



2nd RUFORUM TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

CONCEPT NOTE

OPERATIONALIZING THE RUFORUM REGIONAL NODES TO PROMOTE INTER AND INTRA SUB – REGIONAL NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION AMONG RUFORUM MEMBER UNIVERSITIES

Date: 14th August 2024 **Time:** 10:30-16:30 CAT

Venue: Mercure Hotel, Room Omatako 1, Windhoek, Namibia

Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/3RMaB2g>

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BACKGROUND

RUFORUM has over the years expanded its operations to all the five regions of the continent i.e., (Northern, Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Africa). Given the vastness and diversity across these regions strengthening sub regional engagements is an imperative. Accordingly, the RUFORUM General Assembly of 2021 approved establishment of the Western Africa node in Benin and the Southern Africa node in Malawi as a first step of strengthening sub-regional presence on the continent. The Western Africa node will serve countries in the Western and Central Africa region as covered by Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS] and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The Southern Africa Node will serve countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Eastern Africa node function will be managed at the RUFORUM secretariat in Kampala Uganda. There will be opportunity of creating other sub-regional nodes subsequently as membership and operations grow.

The overall objective of the sub-regional nodes is to facilitate the smooth running of RUFORUM operations in the different regions of the continent and promoting engagement and training of African scholars at all levels. To date RUFORUM has signed hosting agreements with the Governments of Malawi and Benin, respectively. The next logical step therefore is holding of stakeholder meetings to address “take-off” operations at sub regional level. Accordingly this side event is being organized.

It should be noted that the foundational operation theater of the RUFORUM are its national chapters (National Forums). The country forums bring together diverse stakeholders involved in

Co-organisers:





the agriculture higher and tertiary education ecosystems to engage in dialogues, consensus building and strategic partnerships for teaching, learning, research and development. They are anchored at universities with one of the RUFORUM member universities providing the secretariat. The national forums across each country, therefore are the building block and foundation of the regional nodes operations. Fully functional national forums therefore are essential for regional node operationalization.

It is important to note that The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) has also created 20 country forums to which Universities also belong. These forums have been established in Cameroon, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. RUFORUM could therefore learn and leverage AFAAS forums for its teaching, learning and research for development agenda. Accordingly, during the Triennial conference there will be opportunity to discuss operational imperatives for RUFORUM forums from national to sub-regional levels.

MEETING OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the proposed side-event is to discuss the imperatives for activating the operations of RUFORUM at sub regional level and develop the operationalization roadmap. The meeting will involve stakeholders within and outside the network from whom key lessons will also be learnt and shared with.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. **Lesson learning:** Draw lessons on the operationalizing national forums as the foundation for regional integration of co-shared investments and actions.
2. **National operations:** Develop roadmaps for strengthening national operations using national forums.
3. **Sub-regional operations:** Draw lessons on the operations at sub-regional level as well as develop roadmaps for activation of the RUFORUM sub regional nodes.
4. **Partnerships.** Promote intra and inter-sub regional collaboration among member universities

APPROACH

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The workshop will take place in a blended mode as it will allow both physical and virtual attendance. Overview presentations will be made to guide discussions, followed by a panel discussion to enrich and share experiences. Subsequently group work will be done at sub regional level to create convergence, awareness and strengthen the knowledge of participants on the sub regional nodes and national forums.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. Imperatives for activating RUFORUM operation structures at national to sub-regional levels generated.
2. Action leads to engage with national actors identified and the terms of reference generated to guide activation of both national and regional nodes.
3. Leads for Stakeholders knowledge of and engagement with the regional nodes strengthened.
4. Roadmaps and key actions for activating both National Forums and Regional Nodes developed.

DATE AND VENUE

The side event will take place on 14 August, 2024 at Mercure Hotel, in Windhoek, Namibia. From 10:30 to 16:30 CAT in Mercure Hotel, Room Omatako 1. To join the workshop virtually, please click [here](#).

PARTICIPANTS

Member University leaders, RUFORUM staff, AFAAS, FARA, SROs- ASARECA, CCARDESA, CORAF, One-CGIAR, Government representatives, National Innovation Systems stakeholders, students, civil society, and the private sector among others will participate in the workshop. At least 60 participants are expected.

PROGRAMME

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Rapporteurs: RUFORUM

Date	Activity	Responsible / facilitator
Session 1. Opening ceremony and Node Official Launching		
10:00 - 10:30	Arrival and registration	
10:30 - 10:40	Introduction	Dr Sokona Dagnoko
10:40 - 10:45	Welcome remarks	Prof Patrick Okori, RUFORUM Executive Secretary
10:45 - 10:55	Official opening and launching of the Nodes	Vice Chancellor
Session 2. Plenary Presentations		
10:55 - 11:30	Presentation of the Regional Nodes	Coordinator Benin
11:30 - 12:00	Presentation of the National Forums	Coordinator Malawi
12:00 - 12:30	Discussions	Session Chair
12:30 - 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 - 14:10	Session 3: Plenary: Setting up Breakout sessions (four groups, 2 for Southern Africa Node and 2 for Western Africa Node) TORs: (i) What are the imperatives for activating RUFORUM operation structures at national to sub-regional levels? (ii) a. Identify action leads at country level to engage with national actors (ii) b. Generate terms of reference for country level action leads to guide activation of national forums (ii) c. Generate terms of reference for sub regional node level action leads to guide activation of sub-regional nodes	Dr Sokona
14:10 - 15:00	Session 4: Breakout sessions facilitated by Dr Sokona, Coordinator Malawi, Coordinator Benin	Dr Sokona Coordinator Malawi Coordinator Benin
15:00 – 16:00	Session 5: Plenary: Presentation and discussions of the outcomes from the breakout sessions: 10 minutes per group report Discussions (20 minutes)	Session Chair
Session 6. Closing ceremony		
16:00 – 16:20	Wrap up of the discussions and way forward	Prof Patrick Okori
16:20 – 16:30	Closing remarks	Vice Chancellor

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