



Concept Note

RUFORUM 19th Annual General Meeting (AGM)

International Advisory Panel Meeting

Date: Saturday, 28 October 2023

Time: 08:30-13:00 (GMT+1)

Venue: Palais des Congrès, Yaoundé, Cameroon (<https://bit.ly/47y8XHO>).

Introduction

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a pan African network of predominantly agriculture teaching and research public and private universities established in 2004 by vice chancellors in five countries. Since then, the network has evolved and is now operating in 40 of Africa's 54 countries and all its five geographic regions, with a membership of 163 universities that is still growing (for details see www.ruforum.org). The network has also evolved in its scale and scope of operations that now transcend institutional strengthening, post-doctoral training, entrepreneurship and future of work activities. Accordingly, a new set of actors such as Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) institutions, farming communities, private sector and partners in the Global North and Global South are being engaged.

RUFORUM's Vision is "**vibrant, transformative universities catalysing sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa**". This vision of success is achieved by implementing four mutually reinforcing strategic objectives of :

1. Enhancing the relevance, legitimacy, and viability of RUFORUM as a continental HAE network and the effectiveness of its members to collaborate in implementing its programs and be accountable for results, including at the regional nodes;
2. Building synergy through networks of specialization to develop the quality human resources and capacity required to intensify and increase Africa's agricultural productivity and competitiveness;
3. Facilitating collaboration among RUFORUM member institutions and affiliates, utilizing up-to-date information to make substantial structural changes in the organization and operation of AHESI;
4. Ensuring that the products, processes, and knowledge developed through university research directly respond to and are utilized by value chain actors in the agri-food system to catalyze transformation with inclusivity and environmental sustainability;

Collectively, these strategic actions will support the transformation of African universities to produce the relevant human resources, research products and services and positively influence policy for agricultural transformation and growth the continent.

RUFORUM network is governed by eight (8) governance organs, namely: (1) the Annual General Assembly (RUFORUM business meeting), (2) the Board of Trustees, (3) the Board Executive Committee, (4) the Finance and Administration Committee, (5) the Audit Committee, (6) the Technical Committee, (7) the International Advisory Panel, and (8) the Principals and Deans Committee. These governance organs are serviced by the



RUFORUM Secretariat. As statutory, the governance organs met at various time throughout the year to review reports and progress and guide the organisation.

International Advisory Panel (IAP)

The International Advisory Panel (IAP) is one of RUFORUM's Governance Organs. It is RUFORUM's extra eye for foresight, exploration, review and strategic guidance. It serves to support international recognition of RUFORUM and its programmes. IAP consists of eight eminent international experts, 4 from within and 4 from outside Africa. Their functions are purely advisory to both Board and Secretariat on a wide range of issues, such as the international funding context, strategic priorities and strategic partnerships, mobilizing international support, and internal management. Members of the IAP serve for a period of three years and are eligible for reappointment, once. The Board may also appoint from time to time, Honorary Members of the International Advisory Panel; distinguished personalities to help market and advise RUFORUM as necessary.

The major functions of the International Advisory Panel are to:

- i) Provide International oversight and quality assurance;
- ii) Mobilize international support and partnerships for RUFORUM;
- iii) Advise the Board on research, training and outreach thrusts;
- iv) Assist in resource mobilization for RUFORUM; and
- v) Provide the necessary strategic orientation to the Board and the Secretariat.

This concept note aims to prepare the members of the IAP for their meeting during the RUFORUM AGM.

The 2023 IAP Meeting

This years' second IAP meeting is particularly important, given the change in leadership at RUFORUM and the refresh of its Medium-Term Operational Plan. Additionally, during the year, the Secretariat has been involved in intense resourcing for its mission across the 163 members. Key messages from the development partners include the need to focus on outcomes delivery within the agriculture sector, higher education transformation processes, ensuring inclusion, diversity and provision of safeguards¹ and entrepreneurship among others. There have also been discussions on expanding RUFORUMs' resourcing portfolio including the creation of an endowment fund.

Overall Objective

The overall objective of the IAP meeting is to review the implementation of the RUFORUM activities that are relevant to the IAP functions (International funding context, donor trends, strategic priorities, strategic partnerships, resources mobilization, internal management and mobilization of international support) during the past fiscal year, draw lessons and make recommendations for the new fiscal year to improve RUFORUM's performance.

Specific Objectives

1. Receive, consider and approve minutes from last year IAP meeting;

¹ Safeguarding refers to the provision of a range of measures at learning institutions to protect learners (students) and young people from harm, abuse, and neglect.



2. Receive, review and consider strategic thrusts on the 2022-2023 report of the Executive Secretary;
 - a. RUFORUMs two-pronged mid-term thrusts
 - i. Strategic partnerships – FARA, AFAAS and RUFORUM tripartite as part of implementing the Abidjan FARA-One CGIAR Communique
 - ii. RUFORUM’s Science and Transformative Education agenda’s
 - b. Funding opportunities: New thrusts and directions;
 - i. Resourcing for Mission fulfilment
 - ii. Trust fund opportunities and what needs to be done
 - c. Inclusion and diversity: Closing the gender gap in research, training and workplace;
3. Sustainably managing growth
 - a. Guidance of new membership- A proposed staggered recruitment process
 - b. Operationalization from national to regional levels (National Chapters/Forums, Regional Nodes etc).

Participants

The participants to the IAP meeting will be the eight IAP members and the RUFORUM Secretariat executive staff and any other RUFORUM staff assigned by the Executive Secretary as necessary. Representatives of the RUFORUM board may attend the IAP meeting.

Date and Venue

The AGM 2023 IAP meeting will take place on Saturday, October 28th at the Palais des **Congres**, meeting Room B from 09:00 to 13:00 (GMT+1) as a blended event (<https://bit.ly/47y8XHO>).

Methodology

The IAP meeting will take place in plenary in a blended form (face to face and virtually), but physical attendance is encouraged. There will PowerPoint Presentations followed by discussions, and deliberations. Breakout sessions can be used if deemed necessary by the IAP members to address issues raised under the objective section of this concept note.

Expected Outcomes

1. Minutes from last year IAP meeting reviewed and approved;
2. Updates from RUFORUM on matters arising from the approved minutes received and appreciated;
3. The 2022-2023 report of the Executive Secretary received and reviewed and appreciated;
4. The Secretariat advised on strategies to establish and operationalize national forums (RUFORUM National Chapters) at national levels and Regional Forums (Regional Chapters) at the regional level, through the regional thematic groups;
5. RUFORUM advised on the following key strategic issues



- a) Current and relevant areas of focus for the development partners;
- b) Closing the gender imbalance to increase women participation in agricultural higher Education agricultural research, agricultural extension and advisory services provision, entrepreneurship;
- c) Priority areas for RUFORUM leadership.



Draft Agenda

Time (GMT+1)	Agenda Item	Responsible
08:00-08:30	Record of Attendance	Moses Waswa
08:30-08:40	Introduction, Presentation and Adoption of the Agenda, Quorum verification	IAP Chair
08:40-08:45	Welcome remarks from RUFORUM Secretariat	RUFORUM ES
08:45-08:50	Communication from the IAP Chair	IAP Chair
08:50-09:20	Review and approval of the minutes of the last year IAP Meeting	IAP Chair
09:20-09:30	Updates on matters arising from the previous minutes	IAP Chair
09:30-09:50	The report from the RUFORUM Executive Secretary	RUFORUM ES
09:50-09:55	Remarks from the IAP chair	IAP Chair
09:55-10:00	Considerations from the ES Report	IAP Chair
10:00-10:15	Health Break	
10:15-10:30	Presentation on the National Forums	RUFORUM EAES
10:30 -10:40	Discussions on the National Forums: Strategies to implement and operationalize RUFORUM national/regional forums	IAP Members – B Sinsin
10:40 -11:10	Current and relevant areas of focus for the development partners	IAP Members – David Nielson
11:10 -11:25	Closing the gender imbalance to increase women participation in agricultural higher Education agricultural research, agricultural extension and advisory services provision, entrepreneurship	IAP members – Prof Tahra and Jennie
11:25 -11:40	Priority areas for RUFORUM leadership	IAP Members – Prof Kay and Tim
11:40-12:10	General Discussions and Resolutions	IAP Members
12:10-13:00	Any Other Business	IAP members
13:00	End of the meeting	



Annex 1:
Updated List of IAP Members

No	Name	Gender	Institution	Email	Country
1	Dr. David Nielson	Male	Former Official- World Bank	dnielson0427@gmail.com	USA
2	Dr Timothy Chancellor	Male	Natural Resources Institute, Faculty of Engineering and Science	T.C.B.Chancellor@greenwich.ac.uk	UK
3	Jennie Van der Mheen	Female	Wageningen University and Research (WUR)	jennie.vandermheen@wur.nl	KNL
4	Tahra El Obeid	Female	Qatar University	Tahra.e@qu.edu.qa	Qatar
5	Prof. Kathleen Muir Leresche	Female	136 Rocklands Road Rooi Els Cape, PO Box 343 Betty's Bay, Cape 7141 South Africa.	bandroop@gmail.com	South Africa
6	Prof. Brice Sinsin	Male	University of Abomey Calavi	bsinsin@gmail.com	Benin
7	Prof. Ophelia Inez Weeks	Female	Former ED - Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development	oweeks71@gmail.com	Liberia
8	Dr Codou Diaw	Female	Executive Director of the Batonga Foundation	codoudiaw@hotmail.com	Senegal



Annex 2:

Report from the 18th AGM IAP meeting in Harare, Dec 2022: Report of the International Advisory Panel to the RUFORUM Board

15th December 2022

An annual meeting between the RUFORUM Secretariate and RUFORUM's International Advisory Panel (henceforth referred to as the IAP) was convened on December 11, 2022 (attendance and agenda for the meeting are provided in Annexes One and Two below). The RUFORUM Secretariate (henceforth referred to as the Secretariate) opened the meeting by providing the IAP with a briefing on its ongoing work program, on ideas about the work program going forward, and on prospects for financing these activities. The steady success in expanding the scope and reach of RUFORUM's programs is evident, as is the expanding and very important impact of these programs. The possibility of substantial new funding is quite encouraging – and the success in attracting strong partnerships with institutions in the MENA region is particularly impressive and welcome.

It was noted that the potential expansion of the work program will pose interesting challenges in scaling out programmatic activities while maintaining quality in programming. Dealing with these challenges could be a candidate topic for future discussion between the IAP and the Secretariate. The meeting's discussion of several key topics is summarized in the paragraphs below.

The Secretariate introduced the possibility that future support from BADEA might be provided to RUFORUM through the modality of a trust fund. The (multi-donor) trust fund modality could also be an attractive way to structure support from other partners. At the request of the Secretariate, it was agreed that the IAP would provide support in exploring and developing experience-based approaches to the potential adoption of the trust fund modality.

It was noted that there are various initiatives to develop Centres of Excellence (CoE) in Africa. These include the CoE programmes supported by the World Bank in which RUFORUM is involved, the African Research Universities Alliance and the proposed CoE on Agroecology to be funded by the European Commission. It was agreed that it would be useful to explore linkages between the programmes and to review the utility of the different models to inform future investments. Endowed Chairs are a useful way to raise the profile of CoE and to grow funding for greater impact. This could be an interesting mechanism for RUFORUM to promote.

The IAP commended the work being done by RUFORUM on priority themes such as women in STEM and agriculture, entrepreneurship, and youth in agriculture. Consideration may be given to further developing the key areas of climate change, biodiversity and environmental sustainability which currently have less visibility. One avenue for this could be the discussion with the EC on agroecology which the IAP has been helping to facilitate. There are other funding sources available for these issues which the IAP could assist RUFORUM to connect with (note reference below to the Green Climate Fund).

Over the course of 2022, the Secretariate and the IAP have worked together in the formulation of an updated description of the role of the IAP (this updated description is attached as ANNEX Three below).

One of the key roles of the IAP has been to facilitate the development of partnerships with, and support from, institutions external to Africa. This will continue to be a key role for the IAP – and in the coming year, particular



attention in this regard will be focused on facilitation of deepening partnerships with, *inter alia*, the following: JICA, the One CGIAR, land grant universities in the US, and the Green Climate Fund.

Three members of the IAP have indicated their intention to retire from membership in the IAP. These departing members are: Prof. Didier Pillot; Prof. Daniel Sherrard; and Dr. Lindiwe Sibanda. Replacement members are appointed by the Executive Committee of RUFORUM's Board after consultation and recommendations from the Secretariate. Appointment for two of the three open positions has been finalized: Dr. Tim Chancellor and Dr. Tahra El-Obeid. A third open IAP position awaits appointment by the Board's Executive Committee.

The imminent transition in the position of Executive Secretary of RUFORUM from Professor Adipala Ekwamu (incumbent) to Dr. Patrick Okori (in-coming) was referenced several times during the course of the meeting. At the close of the meeting, the IAP gave special recognition to the extraordinarily valuable leadership of Professor Adipala Ekwamu in the establishment and development of RUFORUM and its programs, and their impact on the African Continent. Further, the IAP welcomed, and very much looks forward to working with, Dr. Patrick Okori in coming months and years.

Meeting Participants

1. Dr. David Nielson (Chair IAP).
2. Prof. Didier Pillot (IAP member).
3. Prof. Adipala Ekwamu (RUFORUM Executive Secretary).
4. Dr. Tim Chancellor (IAP member).
5. Prof. Daniel Sherrard (IAP member).
6. Ms. Jennie Van der Mheen (IAP member).
7. Dr. Sokona Dagnoko (Executive Assistant to the Executive Secretary).
8. Prof. Brice Sinsin (IAP member).
9. Prof. Lindiwe Sibanda (IAP member).
10. Prof. Kay Muir Leresche (IAP member).
11. Prof. Ophelia Weeks (IAP member – participated virtually).
12. Ms. Judith Francis (Honorary IAP member – participated virtually).
13. Ms. Judith Nakyobe (Manager Finance and Administration).
14. Ms. Loyce Angoku (Senior Finance Officer).
15. Mr. Jacob Kato (Technical Specialist for Systems Development).
16. Mr. Waswa Moses (Technical Specialist for Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning).
17. Mr. Emmanuel Okalany (Technical Specialist for Development and Partnership).
18. Dr. Patrick Okori (ICRISAT, and incoming RUFORUM Executive Secretary).
19. Dr. Mary Showa (RUFORUM Board).

Meeting Agenda

1. Update on 2022 RUFORUM Programme Implementation and resource mobilisation;
2. Review of the report from the previous IAP meeting;
3. Review and discussion of the First Operational Plan Outcome Evaluation;
4. Presentation of statement of the IAP's own objectives and strategies for its support to RUFORUM



5. Discussion on engagement modalities between RUFORUM Secretariat and the IAP;
6. Discussion on relationship between the IAP (and its individual members) and the RUFORUM Secretariat;
7. Discussion on relationship between IAP and RUFORUM Board, individuals and partnering institutions; and,
8. Discussion on the structure and composition of the IAP.

Adoption of the Agenda

1. Agenda item 3 was removed since the report had just been submitted and the RUFORUM Secretariat had not prepared.
2. It was agreed that Agenda items five to eight be discussed together since they are linked.
3. Agenda item of managing the turnover of IAP members be discussed as an AoB.



Annex 3.

About the National Forum for Agricultural Higher Education -NaFAHE

- ***The NaFAHE Concept***

The National Forums for Agricultural Higher Education (NaFAHE) are RUFORUM chapters established at country level, according to the specificity of each country. The NaFAHE provide a platform for stakeholders to articulate demands for university services, advocate for change, and provide feedback on the utility of RUFORUM activities. It is chaired by a distinguished person outside the university system and has a Secretariat based in a member university.

- ***Functions of the NaFAHE***

Each NaFAHE meets at least once a year (face to face or virtually) and has the following functions:

- a. Formulate the National Agriculture and related disciplines, Science, Technology, Innovation, Training and Research priorities for the member universities in their countries
- b. Ensure that financial and other resources are mobilized and effectively deployed to carry out RUFORUM activities at National level
- c. Disseminate the Agriculture and related disciplines, Science, Technology, Innovation, Training and Research products produced by the universities in their countries
- d. Hold annual National Forum events to foster collaboration linked to University research, training, outreach and wider policy, and stakeholder management.

- ***Functions of the NaFAHE***

In each country, the national RUFORUM chapter shall consist of the following members

- (i) A representative of universities in the targeted country offering courses in agriculture and related disciplines, Science, Technology, Innovation, Training and Research
- (ii) A representative of the body responsible for higher education in each country from which a university member of RUFORUM comes from
- (iii) A representative of the body responsible for agricultural extension and advisory services provision in each country from which a university member of RUFORUM comes from
- (iv) A representative of the body responsible for the national agriculture research in each country from which a university member of RUFORUM comes from
- (v) A representative of the body responsible for Science Technology, and Innovation in each country from which a university member of RUFORUM comes from
- (vi) The following co-opted member as and when the need arises
 - a. Representative of farmer organizations
 - b. Private sector representatives
 - c. Civil society representatives
 - d. Any other categories of persons- deemed fit by the Chairperson of the respective national RUFORUM chapters



- (vii) The Co-opted member may speak at the meeting on any matter in relation to which his or her advice is sought but shall not have the right to vote on any matter coming for decision before the meeting.
- ***Management of the NaFAHE***
 - The National Chapter shall be headed by a chairperson elected by members of the national chapter at their first meeting who shall also be assisted by a Secretary appointed also in that first meeting
 - The National Chapter will mobilize resources for its operations
 - RUFORUM Secretariat when possible shall contribute to covering the cost of the meetings and other operational costs of running of the National Chapter in the countries of the member universities
 - The NaFAHE shall meet at least once a year
 - The Chairperson will serve for three years which may be renewed once