



Theme: Operationalising Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action

Venue: Mercure Hotel, Windhoek, Namibia

**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS FOR RUFORUM'S SECOND TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE
Thematic Area 2: Sustainably Growing the Economy and Feeding Africa**

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a network of 170 Universities in 40 African Countries, will hold its second Triennial Conference and the 20th Annual General Meeting (AGM) from 12th – 16th August 2024 at **Mercure Hotel, Windhoek, Namibia**. The theme for the second Triennial Conference is **“Operationalising Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action”**. It is a response to the urgent call to action by African governments, development partners, private sector and citizenry to this crucial sector to generate inclusive and sustainable solutions for the continent’s urgent development needs.

The conference will enable education, research and agricultural ecosystem actors to showcase and present their key findings, lesson-share and inform each other on key actions required to harness science, technology and innovation for Africa’s development. Accordingly, the second Triennial Conference will involve scientific sessions that bring together a wide range of stakeholders and partners. The scientific sessions, which cover four thematic areas, will include oral and poster presentations as well as exhibitions. Various meeting types involving bilateral and multilateral partners will also be conducted to establish coalitions for leveraging Africa's and the global science community's capacity and science solutions for development.

The four thematic areas are as follows:

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- Thematic area 1: Educating Africa: Implementing Transformative Higher Agricultural Education to meet Africa’s Human Capital Needs*
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- Thematic Area 2: Sustainably Growing the Economy and Feeding Africa*
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- Thematic Area 3: Unlocking Inclusive and Broad-Based Economic Opportunity
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- Thematic Area 4: Economic Trends, Best -Practices, Policy-Practice and Futures
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Thematic Area 2: Sustainably Growing the Economy and Feeding Africa

The African Development Bank’s (AfDB) Macroeconomic Performance and Outlook report¹ for 2024-2025 indicates that the continent’s real gross domestic product (GDP) will grow at an average rate of 3.8% and 4.2% in 2024 and 2025 respectively. Africa will also account for eleven

¹www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/africa-dominates-list-worlds-20-fastest-growing-economies-2024-african-development-bank-says-macroeconomic-report

Co-organisers:





of the world's 20 fastest-growing economies in 2024 and sustain higher GDP growth than the global averages of 2.9% and 3.2% for 2024 and 2025 respectively. Key factors driving GDP growth in top-performing economies among others, include the declining commodity dependence through economic diversification according to AfDB. Agriculture is a vital sector of Africa's economy, because of its multiplier effects in developing the economy.

The AfDB further indicates that if barriers to agricultural development are supported by new and strategic investments, Africa's agricultural output could increase from \$280 billion in 2023 per year, to \$1 trillion by 2030. It should thus be possible to feed and grow Africa if the continent transforms its significant agriculture sector and seizes the potential for diversification into an equal opportunity player in global trade and growth. Economic transformation processes should buttress Africa's agriculture against endemic and emerging challenges such as: (i) [rapid growth in demand for food](#) by urbanizing communities, (ii) need for [rapid commercialization of agriculture](#), (iii) lagging production, productivity and agro-processing, (iv) changing consumption patterns, (v) [climate change](#), (vi) weak and/or dysfunctional markets (input and output) among others²³⁴. The production elements of Africa's agriculture sector that must be transformed include: Arable farming, the blue economy, livestock and natural resources within the framework of agrifood systems. Strengthening agrifood systems, revitalizing value chains and sustainable development require that all knowledge sources as well as human capital be aligned. African agricultural universities must and can play a significant role in the process.

The RUFORUM Secretariat in partnership with the host country Namibia and the Local Organising Committee now invites abstracts for the Second Triennial Conference under this theme. For this thematic area, abstracts may be presented on the under listed topical areas under each sub-theme as indicated below:

Sub-theme 2a. Increased production, productivity and competitiveness :

- a) Crop-based production systems:
 - Sustainable intensification- agronomy, soil health & production systems
 - Climate smart agriculture and conservation.
 - Crop improvement- Genetics, molecular biology and biotechnology.
 - Crop protection – epidemiology, management and control.
 - Entrepreneurship and markets.
- b) Livestock-based production systems:
 - Sustainable production systems.
 - Health and Zoonoses.
 - Genetics and breeding.
 - Entrepreneurship and markets.
- c) Africa's Blue economy and related food systems:
 - Fisheries, aquaculture and marine production systems.

² Nabuuma, D. et al., 2022. Impact of seed system interventions on food and nutrition security in low- and middle-income countries: A scoping review, Global Food Security, Volume 33,2022,100638, ISSN 2211-9124, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2022.100638>.

³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2022/10/17/putting-africans-at-the-heart-of-food-security-and-climate-resilience>

⁴ <https://www.afdb.org/en/the-high-5/feed-africa>



- Markets.
- d) Crop-livestock production systems for tropical agroecologies:
 - Drylands farming systems.
 - Agroecology and sustainable production systems.
 - Humid and sub-humid farming systems.
- e) Digitization and improvement of value chains:
 - Precision agriculture: Opportunities and lessons learnt.
 - Digital green: Efficient resource use- irrigation, data capture etc.
 - Digital tools for improving value chain connectedness and access to markets.

Sub-theme 2b. Resilient agrifood systems and health:

- a) Sustainable food supply: Supply of sufficient, accessible, nutritious and safe food.
- b) Climate change mitigation and adaptation: Clean energy, climate smart agriculture, and conservation; carbon neutrality.
- c) Leveraging indigenous agrifood systems for sustainable development.
- d) One world, one health: Human, animal, and environmental health nexus.

Guidelines for Abstract Submission

1. Abstracts must be submitted via an online platform through the [link](#) no later than **31st March 2024** (Email submissions will not be accepted).
2. A clear and concise abstract of **no more than 2100** Characters with spaces excluding the title, authors' details and key words. Please do not include figures or tables.
3. Abstracts must be submitted with the following structure when writing: background, objectives, methods, results, conclusions/implications, and keywords.
4. On submission, indicate whether for oral or poster (The selections committee may suggest otherwise upon review of the content of the abstract)
5. Accepted abstracts will be informed to submit a full short paper which will be published in either the RUFORUM Working Document Series <https://repository.ruforum.org/> or the African Journal of Rural Development <https://afjrdev.org/index.php/jos> once approved by peer reviewers. Sample papers can be accessed at <https://shorturl.at/ICHPX>.
6. You may submit more than one abstract. However, presenters who are accepted for oral presentations will be permitted to give only one oral presentation. Additional accepted abstracts will therefore be posters only.
7. Poster size should be as follows: Height: 118.9 cm, Width: 84.1 cm ([link or sample poster](#))
8. All papers will be subjected to peer review and plagiarism checks before publication.

Enquiries should be submitted to triennial@ruforum.org with a copy to acheikhyoussef@unam.na