



# The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

## Collaborative Research and Capacity Building of Sokoine University of Agriculture and the National Agriculture Research System in Tanzania: Lessons Sharing on Implementation

### Concept Note

#### Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) has been partnering with Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI), a USAID Feed the Future Project, in building human capital investment in the next generation of intellectual, economic and political leaders in Tanzania. This joint project aims to strengthen training and collaborative research capacities of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and the Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (MAFC) with the goal of improving food security and agricultural productivity in Tanzania.

Over the years, agricultural productivity in Tanzania has stagnated while vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity has increased. Rates of malnutrition are high even among food-producing households. With a high population growth rate, Tanzania will face severe food shortages unless widespread agricultural productivity advances occur. Meeting this challenge, requires new knowledge, new ways of doing business in agriculture and food systems, and greater accumulation of assets by farm households. However, the Agricultural training, research, and outreach organizations lack the capacity needed to boost food production to new levels.

Within the iAGRI project arrangement, RUFORUM has been a lead service provider to oversee training of 30 Tanzanian MSc students in selected Eastern and Southern Africa universities, namely, University of Nairobi, Makerere University, University of Zambia, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), University of Zimbabwe, Egerton

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University, Lilongwe Universities of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Kenyatta University and Stellenbosch University. RUFORUM's engagement in this program is mainly based on its successful track record in implementing similar continental capacity building initiatives such as Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa (SCARDA). Additionally, Tanzania as a country has been a member country of RUFORUM since 2006 through Sokoine University of Agriculture. There are also students within the iAGRI project who have trained from the USA universities. This has been a unique training model which should be reviewed to provide lessons for other upcoming capacity building initiatives.

The key features of the project include:

- **Training of Scientists:** by 2017 the project will have trained 20 PhD and 115 MSc. Students.
- **Collaborative research;** More than 130 research projects related to food security funded through iAGRI bridge the distance between global partners for workshops, research and student advising through use of modern technology.
- **Building Capacity:** SUA will be helped to develop and implement enhanced instructional, internship and outreach programs through joint research and international exchanges between Tanzanian and U.S. researchers and scholars.
- **Building Linkages:** sound linkages between iAGRI of the Ohio State University Consortium, Tanzania's Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania's National Agricultural Research System, RUFORUM and Global South Institutions.

To date, a lot has been achieved and the project will end in early 2017. Hence, it is important to hold a platform for lesson sharing which will draw from the annual project reports, students' individual experiences, Partners' experiences and feedback in the implementation of the project. This will help to obtain a synthesis of lessons which will contribute to the deeper understanding of how the project has worked at all operational levels, especially in terms of implementation undertaken by RUFORUM.

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### Objectives of the side Event

- i) To identify core push-pull factors at play during the implementation of the project.
- ii) To share challenges in the design and implementation of this projects.
- iii) To identify key value-added aspects associated with this joint project.
- iv) To identify quick wins for scaling-up and incorporation in future undertakings.

### Approach and Methodology

A series of Power Presentations will be made by project partners and selected students on their experiences in the implementation of the project. Open discussions will follow to tease out key issues for consideration in future undertakings.

### Output of the meeting

- A lesson sharing meeting report will be generated.
- Key issues to inform future human capital development efforts.

### Venue and Participants

**Venue:** Century City Conference Centre, Meeting Room 7

**Date & Time:** Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016 from 1730-2100

Participants of the meeting will include RUFORUM Secretariat staff, IAGRI staff, and selected students supported through the joint project.

### Side Event Organizers and Contact

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