences on working with rural communities to improve agricultural

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Strategic Action	Key results by October 2016
<p>productivity and livelihoods.</p> <p>4. Strengthened and engaged research partnerships leading to peer- and-quality assurance of research protocols, networking, and collaboration.</p> <p>5. Strengthened and established multi-stakeholder platforms for community outreach to re-orient university research and training to be of relevance to smallholder farmers through the Community Action Research Programmes (CARPs)</p>	
<p>Strategic Action 2.3: Build systems for data collection and analysis, as well as sharing of information on progress towards major goals and implementation of activities</p> <p>1. Continued to facilitate Member Universities to report on their actions and contribution towards STISA 2024 Priority One implementation</p> <p>2. Developed a platform (in partnership with IFPRI/ASTI) for tracking university performance in terms of research investments, training programs, and staff capacity. This is a framework envisaged for monitoring human capacity, training, research outputs, and investments in African Universities.</p> <p>3. Conducted an impact assessment of the 10 year previous RUFORUM Strategic Plan (2006-2015) that took stock of returns to investment and set benchmarks for the new 2015-2020 Business Strategic Plan.</p> <p>4. Organized exhibitions on STISA Priority One at key events across the continent including at the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD3) 5-8 April, 2016; the 7th Africa Agriculture Science Week (AASW)/FARA General Assembly, among others.</p> <p>5. Trained 315 and continued to engage young Agricultural Social Media Reporters on the use of social media across the continent to attract the young generation to report on science outcomes and into the agricultural sector</p>	
<p>Strategic objective 3: Promote economic competitiveness through fostering innovation, value addition, industrial/ agribusiness development and entrepreneurship in synergy with other instruments</p>	



Strategic Action	Key results by October 2016
<p>Strategic Action 3.1: Develop National and Regional innovation and knowledge systems that add value to and ensure optimal returns from investments in STI</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RUFORUM Secretariat through the competitive Grants system (CGS)² supported university-led, farmer-focused research on commodity based value chains by guiding the implementation of 55 multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional research teams (GRG; 5th GRG projects and 6th GRG projects) involving support to 120 Masters students. 2. Piloted innovative training models that promote postgraduate training involving entrepreneurship skills building, in addition to relevant technical, research and outreach capacities piloted at Gulu and Egerton Universities in partnership with EARTH University in Costa Rica and other partners. <p>Strategic Action 3.2: Foster value addition, agribusiness and entrepreneurship to address and respond to African socio-economic challenges</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Launched the Young Africa Entrepreneurs (YAE) competition. The competition attracted 756 young applicant from across the continent. The best 15 young innovators/entrepreneurs were recognised during the 5th Africa Higher Education Science Week by HE. Dr. Nkosasana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.
<p>Strategic objective 4: Protect knowledge production (including inventions, and indigenous knowledge) by strengthening IPR and regulatory regimes at all levels</p>	
<p>Strategic Action 4.1: Transform and strengthen Africa’s agricultural STI environment into an effective innovation system to meet Africa’s socio-economic needs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitated scholarly skills development among faculty and graduate fellows through technical backstopping in peer reviewing, training in publishing and authorship, and institutional scholarly quality assurance processes. 2. Retooled faculty in project development implementation and tracking of outcomes. 3. The RUFORUM Board approved the continent-wide Capacity Development Strategy to guide postgraduate training and research in African universities

² The CGS emphasizes linking faculty and students with rural communities, promoting inter-disciplinary research and encouraging multi-agency research teams to create impact across the region. The CGS gives universities opportunities to encourage participatory research by faculty and students working in partnerships with the farmers and other agencies involved in research and development.



Strategic Action	Key results by October 2016
Strategic objective 5: Facilitate STI policy reforms, harmonization, science diplomacy and resource mobilization	
Strategic Action 5.1: Through effective policy practice provide an enabling policy and institutional environment for the sustainable application and performance of science - integrating STI in strategies, plans and programs at national and regional levels	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaged with governments to strengthen Africa’s higher agricultural education quality, through creation of platforms for university engagement with African agriculture, science and technology stakeholders with a focus on continental and international development frameworks such as STISA 2024. 2. Held the continental Biennial Convening (October 2016) in Cape Town, South Africa on Africa Higher Agricultural Education with a theme; “Linking Agricultural Universities with Civil Society, the Private Sector, Governments and other Stakeholders. 3. Participated in various high level policy dialogues to enhance science dialogue and policy support including: meetings with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission; the President of Mauritius; The African Development Bank; The Deputy President of Kenya; the President of Malawi; various high commissioners/ ambassadors; Ministers from various countries; among others, to discuss higher agricultural education in Africa. 	
Strategic Action 5.2: Establish funds and financing mechanisms that promote national, regional and continental solidarity in agricultural STI	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Through the various engagements, RUFORUM mobilised 13 grants amounting to about US\$60 Million for Member Universities and close to US\$30 million for the Secretariat to strengthen higher education in Africa. 5. Conducted organisational review to; (a) review progress towards achievement of programmatic targets relevant to STISA over a 2-year implementation period, 2014/2015-2015/2016, (b) determine the effect of interventions on RUFORUM’s undertakings, (c) facilitate learning by reflecting on challenges and draw lessons from each Core Area, and (d) determine any emerging issues that need to be considered during the remaining period (2017-2019) related to STISA. The review findings indicated that RUFORUM was on track with regards to all performance measurement indices. 	

