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**Regional Program for
Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa
(SHAEA)**

Independent Evaluation Committee

Protocol for Proposal Assessment

August 2018

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This document is available at www.ruforum.org/SHAEA

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION PROTOCOL

The World Bank Group (WBG) is developing a regional agriculture related higher education program on agri-food systems transformation in Africa to promote a regional approach to a continental challenge. The strategy is to strengthen the capacities of competitively selected regional anchor universities to deliver high quality training and service to the agri-food sector through strong collaboration with sector actors, especially the private sector. Primarily by training a new generation of problem-solvers with transdisciplinary skills in collaboration with the private sector and other post-secondary training institutions including TVET.

In collaboration with the Governments of Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi and Mozambique the WBG and RUFORUM are jointly launching a Call for Proposals. Public and private universities from collaborating countries with a significant agricultural profile and programs at post graduate level are encouraged to submit proposals to become a regional anchor university for this initiative.

This is part of the preparation for the Regional Program for Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA) project which is expected to be reviewed by the WBG Board in the spring of 2019. The main objective of this proposed project is to develop competent and relevant human resources required to accelerate agri-food systems transformation in Africa through strengthening (i) agri-food related education and training enhanced with transdisciplinary approaches, experiential learning and applied research at selected African regional anchor universities and in collaboration with the sector; (ii) university linkages to the regional agricultural sector - its priorities, needs and stakeholders; and (iii) university partnership with private and public entities related to agri-food both within and outside the region. SHAEA is part of the WBG Board significant reinvestment into higher education in Africa with a regional emphasis and complement the African Higher Education Centers of Excellence projects as well as the regional agricultural projects WAAPP and ECAAT.

SHAEA has been designed through a broad consultation with relevant stakeholders in in Africa including governments and private sector. Six regional key knowledge gap areas have been identified:

1. Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship
2. Agri-food Systems and Nutrition
3. Rural Innovation and Agriculture Extension
4. Agricultural Risk Management and Climate Change Proofing
5. Agriculture Policy Analysis
6. Statistical Analysis, Foresight and Data Management

The Project will support the governments of the participating countries to collectively address challenges in these regional key knowledge gap areas with interventions of: (a) selecting Regional Anchor Universities (RAU) through a competitive and transparent process from existing higher education institutions in participating countries which have capacity within agriculture at post graduate level and shows strong potential to help address the defined regional challenges taking into account national priorities; (b) strengthening these specialized RAUs through professionalizing leadership and management, streamlining administration and capacitating faculty. Thereby enabling the RAUs to produce excellent training and applied research which can

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meet the needs of highly-skilled employers and employment creators as well as knowledge transfer for the agri-food sector; (c) assist the RAU with mainstreaming gender sensitivity into its planning and operation; (d) establish a strong culture of collaborating and partnership with the sector to ensure that the knowledge generated, and the youth educated are capable of addressing the needs of the agri-food sector and the society at large. The RAU should become the regional hub for innovative solutions and training of human capital able to instigate real development impact; and (e) developing a culture of results-orientation and accountability in institutional management through a performance-based financing mechanism of the project. As a regional project, SHAEA will be governed by its Regional Steering Committee (RSC) and facilitated by its Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) - RUFORUM.

This protocol is for the evaluation of proposals submitted by higher education institutions from participating countries in response to the above-mentioned Call for Proposals. The purpose of this evaluation protocol is to provide guidelines for the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) to assess the submitted proposals and provide selection recommendations to the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) of SHAEA. This document will also guide institutions which are interested in preparing proposals for consideration to be a RAU.

The IEC will independently and objectively assess all timely received proposals that meets the eligibility criteria. For proposals that are eligible and meet the minimum technical criteria the submitting institution will also be assessed through a on-site visit. This protocol provides guidelines regarding the assessment criteria, information requirements and the procedures to be taken into account by the IEC. The IEC should refer to SHAEA project documents in their assessments of each submitted proposal.

2. EVALUATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

2.1 Screening for completeness

The proposals submitted by higher education institutions from the SHAEA participating countries in Africa will go through an initial screening conducted by the Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) in accordance with the basic eligibility criteria in Annex II. Only proposals passed through this screening will be forwarded to the RSC for endorsement. The endorsed proposals will then be evaluated by the IEC. For those eligible endorsed proposals, their evaluation will be carried out in two stages:

1. The **first stage** will be a technical assessment by the IEC. Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated by three experts who have knowledge and experience in the 6 regional key knowledge gap areas, as well as in transdisciplinary and experiential learning. Out of the three experts at least one internationally-reputed university or scientific leaders and a leading investigator from the private sector. Each proposal will first be screened for eligibility and if eligible it will be technical scored. Based on this a shortlisting will be made.
2. The **second stage** of the evaluation involves an in-depth, on-site assessment of the institutions whose proposals have been short-listed from the first stage. Teams of experts will be formed and these will visit each of the short-listed institutions. The teams will assess the commitment from senior management and the proposed implementation team as well as their leadership and management capacity. The team will also ascertain the feasibility of implementing the proposed program, as well as the capacity of staff, facilities and

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infrastructure for teaching, learning, research and administration. And to what degree the capacity description in the proposal reflects the reality on the ground.

Based upon the above, the Evaluation Panels within the IEC will submit ranked recommendations to the RSC, together with appropriate and relevant documentation. Based on the recommendations, without changing any evaluation marks of the individual proposals, the RSC may make adjustments to ensure that the regional key knowledge gap priorities are addressed without too much overlap at the PhD level. The RSC makes the final selection decision.

Each institution can only submit one application. If selected, the amount available will depend on the specific agreement between the respective government and the WBG. The idea is that the funding should be sufficient to generate a critical mass of senior faculty, postgraduate students as well as national, regional and international partners to have real impact on agri-food systems transformation in the region.

The full evaluation process and timeline is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: SHAEA Evaluation Process and Timeline

	Steps	Dates	Organization	Comments
1	Deadline for receiving final SHAEA Proposals to become a RAU	Nov 30, 2018	RFU	Submitted to the Ministry of Education or equivalent.
2	Review of Proposals on eligibility and completeness of documentation and produce the long-list for evaluation	Dec 3-5, 2018	RFU	
3	Review and endorse electronically the long-list	Dec 9, 2018	RSC	
4	Evaluation of eligible proposals and produce a shortlist	Dec 10-15, 2018	IEC	IEC review by members or IEC sub-groups
5	Assessments and site visits to short-listed institutions	Jan 7-12, 2019	IEC	2-3 teams are expected to be visiting institutions
6	Submission of on-site Evaluation reports, final evaluation score, and selection recommendations for RAUs to the RSC	Jan 15, 2019	IEC	Including suggestions for improvement
7	Review and decision on final selection	Jan 22 -23, 2019	RSC	Face to face meeting

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8	Submission of evaluation report to the World Bank Group for No Objection	Jan 25, 2019	RSC & RFU	
9	Announcement of Regional Anchor Universities conditional selection and publication of evaluation reports to each applying institution	Jan 31, 2019	RSC & RFU	Institution will be conditionally selected subject to incorporation of the IEC's suggestions
10	Submission of grievance & appeals	Feb 1 - 15, 2019	Grievance & Appeals Committee	See Section 6.3
11	Review, final report and recommendations of a Grievance & Appeals Committee to RSC	Jan 27- Feb 07, 2019	Grievance & Appeals Committee	
12	Submission of improved proposals	Feb 15, 2019	Institutions	Including a cover letter that indicates the improvements referring to the suggested by the IEC
13	Review of improved proposals	Feb 21 - 22, 2019	IEC and RFU	Review by 2 IEC members and the RFU

3. EVALUATION

3.1 The selection and composition of the Independent Evaluation Committee

For the success of the project, an objective, well balanced, academically- and private sector recognized composition of the Independent Evaluation Committee (IEC) is of the utmost importance to quality, potentials, and impact of the RAU's selected and funded under SHAEA. Therefore, the members of the IEC should be independent of the proposal-submitting institutions and of the SHAEA participating countries in order to maintain the integrity of the project (i.e., objectivity, avoiding conflict of interest). They should be well acquainted with the current education and research practice of the discipline(s) within the regional key knowledge gap areas, and be able to cover various other activity areas of the institution (e.g. institutional leadership, Master's and PhD training, provision and maintenance of teaching and research facilities; transdisciplinary curricular, experiential learning as well as linkages with sector actors and other outreach activities). The IEC should be able to position agri-food systems transformation within the African and international context, and should be able to assess the teaching, learning and outreach/research trial dimensions of the RAU proposal.

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The IEC should include African higher education and scientific community including diaspora, African private sector representatives as well as global technical experts. They will be identified and appointed by the RFU in consultation with the World Bank according to the required expertise and experience. In addition, the Committee may draw upon other expertise to evaluate the potential of the proposals to address social, economic and development priorities and the degree to which the priorities are shared among several countries. This will allow for an alignment of the composition of the IEC with the required expertise to adequately evaluate the proposals.

3.2 Units of evaluation (who will be evaluated)

The proposals will be evaluated in three “tiers or units”, which are:

- i. The university as a whole. An institution is defined as the whole university as a legal institution. A university might be public or private, located in one place or spread over several campuses. The assessment of the proposal at the institutional level primarily focuses on leadership commitment, strategy alignment and organization. The Boards under whose jurisdiction an institution falls - notably the Governing Boards of universities (university council, senate, advisory boards, etc., which will be referred to throughout this protocol as ‘board’) - are ultimately responsible for the proposed RAU and its requested and received funding. At the institutional level, the IEC will take into account the institution’s strategic plan submitted as part of the RAU proposal. In the on-site and leadership evaluation of the proposal, the IEC will specifically include consideration of the institutions’ accountability to their governing boards and their funding agencies, as well as to governments and society at large with regard to their progress towards meeting the labor market demand on human resources and regional specialization on academic knowledge generation. As well as their gender policies and to what degree they are enforced.
- ii. The academic level. The education and research trial programs including CARP++ implemented by members of faculty with the sector actors and supported by administration will form the academic core of the RAU. Each RAU will have a director with the day-to-day education and outreach responsibility for the RAU proposed activities. Throughout this document they will be referred to as ‘academic component leaders’. At the level of education and outreach groups, the criteria should primarily be applied to the performance of the members of faculty and students. The evaluation will entail an assessment of the proposal's output and activities of the involved departments, students and members of faculty, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, of the relevance of the work, of the outreach and partner inclusiveness in the proposal, and of the proposal's regional relevance. Nonetheless, issues of policy and center leadership as well as administrative support ability within the institution submitting the proposal remain critical elements of assessment. In addition, principal faculty and administration members will be evaluated as part of the evaluation of the education and outreach program under the proposed RAU.
- iii. Partner institutions. These will not be visited. But the IEC will contact key national, regional and international partners to assess their commitment and evaluate their level of involvement during the proposal writing process to ensure that the product has shared ownership. Up to five partners will be contacted including the key international university partner and the two private sector partners.
- iv. Government. The on-site and leadership evaluation will also evaluate the government’s ownership and support to the proposed RAU, beyond the mere funding.

3.3 Prospective and retrospective evaluation

The primary focus of the evaluation is a prospective evaluation of the likely impact from funding the proposal. It is not a retrospective evaluation of past or current performance. However, in the prospective evaluation, past performance and current capacity are important indicators for the likely impact of the proposal. Therefore, the assessment of past results, institutional collaboration, and track record of the institution as well as the involved faculty, investigators and leadership is relevant. Therefore, both retrospective and prospective characteristics are included in the assessment criteria (see below).

3.4 Scientific disciplines and interdisciplinary aspects

It is important that proposed education and research trail activities are assessed according to international standards. Approaches may vary among scientific sub-disciplines within the 2 - 3 priorities topics among 6 regional key knowledge gap areas. While the outline of the evaluation criteria and information requirements in the evaluation protocol is based on the common scientific ground of these disciplines, the IEC may should to take into account the specific characteristics of the prioritized regional key knowledge gap areas, especially the PhD program in terms of its specific teaching, learning, research identity, and related facts and figures. It is important to emphasize that the RAU in general is expected to pursue a transdisciplinary and experiential learning approach within agriculture related subject. Therefore, the IEC should include members who have solid experience in assessing such programs.

3.5 Screening for completeness

To recap: The proposals submitted will initially be screened by the RFU for eligibility. Only proposals passed through this screening will be forwarded to the RSC for endorsement. The endorsed proposals will then be evaluated by the IEC.

4. PLANNING THE EVALUATION

The IEC will assess the RSC-endorsed proposals within the following aspects of each institution proposing to become a RAU under SHAEA: (i) alignment to national priorities and regional needs, (ii) leadership and management commitment and capacity, (iii) administrative proficiency, (iv) gender strategy and its enforcement, (v) ability to collaborate with external partners, particularly the private sector, (vi) training (short courses, Masters and PhD programs for the next generation of sector leaders, technicians, faculty and researchers); (vii) research (results relevant to the academic and scientific community as well as to the industry), and (viii) outreach (results relevant to society). The evaluation will emphasize the importance of educational competence, academic capacity and regional engagement.

The IEC may look beyond what is contained in a specific proposal by considering evidence from other available sources including stakeholder surveys, conferences, various forms of impact analysis, case studies, policy reports, etc.

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Table 2: Assessment Criteria, Sub-Criteria and Guidance

Criteria for Technical Evaluation	Mark
<p>(1) Alignment of proposal to national priorities with the agri-food sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which the proposal is aligned to the national priorities 	3
<p>(2) Gender equity and Social responsibility – Inclusion of post-secondary learning institutions as partner institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what degree is gender equity part of the proposed RAU? (3 marks) Involvement of post-secondary learning institutions including TVET in the proposed RAU? (2 marks) 	5
<p>(3) Potential for strengthening institutional leadership and management capability and push for institutional reform/change for improvement results</p>	7
<p><i>Sub-criteria: Institutional capacity and institutional performance:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability of the institution to react adequately to important changes in the authorizing environment (1 mark) The institution’s effective accountability to the governing boards and their funding agencies, governments and African society at large. (2 marks) Clarity of education and research priorities, faculty and personnel policy, gender policies, and enabling policies for resource mobilization and budget allocations (1 mark) Ability to mitigate institutional risk related to disruptions in teaching and research, for example from student or faculty strikes (1 mark) 	5
<p><i>Interest and willingness among the external board members to assist the potential RAU in leading and facilitating a coherent institutional improvement process</i></p>	2
<p>(4) Potential for agri-food systems transformation impact through training new generations of problem solvers with transdisciplinary skills within the regional key gap areas</p>	20
<p><i>Identification of critical factors for achieving learning quality and credible policies and plans to address those, including likelihood of reaching international quality benchmarks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivation of faculty and staff (1 mark) Introduction/revision of courses and programs for transdisciplinary and experiential learning in the regional key knowledge gap proposed areas (1 mark) Proposed approach to apply modern teaching-learning techniques: provide hands-on learning, develop team-based teaching and team-based learning, foster applied problem-solving skills, group work, including use of student-centered and work-based learning (2 marks) Quality and credibility of plan to achieve international quality benchmarks/accreditation (1 mark) 	5

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<p><i>Resources for quality in Teaching and Learning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty resources: Excellence of existing faculty and strengthening faculty and staff knowledge and skills and/or bringing-in top-notch faculty and use of ICT (2 marks) • Learning resources: Status of learning and physical resources for quality, including the relevance of proposed investments in teaching and learning methodologies, materials and civil works (2 marks) • Strategy for enhancing the teaching and learning quality through a rigid Q&A system including student assessment and feedback (1 mark) 	5
<p><i>Impact of improvements in Learning:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to credibly scale-up new/revised courses, including potential use of distance-learning (consider existing volume of students, targets, graduation rates) (2 marks) • Ambitiousness of short-term training program designed to provide tailored demand driven mid-career training services in collaboration with TVET and other post-secondary training institutions to: private and informal sector employed people, TVET teachers, rural advisory people, civil servants, etc. (3 marks) 	5
<p><i>Academic partnerships:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal build upon existing partnerships and how robust are these partnerships according to the external partners? (2 marks) • Are the proposed commitments and collaborations from key international academic partners substantial? (3 marks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint faculty development programs ○ Joint conferences, research, sharing access to specialized research, learning equipment and library resources, student and faculty exchange etc. ○ Joint specific courses/programs and assistance to curriculum development 	5
<p><i>(5) Potential for agri-food systems transformation impact through linkages with sector demand and collaborating with sector actors</i></p>	20
<p><i>The degree to which the new or revised transdisciplinary Master and PhD programs and curricular within the six regional key knowledge gap areas strengthen linkages with the sector:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree to which RAU plan to involve the sector partners in designing the PG program, mid-career training and the project at large (2 marks) • Integration of the CARP++ model in the overall approach to linking with private sector needs and building the human resources needs for the agri-food sector (4 marks) • Strength of the internship and research outreach program design in the proposal (2 mark) • The institution's track-record and policy for making the expertise of their faculty and students and their research results available to sector partners (knowledge transfer) (1 mark) 	10

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact of innovation emerging from post graduate research and research trials: applicability of the education and research results (suitable for application innovations, processes and services leading to transformation) (1 mark) 	
<p><i>Strength of the proposal design in involving relevant sector partners in pursuing the agri-food systems transformation agenda:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the proposals overall ability to involve external stakeholders in the project design and implementation (1 mark) • Sector partner assessment on their expected involvement and influence on the project. For example, will sector partners employ the graduates, take interns, send staff for short-term professional development courses, conduct joint research trails, and use knowledge of the center? (2 marks) • Rigidity of the design of the joint demand driven research trials component especially regarding transparency and fairness during selection process (2 marks) 	5
<p><i>Ability to articulate and serve strategic agri-food sector human capacity needs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities understanding of its role and responsibility towards societies need for relevant knowledgeable skillful human resources with entrepreneurial mindset and high ethical and moral standards (2 marks) • Universities willingness to support sector needs through placement of staff (mark 1) • University staff willingness to support sector needs through placement (1 mark) • Universities ability to run a graduate placement system effectively and efficient (1 mark) 	5
<p>(6) Potential for strengthening capacity to address agri-food systems transformation at regional level</p>	5
<p><i>Potential regional development impact through collaboration with sector partners – breadth of partnerships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal have a clear regional scope? (2 marks) • Do the relevant line ministries support the RAU’s proposal and see the need for the RAU to be a regional hub? (2 marks) • Do key partners (employers, organizations, and governments) express their support to the regional dimension? (1 mark) 	5
<p>(7) Quality of the proposal and the use of innovative approaches and solutions (incl. fit with strategic plan analysis) SWOT-analysis (Annex 3) of the position of the institution or center and programs; analysis of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats; coherence of the proposed program. (5 marks)</p>	5
Total	60

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In applying the above criteria, the evaluation should pay attention to the SHAEA Project Development Objective (PDO), and to the ability and capacity of the proposed RAU to achieve the expected results.

4.1 Five point scale

The final assessment of the proposals should be in both qualitative and quantitative terms. In the text, the most important considerations of the IEC should be clarified, while the conclusion should be summarized in a single term according to a five point scale: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. The IEC is to consider the full range of the scale and apply the criteria according to the descriptions given below:

Table 3: Five-Point Scale for Overall Project Assessment

Assessment	Rating	Numeric score
The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.	Excellent	5
The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible	Very Good	4
The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary	Good	3
While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses	Satisfactory	2
The proposal fails to adequately address the criteria under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information	Unsatisfactory	1

An evaluator will use this scale to answer each question in the Evaluation Questionnaire which will be provided by the RFU. The questionnaire and final evaluation mark for the proposal can be automated with an Excel sheet. It includes each of the evaluation marks and a summary of the main strengths and weaknesses. Each proposal is expected to be separately reviewed by at least three experts (two evaluation panel members and one external evaluator). A combined evaluation is then arrived at through discussion among the evaluators and, if deemed necessary, additional advice from other evaluators can be sought. Each submitting institution will receive feedback from the evaluation.

4.2 On-site proposal and leadership evaluation

For the on-site evaluation of the prospective RAU shortlisted by the IEC, small evaluation teams consisting of at least two internationally reputed university leaders and a leading private sector representative within agri-food systems will visit each of the short-listed institutions for one day. The team will assess the institution's leadership and capacity and ascertain the feasibility of the implementation of the proposed RAU, given the specific institutional context, autonomy and accountability, management practices, existing academic capacity and infrastructure, including

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learning and research equipment, government support and policy. Specifically, the assessment team will evaluate the following criteria:

Table 4: Assessment criteria for on-site visit

On-Site and leadership evaluation	Marks
<p><i>Institutional leadership and vision (based on an interview with the head of the institution, chair of the board, existing institutional strategic document and other relevant materials)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vice Chancellors commitment and willingness to lead institutional improvements (3 marks) • Alignment of the proposal to the universities strategy (1 mark) • Senior management’s (DVC’s, Directors, Principals, Deans, Heads) commitment and willingness to facilitate, implement institutional improvements (2 marks) • Boards commitment and willingness to institutionalize institutional improvements (2 marks) • Assessment of external partners influence as members of RAU Board (2 marks) 	10
<p><i>Academic component leadership and administrative capacity (based upon interviews with the proposed academic leader, deputy leader and senior faculty involved in the proposal)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the professionalism of management of education (2 marks) • Management of outreach and linkages with sector especially the private sector (2 marks) • Faculties view on senior management willingness and ability to follow through on institutional and administrative improvements (1 mark) 	5
<p><i>Implementation capacity with a focus on the procurement, financial management and environmental management of implementation (based upon desk review of proposal and past financial audits and site visit).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, transparent, and efficient procedures for procurement (2 marks) • Experienced staff in Procurement and financial management (2 marks) • Track record of timely, unqualified audits (1 mark) 	5
<p><i>Institutional ownership of proposal as evident from faculty and student awareness and inclusion (based upon proposal, site interviews, and campus visit)</i></p>	5
<p><i>Government involvement to support the institutional proposal, alignment with relevant sector strategies, a regional provision of higher education, and quality of government policy making (interviews with government officials in ministry/agency for higher education and officials from other relevant line ministries and relevant material)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and support from key government agencies, including relevant sector ministries (such as agriculture, education, and labor) (2 marks) 	5

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability and predictability of government’s policy as it concerns risk to the proposed RAU (1 mark) • Government commitment to establishing a regional higher education policy and building regionally shared capacity (1 mark) • Government and stakeholder ability to avoid disruptions to teaching and sector collaboration (1 mark) 	
<i>Commitment from academic and sector partners to the institutional proposal (based upon face to face or phone/VC/skype interviews with partners and other relevant material).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of existing international academic partnerships (2 marks) • Assessment of existing industrial (private sector) partnerships (2 marks) • Assessment of existing other key partnerships (1 mark) 	10
Total	40

In addition, the evaluation team must assess the consistency between the submitted proposal and the reality on the ground in terms of institutional SWOT analysis¹, infrastructure, academic and research capacity, and government and partner support. The evaluation team must report any material inconsistencies between the written proposal and the reality of the ground, consider implications for the overall credibility of the proposal, and re-consider the affected marks of the technical evaluation of the proposal.

4.3 Preparation of site visit

Each on-site evaluation team receives all relevant materials (the RAU proposal, the Evaluation Protocol, the project document, the specific terms of reference for the evaluation, and the visiting program) two weeks in advance of their site visit. The Chair may request, possibly after consulting the other Committee members, additional information from the prospective RAU or its Board. The on-site evaluation teams will receive guidelines for their site visits, working procedures, and writing the evaluation report.

4.4 During the visit

The evaluation team meets with, at a minimum:

- RAU senior management DVC’s, Directors, Principals, Deans, Heads
- The Chairperson of the institution’s Executive Board
- Proposed academic component leader and deputy
- The senior faculty members making up the core of the proposed RAU’s academic staff
- Government officials leading higher education policy and relevant officials from other governmental ministries/agencies
- A representative group of leading, tenured and non-tenured, faculty at the institution
- A small (20-30), but representative, number of undergraduate, Masters and PhD students (interviewed in small groups without presence of institutional staff)
- Representatives of the technical and maintenance staff

¹ “SWOT analysis” is an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a project or an organization. Please see Annex for details.

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- Representatives of key partner institutions (key partners are not required to travel to the institution to be available for the visit. The evaluation team can conduct short phone interviews with key partners prior or shortly after the visit).
- Other relevant civil society representatives engaged with the institution

The final list of meetings and the agenda will be coordinated by the RFU, the institution, and the leader of the evaluation team.

4.5 Avoidance of any perceived or real conflict of interest

All costs associated with the site visit must be paid by the RFU. The evaluators are prohibited from receiving any gifts or favors from the institution, partners or government. Similarly, the institution, partners and government must in no way offer any gifts or favors. The evaluators are required to report any offers of gifts and favors to the RFU. Similarly, the institutional team is required to report any requests for gift or favors from any evaluator to the RFU. The institution may arrange for standard food and beverages during the visit, and, if agreed on beforehand, transportation between the hotel and the institution. All meetings between the evaluators and the institutions must be on the agreed meeting schedule and be in a professional, objective, setting and take place during the day.

The evaluation team may wish to use a checklist for the assessment at the institutional or center level and that of the education and/or research group or program. Each team member can use these lists individually (that is, before the meetings of the committee in full) for their provisional judgment but will have to consider them mainly as starting points for discussions with other members of the team during the site visit. The use of checklists should not in any way imply that the final score is an average of all scores. The scores are only to be given after careful consideration by the entire team.

5. EVALUATION REPORT

To meet the objectives of the independent evaluation, as outlined in section 2 above, the committee will score and provide a short report explaining the scoring results for each criterion (maximum 5 pages). Basically, for the evaluation of each RAU proposal, the short report should contain the score for each criterion and sub criteria and a short explanation next to the score on the rationale of how the evaluation arrived at the final mark. Furthermore, the evaluation report should reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal as they emerge from the assessment, the related documentation and the discussions and observations during the site visit. Consequently, the report should also indicate opportunities for improvement of the selected proposals, possible threats and recommendations for how all of these can be included in the final RAU proposal of the institution.

In line with the above, the report should assess the institution's regional developmental impact, the academic and scientific partnership dimensions, the various potential excellence aspects such as the highlighted quality and productivity elements, the social and economic relevance indicators, the sustainability perspectives and the feasibility levels of the proposed program. The report will include both past performance and future prospects of prospective RAU. The individual evaluation team reports may be confined to 1 page per group, including the 5-point scale assessment. It is important that the reasons for the given score are sufficiently explained in the text.

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In its feedback, the IEC should provide specific suggestions for proposal improvement.

Proceeding from the above, the assessment report of each proposal by the IEC will contain two parts:

- Scoring assessment at the level of the institution or proposed RAU in terms of the criteria highlighted above identifying the main issues of praise and criticism and putting forward recommendations for improvement of the RAU proposal.
- Scoring assessment of the education and outreach groups or programs according to the above-mentioned criteria, with a focus on performance in terms of academic training and scientific achievements and of social and economic relevance. The IEC may use qualitative and quantitative indicators.

5.1 Evaluation Report content guidelines

Introduction – Overview of the SHAEA proposals in general and summary of the findings

Part I- Review of each potential RAU, containing:

- ❖ reflections on the alignment to national priorities and potential for regional impact of the RAU;
- ❖ Reflection on gender sensitivity and awareness in project design;
- ❖ reflections on the institution's partnership inclusiveness (the strengths and relevance of collaboration with national regional and international sector partners - academic partner institutions, employers, organizations, and governments - that will employ and use the graduates and research knowledge of the academic institution, as well as the breath of this collaboration);
- ❖ reflections on the institution's potential for quality education (academic reputation, quality of Master and PhD-training, financial and human resources and research facilities, organization and internal processes, academic and scientific leadership, national and international positioning) and in terms of productivity (graduations, publications, output) and productivity policy);
- ❖ reflections on relevance (in higher education, research, social and economic impact of society) and applied relevance (the institution's activities aimed at making education and research results available and suitable for application in products, processes and services, including activities regarding the availability of results and the interaction with the private sector, as well as direct contributions to commercial, investment or non-profit use of graduates, expertise and research results);
- ❖ reflection on the ability to collaborate with post-secondary training institutions including TVET in designing and executing short-term training that response to the sectors needs

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for human capacity building for mid-career people in the public, private and informal domain;

- ❖ reflections on the institution's sustainability and feasibility (based on comparative positioning and benchmarking, and also the strengths and weaknesses in the SWOT-analysis, including its strategy for future years, competitive strength, robustness and stability; earning capacity).

Part 2- Review of each RAU proposal's education and outreach, containing reflections on:

- ❖ the regional outlook (importance of its approach for the region and the innovation content of the program – including alignment with regional and national agri-food sector needs);
- ❖ partnership inclusiveness (the strengths and relevance of collaboration with national, regional and international academic partner institutions, employers, organizations, and governments, that will employ and use the graduates and research knowledge, as well as the regional-breath of this collaboration);
- ❖ the potential for quality (level of innovation of teaching and learning including experience with transdisciplinary programs and experiential learning, academic significance and ability to collaborate with external stakeholders, program coherence, publication strategy, prominence of the faculty and researchers, of the R&D, of the education and teaching and research infrastructure; the leadership of its education and outreach programs; and financial and human resources) in its productivity, the R&D activities, education and training, and research infrastructure (quantification of the academic Master & PhD graduation rates, published output, R&D results, utilization rates of education & training and research infrastructure, and quantification of use by third parties);
- ❖ its relevance and applied relevance (of the training and learning, of the R&D, and of the education and research infrastructure – both for the academic world and for society); and
- ❖ its sustainability, feasibility, and vision for the future (of the education and research plans, flexibility and anticipation of changes to be expected in the near future).

The guidelines above are not exhaustive and the report will need to take into account all the multiple dimensions highlighted in this protocol and other SHAEA Project Documents.

6. FINAL SELECTION

The assessment follow-up consists of three elements: (i) the final decision of the RSC regarding the findings and recommendations of the IEC, (ii) the publication of the final RAU selection list, and (iii) the handling of grievances and appeals.

6.1 Final decision of the RSC

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After the IEC has presented its final evaluation report to the RSC, the RSC will meet to discuss the findings and recommendations. Based on the recommendations, without changing any evaluation marks of the individual proposals, the RSC may make adjustments to ensure that key regional development priorities are addressed along with reasonable geographic, linguistic and disciplinary representations. The RSC will then formulate its position regarding the evaluation outcomes in writing in the minutes of the final selection meeting.

6.2 Announcing the selection results to the public

The report of the IEC and the Minutes of the RSC regarding the outcomes of the evaluation together form the evaluation results. The RSC will publish the selected proposals and the evaluation results on the SHAEA website (...). Institutions not selected will receive information regarding the evaluation, but this information and its proposal will not be made public.

6.3 Grievance and Appeals Committee

With regard to any objections or grievances raised by institutions not included in the final award selection, the RSC will set up a Grievance and Appeals Committee of 3-5 people to which the applying institutions can submit grievances. The Grievance and Appeals Committee will seek clarifications from the institution concerned, the IEC, the RFU and other relevant entities, and provide a recommendation on behalf of the RSC whether the grievance or appeal should be accommodated and whether any evaluation/selection decision should be modified.

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Annex 1: SHAEA Proposal Eligibility criteria

Institutions submitting proposals must:

1. Be from one of the participating countries which have IDA funding availability
2. Has had at least 5 cohorts of graduates with Master's degrees
3. Offer postgraduate programs at the Master level (preferably also at the PhD level) in agri-food systems related topics and preferably one within the identified regional key knowledge gap areas
4. Has at least one existing active and functional regional partnership in the area of agriculture
5. Demonstrated on-going effort in reform/change for institutional improvement
6. No land acquisition needed if civil works are expected to be financed under the project
7. If a university has an existing agricultural ACE, it can apply as long as the proposed focus area for being a RAU is not the same as what is already supported by the agricultural ACE
8. Only one proposal per university can be submitted

Annex 2: Guidance on the Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat-Analysis (SWOT)

Among the main objectives of SHAEA is the improvement of education and research management at academic institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa towards higher levels of internationally recognized academic excellence. The assessment of the submitted RAU proposals therefore also entails an analysis of the proposal's strengths and weaknesses. This will be done through an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) in the environment of the proposed RAU. The analysis will be conducted by the Independent Evaluation Committee at the level of the proposal and its submitting institution or center.

3.1 Positioning and benchmarking

The SWOT-analysis is first and foremost an instrument for reflection on the current position and future prospects of the anticipated RAU and its education and research proposal. An important goal of the SWOT-analysis is therefore to benchmark the proposal's position in the international, national and African academic and scientific arena, especially in relation to its main external partners/competitors.

3.2 Undertaking the SWOT-analysis

In a SWOT-analysis, the education and research program proposed for RAU funding will be analyzed in four dimensions, two internal (strengths and weaknesses) and two external (opportunities and threats). The questions to be assessed in a SWOT-analysis are fairly simple and straightforward, and undertaken through, e.g., interviews with relevant stakeholders in and outside the organization. There are also more comprehensive methodologies through surveys and other quantitative techniques. The IEC is free to choose a method, as long as the analysis is based on evidence that is transparent in the context of the submission of the RAU proposal concerned.

Table 5: Examples of Questions to be Answered in SWOT Analysis

Strengths	1	What advantages does the proposal have compared to other universities in the national, regional and African environment?
	2	What do other people see as the RAU's and its proposal's strong points
	3	What relevant resources does the proposal have access to?
Weaknesses	1	Which aspects of the RAU may be seen as sub-standard?
	2	Which aspects of the proposed activities could be improved?
	3	What kind of activities should the RAU avoid?
Opportunities	1	What are the interesting trends that can be seen in the SHAEA proposal and in the agri-food system?
	2	Where or what are good opportunities facing the RAU in meeting those?
	3	Opportunities to be considered by the Committee can emerge from such elements as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in labor markets on both a broad and narrow scale • Changes in government policy related to agri-food systems transformation and agriculture related education and service provision to the sector

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in social patterns, population profiles, life style changes, etc. • Local Events
Threats	1	What is the regional competition in the providing human resources, knowledge and solutions for the agri-food sector and in what areas are the others doing better?
	2	Are there big changes in the working conditions for higher education institutions in the country?
	3	Is the RAU facing a bad financial situation, and which money streams does this concern?
	4	Does the RAU have reputational problems regarding: Fraud & corruption, nepotism, sexual harassment, security issues, institutional inefficiency, academic and educational quality
	5	Does the RAU have significant problems finding, keeping and replacing qualified personnel?

At the intersections of these four dimensions, four main strategic questions arise, as shown in the following matrix:

Table 6: SWOT Dimensions

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Opportunities</i>	Strategic question: which opportunities can be exploited through the strengths of the RAU?	Strategic question: which opportunities may help overcome weaknesses?
<i>Threats</i>	Strategic question: how can the RAU use its strengths to reduce its vulnerabilities?	Strategic question: to which threats is the involved scientific environment particularly vulnerable and how can the RAU overcome these?

Based on this analysis, the assessment can draw conclusions about the RAU proposal's position in the national, regional and international academic and educational arena. It also identifies the elements of strategy, organization and/or education and outreach activities which are to be adjusted in order to meet the external opportunities and threats, reflecting the conclusions of the SWOT-analysis.