

# Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture

## Summary Report for the Period January-March 2022

This report highlights key achievements and progress made during the period January-March 2022, the third quarter of the Financial Year 2021/2022 and fifth year of implementing the [Operational Plan 2018-2022](#) of RUFORUM [Vision 2030](#).

### Below are the highlights of progress made across the flagships:

1. The World Bank provided funding for strengthening higher agricultural education in Africa through the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Additional Financing Project (ACEII-AF). The Inter University Council of East Africa is the Regional Facilitating Unit and RUFORUM Secretariat is the technical partner. Two countries, Malawi and Mozambique are participating in this first phase.
2. RUFORUM published documentaries highlighting outcomes and impact of transformation at university, individual, family and at the wider community level across various agricultural value chains.
3. RUFORUM commissioned a functional analysis of the RUFORUM Secretariat in line with the requirement to establish RUFORUM Regional Nodes in Southern and West Africa, and to align the RUFORUM Secretariat Management to the changing operational environment for RUFORUM.
4. RUFORUM commissioned an Outcome Evaluation of the First Operational Plan of the RUFORUM Vision 2030 (OP 2018-2022) that will guide development of the second Operational Plan (OP 2023-2027)
5. RUFORUM awarded Nurturing/Institutional Strengthening Grants to Nugaal University in Somalia to support training of 20 students at the Masters' degree level and to Peace University and University of Khartoum to support training of 32 PhD female students.

### INTRODUCTION:

The narrative below elaborates the achievements made during the period 1<sup>st</sup> January-31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the third quarter of the financial year 2021/2022. The report is arranged by Flagship Programmes of the RUFORUM [Vision 2030](#)

### Flagship programme: TAGDev-Transforming African Agricultural Universities for Africa's Growth and Development

#### a) Pilot short courses in agribusiness/entrepreneurship in TVET institutions in Kenya and Uganda

Under the University-TVET partnership, [Baraka Agricultural College](#) (in Kenya) worked with county Governments of Nakuru, Molo and Baringo to train 40 community based agriculture advisors (CBAA) in entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture and agricultural extension to support agricultural transformation and income generation of smallholder farmers (see Figure 1). This effort builds on the pilot undertaken in Uganda with [Adoacerit community development farmer's group](#) that has seen increased diversification of farmer crops and production, value addition and income.



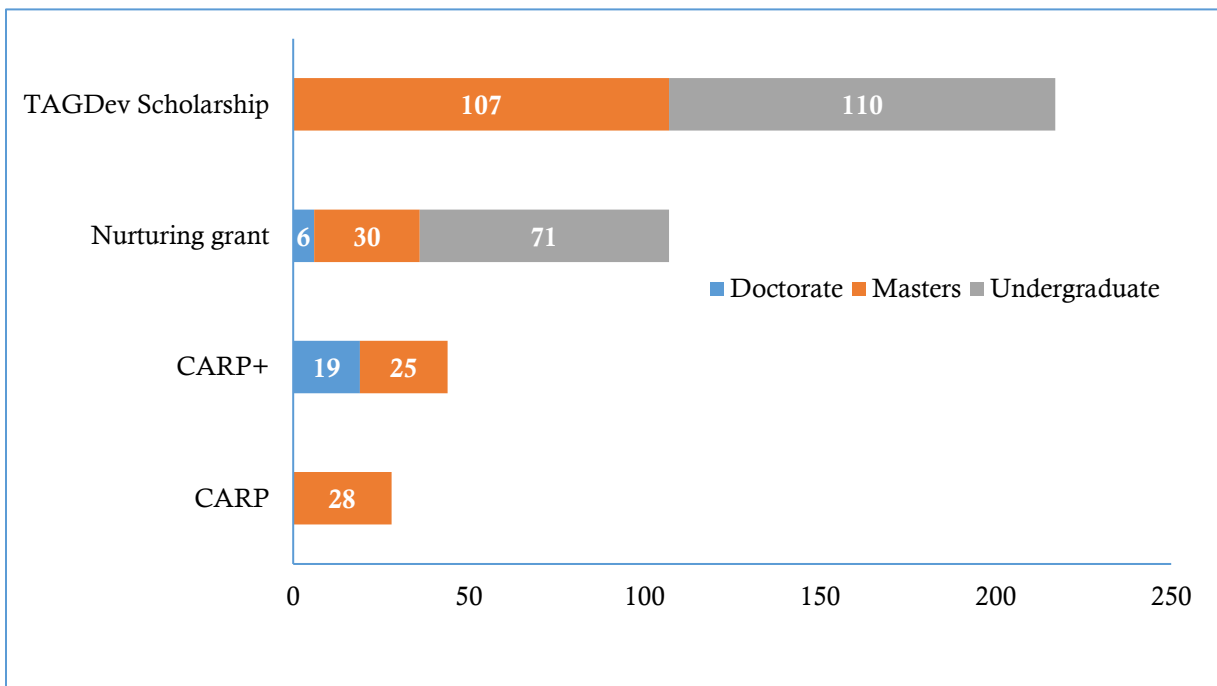
Figure 1: Community based agriculture advisors preparing to make silage

**b) Develop videos to document the impact of the programme**

During the quarter, RUFORUM published four categories of videos: videos reflecting individual transformation as well as individuals beginning to sow seeds of change to others through giving back to society (see story of [Sheku Gbollie from Liberia](#), [Andrew Nkhoma and Peter Lungu](#) from Malawi, and [Grace Bekah from Kenya](#)); individuals who have exploited their knowledge and skills to transform livelihood conditions as well as agricultural enterprises of their families (see story of [Mary Nganga from Kenya](#)); evidence of the impact of the students enterprise scheme and the incubation hubs model in catalyzing the creation of students' led enterprises in Uganda ([Bishop Stuart University hub](#)) and in Kenya ([Egerton University hub](#)); and, evidence of programme impact at the wider community level across different value chains in Uganda ([rice value chain](#) and [piggery value chain](#)) and cassava value chain in Kenya at [Egerton University](#) and [University of Nairobi](#).

**c) Recruit students to complete graduate studies in agricultural sciences at Gulu University in Uganda and Egerton University in Kenya**

The Secretariat recruited 20 additional students from Somalia based at Nugaal University as part of operationalizing the two Masters programmes that were developed with the support of Gulu University and Egerton University. The programmes: Masters in Agribusiness and Value Chains Management and Masters in Business Administration build on the unique model of training adapted in the TAGDev programme of RUFORUM. This brings to total 528 students supported to undertake their studies within Africa, and a total of 416 still undertaking studies (see Figure 2). Beyond recruitment of students at Nugaal University, the development of the Masters programmes has enabled RUFORUM to support capacity building for other emerging universities in Somalia including: Adan University, Amud University, Burco University, Horn International University and Ilays University that are currently enrolled in these two programmes. Secondly, the development of the programmes enabled the provision of a rubric for the development of innovative graduate programmes in Somaliland and indeed in Somalia as a country.



**Figure 2: Number of continuing students supported under the TAGDev Programme**

**d) Support students and faculty community action research teams to engage with communities and strengthen commodity value chains for smallholder farmers**

RUFORUM [community action research project](#) teams continued to engage smallholder farmers in collaborative research and have to-date engaged 71,016 smallholder farmers in profitable agriculture value chain undertakings. Through engagement in the projects, universities have been brought closer to the smallholder farmers. For instance, the Cassava Community Action Research Project at Egerton University in Kenya developed various value added products along the cassava value chain (See [Video](#)) that will play a big role in *demaizing* Kenya; the [Cassava CARP+](#) at University of Nairobi supported smallholder farmers to engage in the cassava value chain as a business; and, the Rice CARP+ at Gulu University has catalyzed the development of local rice seed business amongst smallholders in Uganda (See [Video](#)).

**e) Support the development, scaling-up and documentation of commercialisable innovations emerging from agribusiness incubation centers for greater impacts**

Under the RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program aimed at strengthening agri-enterprise innovation hubs at universities, a total of 784 Youth have been engaged, and out of these, 509 are continuing with business incubation and generating various innovations. Youth engaged under the [Bukavu agribusiness incubation center](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo provided agricultural related services including capacity building services, veterinary and technical support to ensure self-reliance amongst farmers (see Figure 3). The enterprise



**Figure 3: Bukavu Youth Agripreneurs enterprise**

seeks to have better quality local products, stimulate production at large-scale and supply raw materials to processing industries, bring agrifood products to the local markets and respond to hygienic and environmental standards that will ensure good health of the people in Bukavu.

**f) Field attachment to communities and mentorship for Cohort II, III undergraduate and Cohort II, III and IV Masters Students**

Through the innovations, products to markets field attachment and mentorship programme of RUFORUM, 43 student enterprises continued to develop brand identity and scale-out their enterprises (see Figure 4). The enterprises are still navigating the certification of products challenge through outsourcing additional funding to secure the necessary infrastructure to meet certification requirements. This has been undertaken through resource mobilization, for instance, [Family Store enterprise](#) secured 53 millions (US\$ 14,500) from [ImpactHER](#) to boost the enterprise; and, [Active Living Uganda](#) secured US\$ 2800 from the Food and



**Figure 4: Nectar point enterprise in Gulu, Uganda**

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Africa Center of Excellence (ACE) for Pharm-Biotechnology and Traditional Medicine ([PHARMBIOTRAC](#)).

***g) Support for studies, welfare and psychosocial wellbeing of Cohort I, II, and III undergraduate and Cohort II, III and IV Masters students***

The Secretariat organized monthly meetings with all continuing students to discuss their progress and academic and social issues that they are facing. The areas of support continued to emerge including increased need for mobile internet and practical trainings in research methods and social issues that affect female students. The Secretariat is already offering supplementary training on research methods, scientific data management and scientific writing.

***h) Establish and operationalize the RUFORUM Alumni Network***

Through the Alumni Telegram Groups, RUFORUM continued to engage its Alumni to share opportunities for scholarships, trainings and funding opportunities for enterprises. RUFORUM further mobilized Alumni with enterprises to showcase their products during the [18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of the Afro-Arab Youth Council \(AAYC\)](#). The products at the exhibition ranged from innovative fish production to processed agricultural products such as wines, confectionaries and information and communication technologies (ICT) for agricultural enterprises. RUFORUM works closely with the Ugandan Chapter of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program Alumni to share events and trainings of benefit to the Alumni.

***i) Document emerging lessons from the cohort I, II, III, and IV supported students***

The Secretariat continued to document student storylines capturing the students' experiences in education. Amongst these included:

- i. [My journey as a researcher](https://ruforum.wordpress.com/2022/01/28/my-journey-as-a-researcher/) (<https://ruforum.wordpress.com/2022/01/28/my-journey-as-a-researcher/>)
- ii. Giving back to community earned me a job and I returned to Uganda <https://ruforum.wordpress.com/2022/03/01/giving-back-to-community-earned-me-a-job-and-i-returned-to-uganda/>

**Emerging lessons and issues**

RUFORUM has supported member universities demonstrate relevance to communities through students' field attachments and community action research, amongst several other aspects. Documentation of process and lessons from the different initiatives will be essential for learning and for ensuring sustainability of the products emerging from current interventions.

**Flagship programme: RANCH: Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education**

***a) Strengthen Higher Agricultural Education in Africa***

The World Bank support to higher agricultural education in Africa under the Regional Anchor University Flagship programme of RUFORUM kicked off as Additional Financing to the African Centres of Excellence Programme for Eastern and Southern Africa (ACEII-AF), with Inter University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) as the Regional Facilitating Unit and RUFORUM as a technical partner. The Governments of the Republic of Malawi and Mozambique committed to participating and a call for proposals was published resulting into receipt of 12 proposals, three (3) from Mozambique and nine (9) from Malawi. A list of conditionally selected projects for Malawi can be accessed [here](#).

***b) Support establishment of Lead universities for Graduate Training in Africa***

The Université Évangélique en Afrique (UEA), Université Catholique de Graben (UCG), Université Catholique de Bukavu (UCB) and Université Officielle de Bukavu (UOB) in the

Democratic Republic of Congo developed a joint PhD Programme in Agroecology and Climate Science. The PhD Programme is due to start in June 2022.

Peace University in Sudan received support from Université Évangélique en Afrique, University of Gezira, University of Kordofan and Makerere University to develop and launch a PhD Programme in Natural Resources and Environmental Management. The Programme has already recruited 20 PhD students.

#### **Emerging lessons and issues**

Advocacy by member universities with their respective Ministries of Finance and Education is critical in increasing the number of countries participating in the World Bank Additional Financing to the African Centres of Excellence Programme for Eastern and Southern Africa (ACEII-AF).

### **Flagship programme: CREATE-Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence**

#### ***a) Academic Staff Development (ASD) through the Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) program***

During the quarter, 11 additional PhD students were recruited to participate under the Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) program, bringing to total 202 students (50 female, 152 male), out of whom 32 have completed their studies and returned to their institutions. The GTA Programme aims at improving the quality of higher education at African Universities by increasing the proportion of academic staff with PhD qualifications. It is a Programme of joint training between two universities where one university sends its staff to train in another university and they share the training cost. The targeted is to train 325 PhD students by December 2022, which would amount to approximately an investment of US\$ 19.5 Million by African Universities.

#### ***b) Promoting Collaboration in the field of Higher Education in Africa***

During the quarter, Makerere University supported University of Zimbabwe in the delivery of Applied Research Methods and Applied Statistics and Computer Application Graduate course.

#### ***c) Support participation of women in science and technology-related training and research activities in all institutions benefiting from RUFORUM schemes***

RUFORUM continued to foster women participation in the various interventions. During the quarter, out of the 95 new students recruited, 47 (45 %) are female. Cumulatively, RUFORUM has supported the training of 45% female students at doctorate, masters and undergraduate levels. This is part of RUFORUM's commitment to increase the pool of women scientists and professionals and to strengthening gender-responsive research for development.

#### ***d) Provide opportunities for Doctoral training to increase the pool of science, technology and innovation (ST&I) leaders in Africa***

As part of escalating doctoral research on the continent, 69 additional PhD students were recruited with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship programme and RUFORUM nurturing support (see Figure 5). This brings to total 409 Graduate students still undertaking studies.

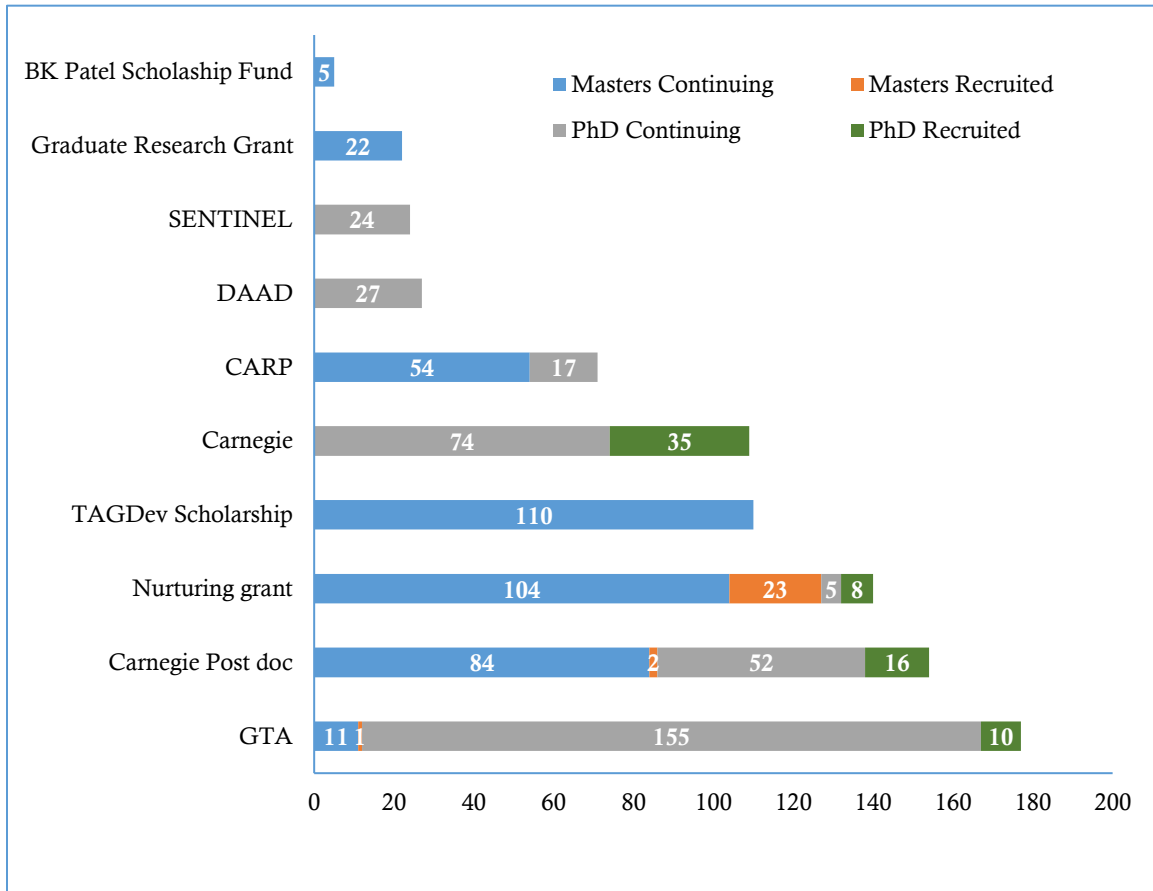


Figure 5: Number of continuing students under the different granting portfolios of RUFORUM

e) **Support post graduate training and research for small and fragile states**

Out of the 95 students recruited by RUFORUM during the quarter, 47 students were from [fragile and conflict-affected](#) states of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan. This brings to total 298 students from fragile and conflict affected States of Burkina Faso (1), Burundi (3), Cameroon (7), Congo Brazzaville (7), Democratic Republic of Congo (51), Ethiopia (19), Mozambique (2), Nigeria (27), Somalia (23), South Sudan (5), Sudan (131) and Zimbabwe (22) continuing to undertake studies with support from RUFORUM.

f) **Support skills enhancement and mentorship for students**

During this quarter, the Secretariat coordinated several network-level online skills enhancement trainings focusing on: [Statistical data analysis for post-graduate students using R programming language](#), [managing an effective job search](#), [becoming a competent, high-performing employee](#) and [eLearning Content Development](#) (see figure 6). The RUFORUM skill enhancement trainings are imperative in filling gaps existing in the academic growth curve of both students and staff at the RUFORUM member universities and to maximize the chance of graduates gaining employment by ensuring they have the right mix of skills to meet industry needs.

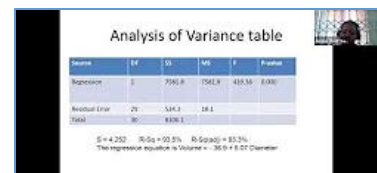


Figure 6: Training session on data analysis using R statistical software

**g) Support RUFORUM Post- Doctoral Fellows undertake thematic research to strengthen agri-food systems, inclusivity and environmental sustainability**

With support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, RUFORUM [awarded](#) 10 Post-doctoral Fellowships to strengthen African universities and research institutions' capacity to meet the growing demand for higher education and research for creating knowledge and prosperity in the continent.

**h) Expand and scale out the partnership with CGIAR for joint capacity building and research in agriculture and related sciences**

RUFORUM signed a contract with [Alliance Bioversity and CIAT](#) to implement the project: "[Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa \(AICCRA\)](#)". RUFORUM as a partner will lead climate-smart agriculture and climate services capacity assessment at university level across Africa and will support capacity development through institution and curriculum review, training of faculty and students and support internships for students to enhance capacity for climate-smart agriculture. RUFORUM participated in the [Ghana Meeting](#) that involved dialogue with different Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Centers focusing on collaboration in and beyond the AICCRA Project.

**i) Artificial Intelligence hub activities with WASCAL and AKADEMIYA2063 supported by International Development Research Centre (IDRC)**

RUFORUM participated in the official launch of the [IDRC/SIDA](#) funded Project "Research and Services Network for Responsible Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action Innovation in Africa" led by West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use ([WASCAL](#)) with RUFORUM and [AKADEMIYA2063](#) as partners. The partners discussed the launch of the call for proposals and how to establish a more functional Network for Artificial Intelligence for Climate Action in Africa. The summary of the event can be read [here](#).

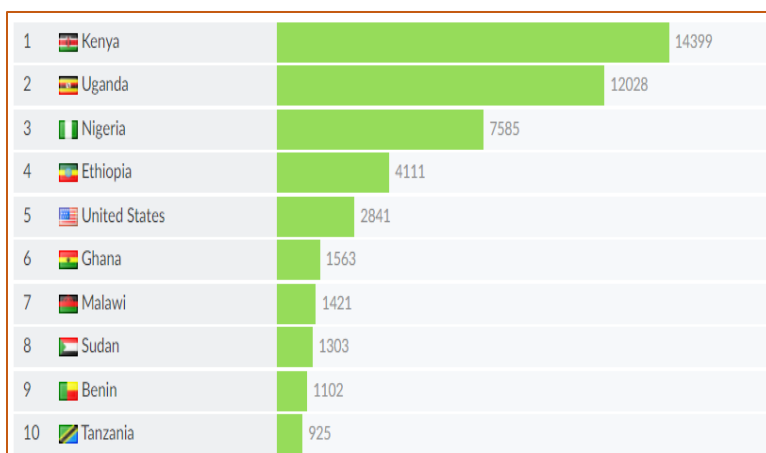
**Flagship programme: K-HUB-Knowledge hub for university networking, partnership and advocacy**

**a) Develop, host, maintain and integrate the RUFORUM online and offline ICT platforms to facilitate and enhance systematic access to information**

During the quarter, RUFORUM commenced implementing the [Regional E-Learning Platform](#) to promote sharing of eLearning content amongst selected pilot universities (Makerere University and Lilongwe Universities of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Malawi). Further, in preparation for the 18<sup>th</sup> RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Secretariat launched the [RUFORUM AGM 2022](#) website to facilitate information sharing with prospective participants.

**b) Foster dialogues on emerging global issues and other thematic dialogues of Communities of Practice.**

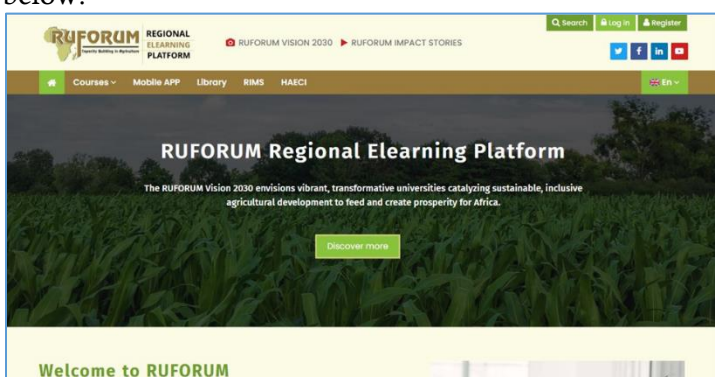
RUFORUM continued to harness information and communication technologies (ICT) to support capacity development across the network. During the quarter, RUFORUM facilitated 246 Zoom Meetings (6,171 participants) and 19 webinars (41,610 participants). The zoom meetings focused on resource mobilization and targeted training while the webinars focused on capacity building across RUFORUM member universities where students and Staff were trained in various aspects ranging from online content development and delivery to effective job search for students. The distribution of participants in the online convenings by country (top 10 countries) is shown Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Distribution of participants in online dialogues by nationality**

**c) Facilitate universities to innovatively use ICTs to improve teaching and learning**

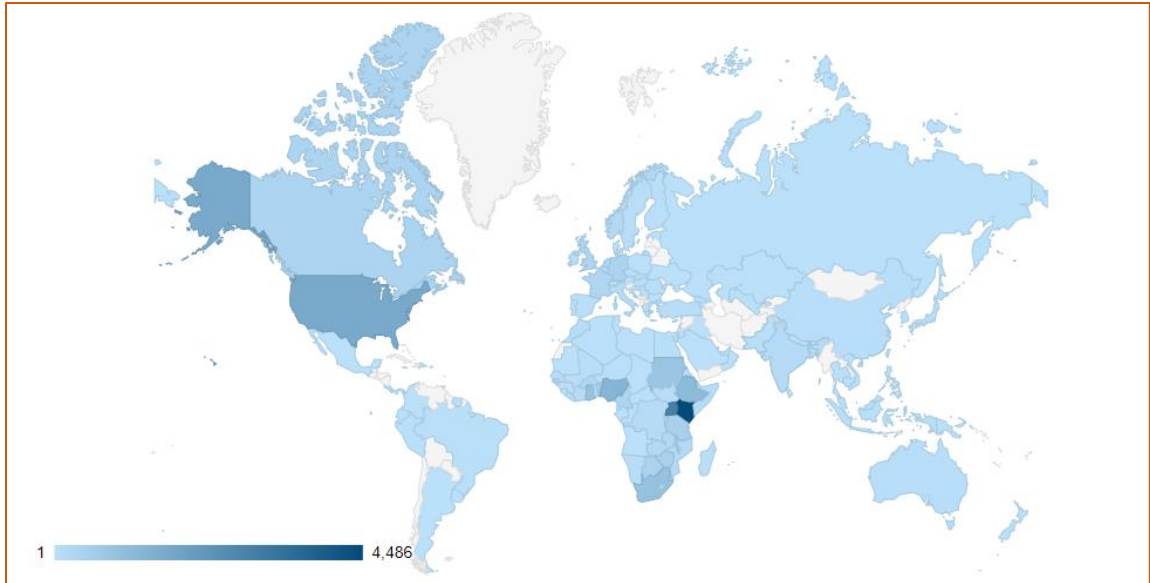
In collaboration with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), RUFORUM developed and hosted the [Regional E-learning Platform](#) for open online teaching and learning for students and staff in RUFORUM member universities. The screenshot of the platform is as shown below:



**d) Strengthen knowledge use through development and dissemination of knowledge products and services, providing easy-to-access on-time information and using specific feedback mechanisms to gauge client satisfaction.**

As part of contributing towards optimizing research and teaching outcomes by facilitating exchange of information amongst various stakeholders, the Secretariat shared outputs emerging from the RUFORUM Network through RUFORUM [Weekly Digests](#), [Press releases](#), [YouTube](#) channel and the RUFORUM [blog](#). The distribution of users of the RUFORUM Blog is as indicated in Figure 8 below:





**Figure 8: Geographical distribution of persons that accessed the RUFORUM Blog during the quarter**

**e) Resource Mobilization**

During the quarter, RUFORUM Secretariat developed and submitted a proposal to support operationalization of the Regional E-Learning platform by training e-course designers and instructors within the RUFORUM Network and facilitating the development of course contents on the Regional E-learning Platform.

**Emerging lesson**

E-learning is a topical thematic area that requires focus at all levels.

**Flagship programme: PROGRAM SUPPORT – Technical, administrative and logistical support**

The RUFORUM Secretariat continued to support Network activities with focus on institutional development, partnerships and alliances, scouting for opportunities and coordination of initiatives. Milestones for the quarter included:

**a) Support University research teams successfully submit at least 10 proposals to support university-level activities**

RUFORUM Secretariat mobilized member universities to partner with universities and research organizations in Europe to submit five (5) proposals to Horizon Europe and two (2) proposals to Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education Calls for Proposals.

**b) Prepare and submit at least 10 proposals to support implementation of the RUFORUM Vision 2030**

RUFORUM submitted an expression of interest to assess inclusive climate-smart agricultural innovations by sub- regional organizations in Africa to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and was selected to undertake the task starting late April 2022.

RUFORUM Secretariat further developed and submitted proposals to diverse funding agencies focusing on capacity building in higher education and strengthening research and innovation capacity for agriculture and business sector development in Africa.

c) ***Support broker alliances and partnerships to assist universities establish delivery networks for scaling-up research outputs, knowledge products and innovations***

RUFORUM formalized partnership with the African Development Bank to provide administration and management support to the Japan Africa Dream Scholarship (JADS) Programme. The aim of the programme is to provide two-year scholarship awards to qualified African graduates to enable them pursue post-graduate studies in selected priority development areas on the continent and in Japan.

d) ***Recruit Staff to support implementation of the RUFORUM Vision 2030***

The Secretariat recruited four new staff: i) Prof Jackson Mwanjalolo Majaliwa from DRC as Manager for the RUFORUM Anchor Universities Flagship Programme; ii) Mr Artur Fernando from Mozambique as a Technical Specialist responsible for Graduate and Post-Doctoral Training; iii) Mr Yamungu from DRC as a Technical Specialist responsible for development of Regional Anchor Universities, and iv) Mr Moses Eriyau from Uganda as a System Accountant. This is part of the effort to strengthen the RUFORUM Secretariat coordination and delivery capacity.

e) ***Undertake an Outcome assessment on implementation of the RUFORUM Operational Plan 2018-2022***

The Secretariat engaged a consultancy firm to undertake dialogue with various stakeholders. The assessments are currently ongoing. The aim is to measure success of the activities implemented in the 2018-2022 period and as well capture lessons and make recommendations for future implementation of RUFORUM interventions as part of developing the RUFORUM 2023-2027 Operational Plan.

f) ***Functional Analysis of the Secretariat operations and management***

The Secretariat commissioned a functional analysis of RUFORUM Secretariat to align the current Secretariat functions with the operationalization of the RUFORUM Regional Nodes being established and to take into account the changing global operational environment.

**Emerging Issue**

The expanding RUFORUM Network requires that services be brought closer to member universities. The RUFORUM Regional Nodes will go a long way in designing and implementing activities necessary to enhance RUFORUM footprints and visibility in the various geographical regions of the Continent

**Planned activities for the next quarter**

1. Planning for the 18<sup>th</sup> RUFORUM Annual General Meeting
2. Finalize the RUFORUM Functional analysis
3. Finalize the Outcome Assessment of the RUFORUM Operational Plan 2018-2022
4. Resource Mobilisation for the Secretariat and Member Universities
5. Hold RUFORUM Governance Meetings