



The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

Harnessing Regional Networks' Capacity to Mobilize Resources for Agricultural Training and Research through Responding to Calls for Proposals: A joint Strategy for RUFORUM and AGRINATURA

Concept Note

Background

Partnerships in agricultural research and higher education play a critical role in enhancing impact through pooling of expertise, resources, capacities and infrastructure for accelerated growth and development of the agricultural sector. Given the complexity of challenges the African Higher Agricultural Education (HAE) and the agricultural sector faces, partnerships to support African expertise are needed to jointly develop working strategies as well as mobilize resources. The need for global partnerships to support African agriculture and higher education is even more valid, given that the challenges Africa faces were faced by other continents, decades ago, and systems and technologies are in place to sustainably curb these challenges thus providing lessons for Africa to learn from. Challenges such as those related to relevance of curricular, teaching approaches, research and outreach to the prevailing community needs and threats such as climate change, land degradation and poor policy implementation which have deterred the productivity and consequently its contribution to food security and farmer income have been successfully addressed in other continents in the globe. Partnerships with institutions which have successfully developed and deployed these approaches will take the African Higher Agricultural Education and Agricultural sector to a higher level by complementing the expertise of African scientists and helping them put systems in place to deploy effective teaching and research for agricultural transformation.

RUFORUM has, therefore, been playing a central role in brokering partnerships between African scientists (especially at universities) and

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global experts in the field of Agricultural research and higher education to harness global expertise to transform Africa's agricultural sector. These partnerships have regularly provided a scan of African agricultural and higher education challenges as well as participating in joint development of solutions and technologies and mobilizing resources to implement them. They have also provided a bird's eye view of global challenges agriculture and its training process are faced with and adopted and adapted working solutions suiting the African situation. Given the accrued positive impact at individual scientists, institutional, sectorial levels, RUFORUM continues to pursue and implement these partnerships with institutions across the globe to strengthen capacity of its member universities to mobilize resources and streamline the teaching and research processes and practices in agricultural sciences. Of great benefit in this regard, has been the partnership between RUFORUM and The European Alliance on Agricultural knowledge for Development (AGRINATURA), an association of major research and education stakeholders in Europe dealing with agricultural research and higher education for development, a similar role RUFORUM plays in Africa.

RUFORUM and AGRINATURA Partnership

The partnership and collaboration between RUFORUM and AGRINATURA dates back to early 2000s with a development of concrete collaborative framework in May 2008 when RUFORUM, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich and other institutions in Africa agreed to collaborate in Agricultural capacity building in Africa. In this meeting, a joint initiative on "Strengthening Higher Education in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (SHEA) was proposed. In this initiative, a regional approach to improving institutional capacity and quality of teaching and research within the National Agricultural Innovation Systems with the two networks fostering partnerships and networking among their member universities to develop and implement actions that achieve the goals of the collaboration. Since then RUFORUM and AGRINATURA have

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developed and mobilized resources to implement five (5) projects and participated in joint events of each other to achieve the objectives of the partnership.

To enhance and bring to scale the impact so far realized in the partnerships between RUFORUM and AGRINATURA, several meetings have been held by the two institutions at the RUFORUM Secretariat and the AGRINATURA Annual General Assembly to identify emerging challenges in agriculture and higher education sectors in Europe and Africa. Preliminary discussions on how the challenges will be addressed and mobilization of funds through open/solicited Calls for proposals have been held. However, a concise outline of priority challenges, solutions, and strategies for implementing the solutions as well as the approach to joint proposal development as approach to resource mobilization has not been concretized.

A strategic planning session has been organized for the two institutions to outline and prioritize areas of interventions for the next five years and how resources will be mobilized through joint proposal development and other means, has been organized during the 5th African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa. It will be a one day side session to be co-hosted by the two institutions.

Objectives of the side Event

The overall objective of the meeting will be to prioritize areas of intervention in Agricultural Higher Education and develop a joint Strategy for mobilizing resources through Joint proposal development.

Specifically, the meeting will be an opportunity to;

1. Discuss and prioritize challenges facing European and African Agriculture and Agricultural Higher Education and develop and prioritize interventions required to address the emerging challenges
2. Develop a framework for responding to open and solicited calls for proposals that address the identified challenges in agricultural training and research in Europe and Africa.

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3. Develop consensus and create a joint AGRINATURA-RUFORUM team to develop a proposal for developing online Masters and PhD course modules, initially targeting Erasmus+ 2017 call but also other opportunities to strengthen use of ICTs in teaching, research and outreach in African and European Universities

Approach and Methodology

The one day event will entail presentation of emerging training and agricultural challenges in the two continents and loopholes in addressing them. Areas of convergence of challenges and complementarity of expertise between the two Networks will be identified. Discussion on available funding opportunities and Calls for proposals including but not limited to Intra African Academic Mobility 2016 and Erasmus+ 2017 Calls will be held. For each funding window, a response strategy will be developed with clarity of roles and responsibilities of members of the two Networks. Action points with timelines will be developed.

Venue and Participants

Venue: Century City Conference Centre, Meeting Room 2 & 3
Date & Time: 19th 1430-1730, focussing on Joint development and delivery of Online Graduate Courses, Meeting Room 10); Rooms 2 & 3 will be available throughout the conference duration for various teams to brainstorm and develop collaborative initiatives including joint proposals

Side Event Organizers and Contact

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Proposed Meeting Agenda

Time	Activity	Responsible person
9:00	Arrival and registration of participants	Emmanuel Okalany
	Introductions	Emmanuel Okalany
	Meeting Objectives and presentation from RUFORUM	
	Presentation from AGRINATURA	
	Trends, emerging challenges and possible interventions for Agriculture and Agricultural capacity building challenges in Africa and Europe	
	Available funding opportunities	
	Way forward (Resource mobilization strategy with specifics for Intra Africa Mobility, Erasmus+ 2017 and other calls)	

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