



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

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 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”**.

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 will include oral and poster presentations as well as exhibitions.

The RUFORUM Secretariat now invites researchers, opinion leaders, graduate and Post-Doctoral students and development experts to submit short abstracts under the thematic areas and sub-themes listed below. High-quality papers will be published in either the RUFORUM Working Document Series <https://repository.ruforum.org/> or scientific journals including the African Journal of Rural Development <https://afirdev.org/index.php/jos> among others.

Thematic area 1: Educating Africa: Implementing Transformative Higher Agricultural Education to meet Africa's Human Capital Needs

Sub-theme 1a. Supplying Africa's 2nd decade (2024-2034) work force:

- a) Transforming Graduate Training and Research: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt.
- b) Entrepreneurial education: The practice, and scalable lessons.
- c) Rebalancing the human resource pyramid: The gap, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs).
- d) Closing the gender and diversity gap in agricultural education: The gap, lessons-learnt and opportunities.
- e) Leaving no one behind: Out of school skilling and education programs: Practice and lessons learnt.

Sub-theme 1b. Emergent issue-Digitizing education:

Co-organisers





- a) Leveraging digital tool to increase access to education while maintaining quality and relevance.
- b) Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence and its impact on education.

Sub-theme 1c. Emergent issues: Building human capital for Africa's climate change and resilience programmes

- a) Climate risks and mitigation: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt in training programmes.
- b) Low carbon services and renewables: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt in training and research programmes.
- c) Climate and carbon finance, and resilience investments: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt.

To access the detailed call for Thematic Area 1 click here ([Link](#))

Thematic Area 2: Sustainably Growing the Economy and Feeding Africa

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,
 - 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.

To access the detailed call for Thematic Area 2 click here ([Link](#))

Thematic Area 3: Unlocking Inclusive and Broad-Based Economic Opportunity

Sub-theme 3a: Inclusive resourcing for equitable economic growth

- a) Access to resources for production
 1. Financial inclusion: Microfinance, Fintechs and supporting excluded communities and populations.
 2. Agricultural input subsidies: Lessons learnt and options for the future.
 3. Access to technologies- Lessons learnt and options for the future.
 - Formal and informal seed and technology supply systems.
 - Post stress seed systems (emergency seed).
- b) Gender, diversity and inclusion:
 - Closing the gender gap in agriculture practice and enterprise.
 - Access to land, water and other physical resources for production (land tenure systems -access, usage, control).

Sub-theme 3b : Wealth and Youth Employment

- a) Agri-entrepreneurship and agriculture de-revived jobs: Initiatives, opportunities, prospects and lessons learnt from past and ongoing actions.
- b) Feeding Africa's urbanising population: The changing peri-urban and urban food systems and their opportunities for young people through service provision, value added-processing and new foods.
- c) Unlocking entrepreneurship in innovation: Digitization, and emerging technologies to facilitate best environment for entrepreneurship.

To access the detailed call for Thematic Area 3 click here ([Link](#))

Thematic Area 4: Economic Trends, Best -Practices, Policy-Practice and Futures

Sub theme 4a: Innovations for growing Africa's agriculture and related sectors

- a) Improving Africa's low agricultural total factor productivity: The status, trends and opportunities.
 - Accessing improved technologies: lesson learnt from the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme and similar initiatives.
- b) Technological Leapfrogging: Digitization, renewables and manufacture transition.
- c) Production at scale for a growing population and markets: Can smallholder agriculture grow and feed Africa: Evidence, roles and opportunity?



Sub theme 4b: Foresight and trend studies

- a) Reaping Africa's demographic dividend: Implications for education planning and investments.
 - Skilling the next generation; Policy frameworks, trends and implications
- b) Making agriculture work for African economies: lessons learnt from CAADP and other frameworks.
- c) Policy and economic implications of climate risks and natural disasters.
 - The race to net zero economies: which way for Africa, are we preparing?
 - Natural disasters and economic growth in Africa.
 - Economic development imperatives for sustainable development

Sub theme 4c: Policies, planning and its implementation (underpinnings for the second decade of Africa's agenda 2063- (2024-2034)

- a) People centred development:
 - Gender diversity and economic inclusion: The cost of exclusion to Africa and the policy imperatives for empowering of women.
 - Leveraging potentials of the youth for inclusive and green development in Africa.
- b) Economic resilience:
 - Harnessing the power of the private sector, including unleashing innovation and improving agrifood system functionality.
 - Trade opportunities: Our progress so far: opportunities and challenges for the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
 - Environmental economics and mitigating the adverse outcomes of frontier technologies.

To access the detailed call for Thematic Area 4 click here ([Link](#))

Guidelines for Abstract Submission

1. Abstracts must be submitted via an online platform through the [link](#) no later than **15th April 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://afirdev.org/index.php/jos> once approved by peer reviewers. Sample papers can be accessed at <https://shorturl.at/lCHPX>.



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