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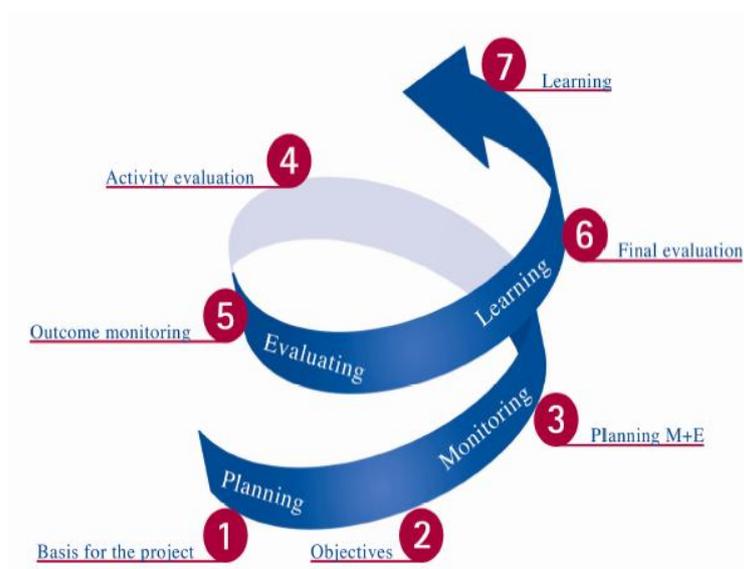
RUFORUM M&E Strategy



Tracking Performance, Progress
and Pathways to Impactful
Capacity Building in Agriculture

RUFORUM
Regional Universities Forum for
Capacity Building in Agriculture



**Funding:**

The process of development of the RUFORUM M&E Strategy and publication of this operational and reference guide was made possible by funding from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation under the project “*Engaging African Universities to Support Agricultural Development in Eastern and Southern Africa*” – Grant ID: OPP50368.

Citation Style:

RUFORUM, 2011. Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy: An Operational and Reference Guide. Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Kampala.

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ISBN:

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Foreword

Strengthening institutional capacity for African Universities for effective training, research and outreach programmes and the engagement of the Universities with the farming community and other development processes lies at the very heart of RUFORUM's mandate. This means that we must work with universities and other Agricultural tertiary Education stakeholders to assist in the formulation of those strategies, policies, structures, and processes, which will have system-wide capacity developmental impact.

Currently active in 15 countries in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, RUFORUM, UNDP must be relevant to the emerging needs of agricultural capacity to drive CAADP achievement. We must have a clear vision of the direction in which we need go and the outcomes we want to help achieve. Likewise, we must be able to respond quickly and appropriately to challenges and opportunities for capacity development in agricultural and rural development sectors.

Results-based management provides a set of principles, approaches, and tools which can help us achieve these goals. We will keep our focus on how we can strengthen real and sustainable capacity in universities by always trying to answer the simple question - "so what difference does our intervention make? In turn, this effort requires us to embrace a culture of tracking progress and evaluation results.

RUFORUM has accumulated tremendous knowledge over the past 5 years with access to, including the lessons learned from evaluations. This knowledge should help us more fully inform our programming and our decision making. The publication of this M&E strategy will help us and our partners to be even clearer about the higher-level results we want to achieve; to develop and act on strategies to achieve those results; to use systematically lessons drawn from evaluations to make decisions; and, ultimately, to improve our contribution to the achievement of Africa's development priorities through university capacity strengthening.

Chairman, Board of Trustees

Preface

This 2011 version of the 'RUFORUM M&E Strategy' aims to support RUFORUM as an organization and network in becoming more results-oriented and to improve its focus on Secretariat performance, university capacity changes and real improvements at farm level. It forms a major breakthrough in driving the effective application of the results-based management approach in programming and performance management at RUFORUM. The Strategy document recognizes that planning, monitoring and evaluation require a focus on organizationally owned capacity development priorities and results, and should reflect the guiding principles of university ownership in capacity development for agricultural development.

The emerging significant shift away from the project approach in favour of programmatic approach and results orientation has also been embraced at RUFORUM. All member universities should also make the move to demonstrate tangible results in training, research and other operations. RUFORUM is already facing intensified calls for accountability to its partners including member universities, development partners and other stakeholders about how resources are used, what results are achieved, and how effective these results are in bringing about progress in university relevance.

In January 2011 an independent external organizational review of RUFORUM was endorsed and the M&E strategy was approved by the Board of Directors in April 2011. The external review found that, *inter alia*, RUFORUM continued to demonstrate a weak results culture owing to the lack of a systemic monitoring and evaluation structure despite notable progress on many fronts. This Strategy complements the other programme and operations policies and procedures by providing practical guidance on how to plan, monitor and evaluate various activities at the Secretariat and to some degree at the member universities. It is the advice of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit that this document cannot, on its own, foster a culture of results and learning for change in RUFORUM or among its partners. However, together with other initiatives, we hope it will make a significant difference in the way we plan, implement, track, evaluate, report and learn for improved performance and positive change.

The strategy is a departure from previous attempt at instituting M&E in that it recognizes that results planning is a prerequisite for effective programme design, monitoring and evaluation, and puts emphasis on learning for change. The strategy also reflects the requirements and guiding principles of the evaluation policy, including unit and university ownership, which must now be mainstreamed throughout the cycle of planning, monitoring and evaluation. The strategy also includes special guidelines for aspects such as evaluating the RUFORUM network, M&E capacity building, M&E for risk management and overall responsibility of different RUFORUM organs among others

There will be regular training and regional workshops to support the application of state-of-the art M&E principles and practices as part of the wider capacity building scheme. While the primary audience for the document RUFORUM Secretariat staffs, we hope that it will contribute to the efforts of all RUFORUM member universities and other partners who, like RUFORUM, must strive towards greater programming and capacity development relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, quality, sustainability and impact. In order to facilitate wider dissemination of this publication, in addition to the printed version, the document is available on CD-ROMs and the RUFORUM website at www.ruforum.org/resources/merc/m&estategy.html.

The production of this strategy is the result of deep consultation and is there a joint product of REUFORUM Secretariat, the member universities and other stakeholders lead by the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Unit. We would like to thank colleagues in other units for their input and dedication to the process and helping sharpen the draft and refine the final strategy document over a many of iterations.

Prof Adipala Ekwamu

Executive Secretary

Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge the contributions and support of a number of individuals and institutions that enabled the successful completion of this strategy document. Through several internal consultations, reviews and feedback on various draft versions of the document the staff at RUFORUM Secretariat drove the process in many ways. They have also provided immense feedback in the dry runs and pilot implementation of the guidelines and tools that accompany this guideline leading to significant improvements. Special thanks go to external experts who contribution separately or collectively in the initial scoping, benchmarking and subsequent stages of the strategy development. These include:

- Participants at the inception planning meeting to scope the strengthening of RUFORUM internal learning and performance management systems during them launch of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant at RUFORUM
- Dr Leonard Oruko, for facilitating the first in-house M&E strategy planning and assessment meeting.
- Nkoola Institutional Development Associates (NIDA), the consulting firm that conducted the baseline survey of the status of M&E practice, capacity at the RUFORUM Secretariat and to benchmark key performance indicators.
- Participants of the IFPRI, InWent coordinated annual workshops held in Feldafing, Germany in which the RUFORUM M&E Strategy was presented and reviewed
- Participants at the Regional Stakeholder Consultation workshop on FARA M&E Strategy and subsequent workshops on M&E for CAADP Pillar
- RUFORUM member universities for providing feedback on test runs of tools and other feedback for operationalizing the M&E framework
- Participants/attendees of various RUFORUM gatherings including the Annual General Assembly (AGA)/AGM for inputting in the process at early stages
- Participants of various international RUFORUM strategy meetings especially the April 2010 Bellagio meeting and the March 2011 donor roundtable meeting
- Various RUFORUM organs including the Board, the International Advisory Panel (IAP), the Technical Committee (TC) and the Deans Committee (DC) for giving guidance and useful input at different stages of the strategy development process.

This M&E Strategy development would not have been possible without the financial support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Grant ID: OPP50368).

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AWPB	- Annual Work Plan and Budget
CAADP	- Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
CARP	- Community Action Research Programme
CBA	- Cost-Benefit Analysis
CD	- Capacity Development
CGIAR	- Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CGS	- Competitive Grant Scheme
DC	- Deans Committee
FAAP	- Framework for African Agricultural Productivity
FAP	- Field Attachment Programmes
FARA	- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FGD	- Focus Group Discussion
GRG	- Graduate Research Grant
IAP	- International Advisory Panel
ICT	- Information and Communication Technologies
LFA	- Logical Framework Approach
M&E	- Monitoring and Evaluation
ME\$L	- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MERC	- Monitoring and Evaluation Resource Centre
MIS	- Management Information System
OM	- Outcome Mapping
PM&E	- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PME	- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
RBFB	- Results-Based Framework
RUFORUM	- Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building on Agriculture
SWOT	- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TC	- Technical Committee
TQA	- Training and Quality Assurance

INTRODUCTION

About RUFORUM

The organization

Established in 2004, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), has the mission to ‘foster innovativeness and adaptive capacity of universities engaged in agricultural and rural development to develop and sustain high quality in training, innovative and impact oriented research, and collaboration’. With a membership of 25 universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA), RUFORUM has grown over the years from a unitary program of the Rockefeller Foundation into what it is today, a regional network focusing on capacity building for the agricultural sector through graduate training at both MSc and PhD levels, and promoting innovation and integration within universities. RUFORUM’s ability to innovatively build the capacity of universities through creation and strengthening of demand-driven science and technology training programmes is continuously challenged by emerging issues. Agriculture will remain the main engine of economic growth and development and livelihoods in Africa but its players, drivers and capacity development needs will certainly change. The RUFORUM strategic plan (2006-2015) is designed to enable the realization of the organization’s role in the changing African agricultural tertiary education landscape.

Vision, Mission, and Objectives

RUFORUM envisions the next generations of policymakers, university professors, agriculture, food and natural resource researchers and analysts, and civil society leaders with high quality postgraduate education and relevant skills for alleviating poverty and food insecurity through science and innovation. RUFORUM sees a vibrant

The mission of RUFORUM is to jointly develop postgraduate level course content in food, agriculture, and natural resources through the collaboration of CGIAR Centers with regional and national institutions in developed and developing countries. It shall strengthen the capacity of member universities to deliver high-quality education in agriculture, food, and natural resources with the aim of building sufficient agricultural development capacity for designing and implementing programs and policies that use natural resources in a sustainable manner for improving food and nutrition security in line with CAADP.

In pursuit of this mission, the overall objective of RUFORUM is to strengthen regional and university capacity for designing and delivering high quality postgraduate education in food, agriculture, and natural resources that is accessible and affordable. Specific program objectives are:

- To work with member universities and other agricultural higher education institutions and stakeholder to strengthen their capacity and enrich existing graduate-level degree programs and to develop new ones to be delivered by innovative delivery models and systems.
- To provide wider access to, and allow wider reach, of the knowledge created in and the human resources available in the RUFORUM network thus harnessing their comparative advantage in and exposure to international agriculture.

VISION

RUFORUM sees a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which can produce high performing graduates and high-quality research responsive to the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development.

MISSION

Strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of small-holder farmers through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact-oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions, and governments.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Train a <i>critical mass of Masters and PhD</i> graduates, who are responsive to stakeholder needs and national/regional development goals	Develop <i>collaborative research and training facilities</i> that achieve economies of scope and scale	Increase the <i>participation and voice of women</i> in agricultural research, production and marketing	Improve the <i>adaptive capacities of universities</i> to produce high quality and innovative training, research and outreach activities that can contribute to policy and development practice	Increase the <i>use of technology</i> to support effective, decentralized learning and the sharing of knowledge	<i>Mainstream new approaches within university teaching and research</i> that emphasize quality, innovation, impact across the agriculture sector's full value chain	Create a <i>dynamic regional platform</i> for policy coordination, and resource mobilization for improved training, research and outreach by universities.
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Strategic Goals and Directions

RUFORUM aims to establish a sustainable and powerful partnership of scientists, farming communities, and development agencies for efficient and swift transformation of agricultural production through harnessing the best of skills in a collaborative, 'learning by doing' manner. This it will do by bringing the best of African and international expertise together in a problem solving format in the university systems. The strategic goals of RUFORUM are:

1. Train a critical mass of Masters and PhD graduates, who are responsive to stakeholder needs and national/regional development goals
2. Develop collaborative research and training facilities that achieve economies of scope and scale
3. Increase in the participation and voice of women in agricultural research, production and marketing
4. Improve the adaptive capacities of universities to produce high quality and innovative training, research and outreach activities that can contribute to policy and development practice
5. Increase the use technology to support effective, decentralized learning and the sharing of knowledge
6. Mainstream new approaches within university teaching and research that emphasizes quality, innovation, impact across the agriculture sector's full value chain
7. Create a dynamic regional platform for policy advocacy, coordination, and resource mobilization for improved training, research and outreach by universities.

Core and Complementary Activities

RUFORUM operates under five year business and strategic plans, which focus on the overall strategy for the network, and which provide the basis for planning, implementation, staff establishment, service delivery, contracting and resource mobilization. The 2010-2015 Business Plan has been prepared to cover the next planning pentennium beginning July 1st 1, 2010. Under the plan, the RUFORUM's business objectives, capacity building service offerings, governance and performance management arrangements, and the core/complementary business execution arrangements, are based on those which have been developed during the previous funding epochs and which have proven to be effective in responding to the emerging African agricultural development capacity needs. Over this period, the core and complementary activities of RUFORUM will be:

(a) Core Activities

1. Competitive Grant Scheme supporting MSc training through research linked to addressing needs of smallholder farmers (GRG) 2 year grants
2. Strengthening Universities engagement with Communities through Community Action Research Program (CARP) 3-4 years grants strengthening.
3. Resources Mobilization
4. Strengthening member universities postgraduate programs including PhD training
5. Enhancing RUFORUM Secretariat's delivery

(b) Complementary Activities

1. Strengthening Communication and learning
2. Networking and Partnerships for relevance of Universities including networking between member universities and RUFORUM Secretariat and among universities
3. Policy Advocacy

RUFORUM is continuously improving its effectiveness and capacity development for impact. The Monitoring and Evaluation strategy helps to find out what is and is not functioning, thereby enabling learning, feedback and sharing of lessons from past experiences and make improvements on project and programme delivery. RUFORUM's Monitoring & Evaluation strategy focuses on being a learning instrument for performance management intended to be beneficial for all projects, programmes, units and engagements with partners. It proposes an inherent capacity to monitor projects and activities embedded in the overall M&E framework coupled with a culture of learning for improvement, trust, openness and honesty amongst all partners and units involved.

While the tangible results through projects, outreach activities, networks, research and training programmes are promising, some key questions remain: *how far have the capacities of universities been developed for long-term performance management and how internal M&E system has worked for performance management, learning and sharing goals at the RUFORUM secretariat and within its network an integral, internally consistent M&E system for regional Programmes.* The final product of the process guided by this strategy will be a systemic Monitoring & Evaluation system that provides continuous learning and evaluation of the outputs, outcomes and impact of capacity building initiatives that support university engagement in sustainable agriculture and rural development. The system will embed, into on-going activities, the need to manage performance through reflections, measurements, sharing and dissemination of organizational, institutional and individual capacity and system features including learning platforms, outcomes and impact evaluation, process, implementation and output monitoring as well as reporting of performances.

Rationale for RUFORUM M&E Strategy

RUFORUM principle of "responsive capacity for agriculture and rural development" which stresses the importance of tailoring training, research, networking and outreach programmes to the dynamic needs of agriculture and rural development is at the centre of every aspect of the Secretariats programme/project planning, implementation and monitoring. The flexibility in the process and system will allow the possibility of learning from experience, and of fine-tuning strategies and approaches through reflection and analysis of outcomes. The strategy also recognizes the importance of ensuring efficiency and accountability in project management and the use of resources entrusted to the organization by partners and universities in the region. There is a deliberate focus on results-based programming, and the need to

demonstrate development outcomes across selected strategic areas rather than outputs against individual projects.

Why have an M&E Unit at RUFORUM¹

- It is a check system that enables RUFORUM achieve its vision and goals
- M&E provide answers questions on what works and why does it work to facilitate doing things better and achieve impact
- Support collation of emerging issues as we implement various projects.
- Continuously ensuring that all units are feeding into broad goals of RUFORUM
- Unit to collect and support the systems in RUFORUM and using this unit to feed back to their programmes in RUFORUM and stakeholders.
- Tracking progress of RUFORUM for better performance
- RUFORUM have plans and M&E try to assess the progress against what was planned for better performance.
- For lesson sharing and learning
- For impact evaluation
- Coordination of M&E activities in the other units through guidance and interpretation of reporting, data collection and other M&E activities
- Linking RUFORUM with its partners at various learning platforms
- Capacity support to other units and network members
- Monitoring the M&E system
- Determine or drive Management Information System needs within RUFORUM
- Guidance to other systems and units i.e. ICT and NAGs in carrying out the core business of RUFORUM, training and quality assurance,

RUFORUM Organisational Priorities for M&E

- Building in-house capacities to define realistic programme objectives, outputs and impacts, and designing appropriate unit and project level M&E interventions.
- Designing and implementing a M&E system that can track progress on outcomes of programmes, projects and activities involving diverse units, actors and aspects of higher education capacity building such as regional postgraduate programmes, leadership and management, quality assurance, influence and impact on policy, poverty alleviation, governance, sustainable livelihood, gender equality and empowerment at various scales.
- Ensuring that M&E frameworks and indicators incorporate, and are sensitive to, issues of gender equality, environmental sustainability and other emerging cross cutting issues such as climate change adaptation.
- Evolving accurate and practical indicators for both quantitative and qualitative outputs and outcomes.

The RUFORUM M&E approach to organizational learning is based on standardised quality learning loop comprising the three phases of programme planning, execution and completion. These are followed by an evaluation phase and the implementation of lessons learned. The pertinent workflow steps using standardised M&E tools are covered in this strategy document to guide lesson gathering and learning for improvement and the loop is illustrated in Figure 1.

¹ Based on staff M&E strategic consultation and brainstorming meeting held on 23rd May, 2009 facilitated by Dr Leonard Oruko – M&E Programme Manager(ASARECA) and reporting session of preliminary findings of M&E Baseline survey of September 2009.

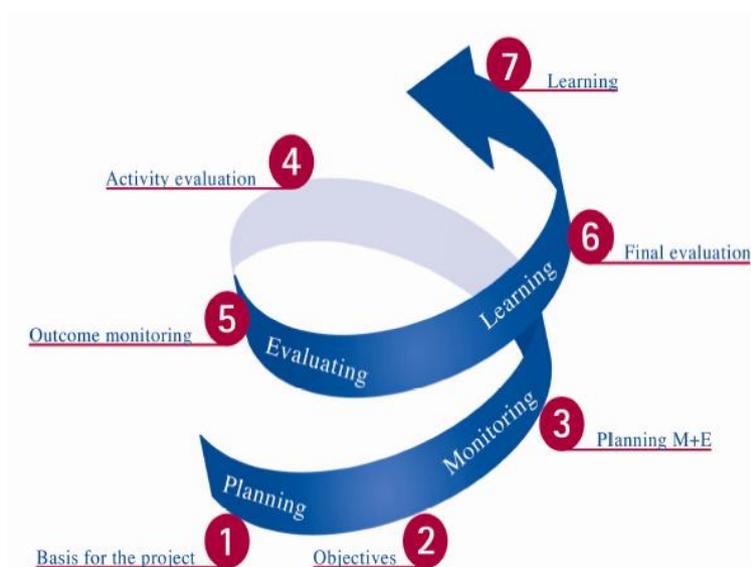


Figure 1: Illustration of RUFORUM organizational M&E for learning approach

At RUFORUM, in assessing capacity development performance, monitoring and evaluation efforts aim to assess the following:

- Relevance of RUFORUM operations and initiatives (strategies, policies, programmes and projects designed to build university capacity and support desirable changes)
- Effectiveness of capacity development and research initiatives, including partnership strategies
- Contribution and worth of capacity development to national and regional development outcomes and priorities,
- Key drivers or factors enabling successful, sustained and scaled-up capacity development initiatives, alternative options and comparative advantages of RUFORUM networking and regional approach
- Efficiency of capacity development, partnerships and regional coordination of postgraduate and research programmes
- Risk factors and risk management strategies to ensure success and effective networking and partnership
- Level of institutional, national and regional ownership and measures to strengthen capacity for sustainability of results

WHAT DOES THE M&E STRATEGY DO?

The objectives of this strategy document are to provide the reader with:

- A basic understanding of the purposes, processes, norms, standards and guiding principles for planning, monitoring and evaluation within the RUFORUM capacity development context
- Knowledge of the essential elements of the evaluation process in RUFORUM: developing an evaluation plan; managing, designing and conducting quality evaluations; and using evaluation for managing for development results, learning and accountability
- Knowledge of the essential elements of the planning and monitoring processes in RUFORUM - developing a robust results framework for projects and programmes, with clear indicators, baselines, and targets; and setting up an effective monitoring system
- To enhance the results-based culture within RUFORUM and improve the quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation

WHO IS THE M&E STRATEGY FOR?

The RUFORUM M&E Strategy has multiple and diverse audiences:

- African Agricultural capacity development and tertiary education stakeholders and partners, who are involved in RUFORUM planning, monitoring and evaluation processes
- Independent evaluators who may be contracted from time to time and may need to understand guiding principles, standards and processes for evaluation within the RUFORUM context

- Member university staff who coordinate, oversee and assure the quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation processes and products with regard to regional postgraduate programmes and research projects as well as the others who use monitoring and evaluation for decision making
- Members of the organs of RUFORUM including national FORUMs, Technical Committee, Deans Committee, and the International Advisory Panel.
- RUFORUM staff at the Secretariat who are constantly planning and monitoring secretariat and regional capacity development programmes and other projects and activities and also managing the commissioning process of evaluations
- The RUFORUM Board of Directors, which oversees and supports the activities of RUFORUM, ensuring that the organization remains responsive to the evolving needs of capacity development

By reading the strategy document, the user will understand the importance of good programme and project design for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as the critical role of monitoring in demonstrating the performance of programmes and projects, and in steering the implementation process towards the intended results. This Strategy document is meant to be used as a reference guide throughout the programme cycle.

THE STRATEGY

Objectives of M&E Strategy and System

This M&E Strategy document serves as a tool to guide and facilitate collective and regular self-assessment of performance and outcomes by RUFORUM and all its partners in capacity building for agricultural development. It aims to provide the mechanism to make visible the factors within the larger socio-economic environment that shape or influence the results of RUFORUM interventions by outlining mechanisms and tools for learning, recognizing results, monitoring and managing participation and partnerships.

This M&E strategy is a pilot document focusing on the development and testing of tools and methodologies for RUFORUM network-wide M&E. It will be fully functional in the subsequent programme cycles after refinement from lessons from its application.

The RUFORUM M&E system is intended to perform a dual function:

- Serve as a tool to facilitate collective and regular self-assessment of performance and outcomes by all units and partners in the regional capacity building operations; and
- Serve as a mechanism to make visible the factors within the larger Eastern, Central and Southern African socio-political environment that can shape or influence the results of our capacity building interventions.

The M&E strategy is therefore conceived as having four inter-related components: (1) learning; (2) results; (3) participation; and (4) partnerships. The focus on *learning* is hinged on the assumption that monitoring and evaluation are essentially processes of reflection that can be built into the project cycle at various points and all operations of RUFORUM. This is envisaged, to facilitate a shift away from traditional approaches to M&E, which are premised on a policing or judgmental role on behalf of the donor agency and others. The learning process will consist of a series of activities aimed at mainstreaming and strengthening a result-based and inclusive M&E, covering all projects under all units. These include activities with both staff and partners to develop result oriented work-plans and workshops for preparing monitoring plans and monitoring tools. These activities have been designed to be platforms for perspective-building on M&E, with a focus on accountability, better decision-making and lessons from implementation.

The apparent focus on *results* is aimed at ensuring continued centrality to the achievement of RUFORUM organizational outputs, outcomes and impacts. The strategic plan (2006 – 2010) and the RUFORUM Master Business Plan (2006 – 2015) both identify critical links between monitoring and evaluation processes at multiple levels, and management tools such as the M&E Framework. These are being

concretised through continuous evaluations of on-going projects to track move towards planned results and outcomes. The strategy also incorporates relevant M&E approaches including participatory processes to identify the stakeholder relevance and scale-based impacts jointly with partners

The RUFORUM M&E Strategy is also ensuring the *participation* of all stakeholders, including member universities, other National Agricultural Research Systems (NARES), private sector, civil society, other higher education institutions, partner universities in Africa and internationally, donors and farmers organizations. The strategy is advocating the development of mechanisms to negotiate differences in perceptions and priorities while assessing the constraints and opportunities experienced in the process of achieving goals and results in joint regional interventions.

The stakeholders are to be given chance to respond in a participatory and strategic way to the question whether the capacity building intervention is being implemented in the optimal manner. The focus outputs as linked to outcomes and impact is desired to create an opportunity to reflect on the bigger picture of responsive regional training, research, networking and outreach programmes tailor-made for particular socio-economic development situation and in a rapidly changing global environment.

The RUFORUM network is a consortium of like-minded universities in a joint *partnership* to make change in positive change in their contribution to sustainable development. This partnership makes the M&E processes more empowering and enabling processes for Secretariat and as well as for the other partners in the network. The process aims to build on existing plans as well as strengths and previous experience of the diverse group of stakeholders. The M&E Strategy in its present form and process of development is a pilot focused on developing frameworks, procedures, indicators, tools and methods and eventually operationalizing the integrated M&E system. It will become fully functional when the latter is achieved over the next few implementation cycles.

Principles of RUFORUM M&E Strategy

- M&E functions, priorities and plans are developed with the stakeholder as part of the institutional analysis process,
- National FORUMs take responsibility for leading implementation of the M&E Plan in their countries (with back-stopping support as required as an element of capacity strengthening from RUFORUM Secretariat),
- The M&E plan should be clear to all stakeholders, “user-friendly” and linked with the internal learning, reporting and accountability systems (complementarity with any existing M&E and performance monitoring and reporting systems),
- The M&E plan provides a basis for both internal learning, and accountability to external funders and partners,
- Outputs arising from implementation of the M&E plan must be logically linked to RUFORUM Objectives and the reporting formats to various donors and its log-frame outputs and outcomes
- There is a functional linkage between the National FORUM’s M&E outputs and the RUFORUM communication strategy and learning platforms

Key Performance Management Questions

All in all the RUFORUM M&E strategy aims to integrate approaches, tools and methods to help answer some critical performance management questions. Some of these questions are reflected here to help guide the process of development of the M&E system. A learning framework will be used to improve on performance based on lessons from platforms and M&E processes designed to answer these questions.

Postgraduate Training Programmes

1. Are the program objectives being fulfilled or achieved? Are they appropriate, relevant and useful to the faculties in maintaining and improving their role in providing quality training at the M.Sc. and Ph.D level? Are we as RUFORUM universities using the inputs and support to strengthen quality of University training? We shall use both participatory and independent outcome/impact assessments. We shall also work with students to give feedback.

2. Are course syllabi, student presentations at the RUFORUM meetings, masters and PhD theses of adequate quality? Can a comparison be made between the various RUFORUM outputs and institutions abroad? This is relevant and important for quality assurance. We will support our students to participate in national, regional and international workshops and compare contents and presentations. We shall also check where students and our grantees (faculties) publish, and how many publications come out of each project.
3. What financial and human resources of any funding have gone into graduate training in the focus departments of the participating universities since the beginning of the program? Are the inputs from the various efforts well utilized and used in a coordinated manner? What are the trends in the levels of co-funding and joint activities with other grants.

Research Impact

1. How effectively have policy-makers received and supported RUFORUM program in individual countries? This is critical for relevance of our activities and for sustainability. The National Forums (multi-stakeholder platforms of university and other actors) are mechanisms of soliciting for wider support including policy makers. Effectiveness of National Forums will be monitored as platforms for mobilizing policy support on top of an assessment as to whether our research is influencing policy agenda
2. Is our research impacting on most vulnerable (hot spot) agricultural areas and communities? Do decision makers have access to this information? Is it used to prioritize investment and action?
3. Are the research programs playing an adequate role to encourage on-farm research efforts so as to provide students and staff opportunities to understand and overcome the constraints of smallholders?

RUFORUM's main capacity building thrust is to catalyse impact orientation of university research for development process. We shall therefore periodically assess the direction and relevance of our research and training, even for this project.

RUFORUM Research and Training Networks

1. How are inputs of the various partner universities directed to a common goal? Can better integration and collaboration be achieved? Are meaningful linkages developed between agricultural research units and climate science or meteorological research units? We will attempt to champion such efforts through appropriate progress monitoring approaches.
2. Is there collaboration with other national, international research/training institutions and agricultural, climate science and meteorological agencies?
3. Specific indicators for assessing this partnership are included in the log frame and M&E work plans
4. Have research partnerships developed between RUFORUM and other southern and northern institutions? The project link to such partners especially for specialized capacity and joint initiatives on emerging issues such as climate change will be constantly reviewed.
5. How do the faculties, universities and national agricultural research institutions perceive the contribution of RUFORUM and its partners?
6. Has the RUFORUM helped in raising the capacity and capability within departments and faculties to carry out appropriate research and training to support sustainable agriculture and rural development as well as enhance adaptation to global environmental change including on climate change?
7. This will be one of the outcome areas to be evaluated within the M&E system.
8. Are there areas of weakness across the faculties and within the faculties that RUFORUM could or should address?
9. We shall keep using regional learning platforms for feedback and generating national and regional priority for interventions. These areas will be made apparent in the M&E and Learning framework)
10. Is the support of RUFORUM recognized as being important within all the faculties and member universities? This will be monitored during implementation through project partners and their reports, project review meetings, meetings of National Forums and other regional learning platforms.

Quality of Training

1. How many students have graduated from all regional programs? Where are they employed? What occurred with students who did not finish the training program?

2. As part of M&E, we are establishing an online tracking system to trace where about of our alumni, their employability/relevance to the job market and contribution to society.
3. Are the curricula of the faculties adequate and appropriate for producing well trained students? This will be assessed through the National Forums that help provide feedback to universities and support re-orientation of universities to development relevance.
4. Has RUFORUM influenced the quality of instruction and research of the associated faculties? Will be assessed through tracer studies and feedback from National Forums.
5. Is adequate supervision being provided to the students who are the core of the regional programs? As part of Secretariat's activities and annual meetings of Deans and Vice Chancellors, we shall continue to push for improvements. We shall hold meetings with students to assess their views, including on use of project funds.
6. Do the students have an affiliation and loyalty to RUFORUM? How can this be instituted or strengthened? This is important for sustainability of RUFORUM. The alumni association for RUFORUM graduates and their support for RUFORUM including organizing internship attachments of students and grant sourcing are key assessment indicators.
7. Are the regional programs recognized as quality programs? Are they perceived as dynamic, innovative and evolving programs? Continued reflection on this use of independent evaluators will help assess this.
8. Is the modus operandi of the program review process sufficient to maintain a high standard?

Process and Methodology of Developing the Strategy

The process of developing this strategy was widely consultative, both internally and externally. While formulating its M&E procedures and instruments, RUFORUM, through the guidance of its Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) Unit decided to develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methods and tools for RUFORUM result based performance management. At the early stage of the process, the consensus reached in-house on the new strategic direction was duly reflected in RUFORUM's Business Plan, and annual work plans for the years 2009/10, 2010/11. The activities involved were appropriately planned, budgeted and monitored regularly. The series of consultations were meant to secure commitment by staff and stakeholders, building capacity on state-of the art M&E practice and philosophy.

The process was kick started by an informal internal assessment of performance monitoring needs and capacity gaps at the secretariat. This revealed the core activities/roles of the PME unit in relation to the other units in achievement of RUFORUM strategic goals and tactical operational outputs. The meetings to do internal systems analysis were facilitated by an external M&E expert, Dr Leonard Oruko (then the M&E officer at the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa – ASARECA). On top of resolving to ensure the process was participatory and all-inclusive, the meetings also charted a roadmap for preparation, adoption and implementation of both the M&E strategy and the M&E system.

An inception planning meeting was then organized between 2nd and 4th June 12th-14th, 2009 to scope for the M&E requirements and processes for the entire RUFORUM network. The meeting was also used to launch all the other components of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded project which supports the development of systems at the RUFORUM Secretariat including the M&E system. The meeting had the principle goal of developing a roadmap and initial components of a strengthened M&E system to facilitate determination, on an on-going basis of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of RUFORUM activities in meeting its overall program objectives. The meeting was attended by representatives from member universities, M&E networks, consulting firms, M&E experts, partners in agricultural tertiary education and development partners.

Over the two year consultations period, a comparative review of M&E strategies and approaches of several major development agencies programme and project-level M&E systems was done. Reflecting on the strengths, weakness, and challenges of these systems enabled RUFORUM to develop a hybrid M&E strategy that is not unique to RUFORUM. The process enabled RUFORUM to pre-empt the difficulties encountered by other multilateral and bilateral organizations and international non-governmental

organizations. The following events represent the main consultation meetings and processes that were employed:

Table 10: Calendar of events and consultation processes employed in developing the RUFORUM M&E Strategy

Date	Event/Meeting/Expert Grouping	Main Objectives and Outcomes
May 23 rd 2009	In-house M&E strategy planning and assessment meeting	Facilitated by Dr Leonard Oruko of ASARECA to consider M&E needs, roles and roadmap to M&E system at RUFORUM
June 2 – 4, 2009	RUFORUM.BMGF Inception Planning Meeting	The meeting considered the status of the M&E at RUFORUM and identified the elements of the proposed the strategy, procedures for developing the M&E strategy, the role of RUFORUM partners and a roadmap to developing the M&E system.
September – November 2009	M&E Baseline Survey	Consultants (NIDA) hired to conduct a baseline survey of the status of M&E practice, capacity at the RUFORUM Secretariat and to benchmark key performance indicators. Survey report presented to Secretariat and widely shared within the RUFORUM network. This has informed many RUFORUM operations and standards/policy development
September 22 – 23 2009	Capacity development Workshop on M&E in Agriculture and RUFORUM	Design an CD matrix for planning, implementing and monitoring capacity building interventions in Africa. RUFORUM baseline survey presented and plans for M&E strategy debated. Expert input from IFPRI, InWent, FAO, World Bank, Universities and NEPAD considered
September 25 th – 27 th 2009	In-house staff consultation on M&E for specialized processes	Outcome on InWent meeting, draft M&E strategy outline was discussed and initial findings of the M&E baseline reported to influence procedures for M&E of communication and CGS activities
February 1 st – 3 rd 2010	Regional Stakeholder Consultation on FARA M&E Strategy	Development of FARA M&E strategy. M&E for capacity building for CAADP Pillar 4 considered as an input into the RUFORUM M&E Strategy. Ideas for joint proposal for M&E capacity building between RUFORUM and FARA for World Bank support mooted.
February – July 2010	Design of draft M&E Strategy and Tools University Level consultation on M&E operations and obligations	PM&E Unit developed the draft M&E strategy and tools Visits made by different RUFORUM staff to
August 26 th – 27 th 2010	RUFORUM Annual General Assembly (AGA)/AGM	Presentation made to Stakeholders and members of Board of Trustees to brief them on status of M&E Strategy, receive feedback on draft and seek buy-in and guidance. Annual targets were set by the board and included completion of the M&E Strategy for approval by the 8 th Board Meeting in 2011
August 20-24 2010	RUFORUM Biennial Conference and M&E briefing of GRG Grantees	Presentation of M&E Strategy and the CGS M&E guidelines to principle investigators (grantees) of RUFORUM Graduate Research Grants. The grantees gave feedback for improvement and were guided on how to design M&E frameworks for their research projects and also commitment to their role in M&E system and reporting requirements.
September – December 2010	Refinement of Draft M&E Strategy and tools Dry-runs (pilot testing of selected) M&E tools and approaches beginning with regional postgraduate programmes	Continued drafting of M&E strategy and tools Piloting of Survey instrument with regional PhD and MSc students. Data Analyzed for initial feedback and test of validity and reliability of selected tools for M&E.
January 17 th – 20 th 2011	Full RUFORUM Secretariat Staff retreat	Staff internal consultations to consider the draft, receive first M&E report, develop additional tools and elements of M&E strategy and generate the M&E schedule. The RUFORUM corporate logframe/results framework was also drafted

January 25 th – February 11 th 2011	Continued internal consultations	Improvement of logframe and design of the new RUFORUM indicator suite and input for the 2011-2016 Business Plan. Units within RUFORUM developed unit level M&E roles and procedures for final M&E system to be supported by organizational MIS
March 21 st – 22 nd 2011	RUFORUM Donor Roundtable	Roundtable to consider RUFORUM 2011 – 2016 Business Plan in conjunction with the supporting M&E strategy for results measurement. Options/schemes and strategies for multi-donor funding for RUFORUM operations, Africa-wide agricultural capacity institutional growth and M&E were considered. Monitoring of RUFORUM growth and expansion was also considered
April 20 th – 21 st 2011	Final regional Stakeholders and expert consultation workshop on RUFORUM M&E Strategy	Expert input into the content, approaches, tools and implementation of the RUFORUM M&E strategy received for final revision and implementation processes ahead of its approval. Final version of the strategy as well as the M&E policy and tools produced.
April 28 – 29 th 2011	8 th RUFORUM Board Meeting, Addis Ababa - Ethiopia	M&E strategy as well as other RUFORUM governance and operational manuals and strategies presented to RUFORUM Board. Approval and launch of the RUFORUM M&E Strategy, Business Plan and other manuals by the board at the UN Conference centre. In attendance were vice chancellors of the RUFORUM member universities, other board members, ambassadors of member countries, AU-NEPAD and Ethiopian Ministers of Agriculture, Higher Education and science and technology

Over the period of development and implementation and at the first Secretariat quarterly review meeting (24th February 2010) the implementation processes and unit roles as well as the M&E policy to guide management response to evaluations were considered. The final 2011/2012 M&E annual work plan was developed as the first full-year M&E cycle. It was to be adopted by entire secretariat in the next Annual Planning and Budgeting meeting in may 2011. All along, the consultations centered on building and in-house culture and capacity for clearer and result-focused operationalization of M&E at UFORUM

Road Map to M&E System

RUFORUM's strategy for developing and implementing an enhanced M&E system is divided into four components:

- Design of an objectives-based, results-oriented framework, including benchmarks and performance indicators, for monitoring and evaluation of RUFORUM programmes, and the design of an M&E component for incorporation in all research projects
- Establishment and utilization of mechanisms for collecting and storing data and information needed to track the execution of all areas of activities (notably research and institutional strengthening, professional community building, ICT utilization, and dissemination and advocacy)
- Establishment and implementation of processes for monitoring progress in achieving the objectives of organization's activities (including donor funded projects, grants, regional programs and research projects)
- External evaluation of the overall outcomes and impact of RUFORUM programmes and activities relative to its overall RUFORUM goal, purpose and outputs on a regular basis.

The road map to achieving this M&E system is outlined below (Figure 2).

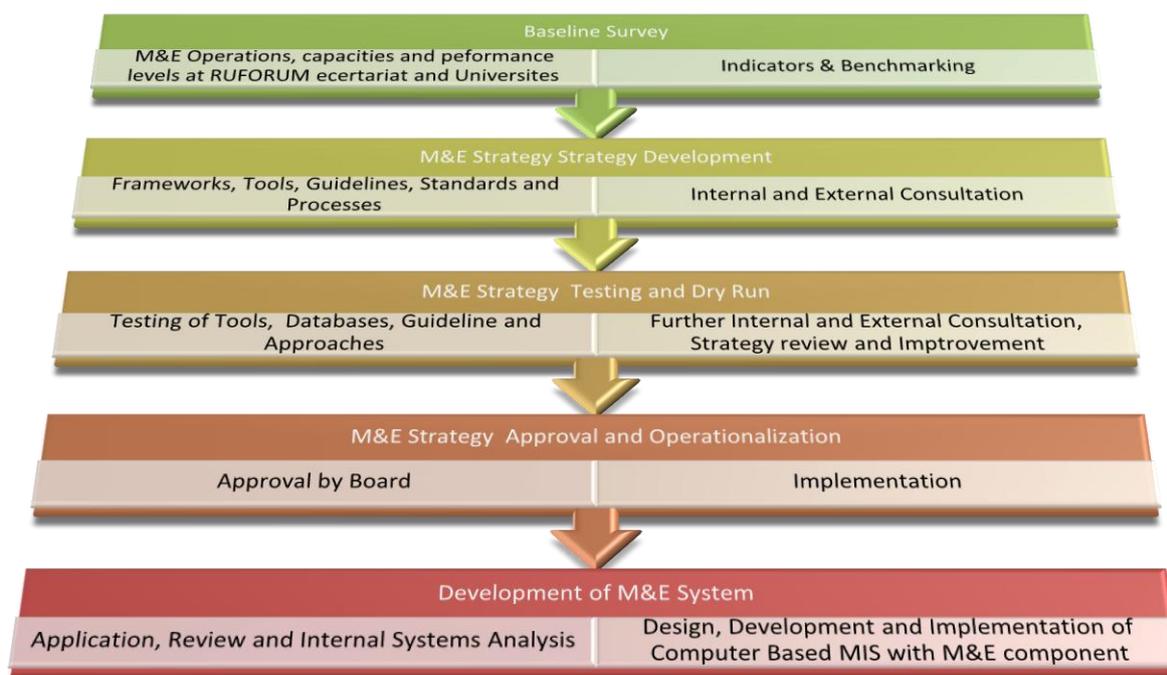


Figure 2: Flowchart of the roadmap to developing the M&E system

STRUCTURING M&E AT RUFORUM

M&E at Universities and National FORUMs

The overall RUFORUM M&E strategy is linked to M&E at university and National levels through the National FORUMs. The M&E framework and plan at this level follows the logical map presented in Table 1 and is part of a proposed institutional change processes implicit RUFORUM's M&E implementation plan. The guiding principles and processes for actualizing the M&E framework and plan integrate key lessons from previous capacity building initiatives in the region. There are practical challenges of implementing such an ambitious regional capacity strengthening and monitoring undertaking.

Guiding principles for RUFORUM M&E at the level of Universities

1. M&E priorities and plans are developed with the university as part of the institutional analysis process,
2. A key individual or unit such as in each focal institution (university or FORUM) takes responsibility for leading implementation of the M&E Plan (with back-stopping support as required as an element of capacity strengthening from RUFORUM PME Unit),
3. The M&E plan has to be made clear to all within the RUFORUM, “user-friendly” and linked with the universities or nations internal reporting and incentive systems including an express mandatory complementarity with any existing M&E and performance monitoring and reporting systems within universities,
4. The M&E plan provides a basis for both internal learning, and accountability to external funders,
5. Outputs arising from implementation of the M&E plan can be logically linked to the RUFORUM reporting formats and its overall log-frame outputs and outcomes,

6. A functional linkage between the university's M&E outputs and the RUFORUM's communication and dissemination strategy and learning platforms, including the national FORUM as a learning platform to which the university is a member.

The strategy builds on institutional analysis and baseline survey undertaken at the formative stages of developing RUFORUMs M&E strategy and system. The strategy allows for the identification of institutional changes objectives and develops related framework and plan for M&E at university and National FORUM levels. A series of well facilitated meetings within the agreed plan are to be organized to complete the process. At every stage selected aspects of Outcome Mapping (OM) approach and Result-Based Frameworks (RBF) and other approaches to managing and measuring institutional change and performance are to be used. Factors to determine the choice of method depends on the facilitator, methods the university is comfortable and familiar with, and existing capacity and plans for strategic planning and performance management.

Table 1: Logical process to guide M&E at University and National FORUM Level

Main Elements	Process Details	Intended outputs and use of these
Situation Analysis and Baseline Survey Indicator Benchmarking	This has been carried out and continues to be done through demand analyses, scoping studies, tracer studies and visits to universities. Appropriate tools such as SWOT analysis and "force-field analysis" are to be done to define the vision and measure progress and performance. Appropriately stakeholder mapping and analysis covering all relevant key boundary partners and right multi stakeholder processes used to this end	Baseline survey report. Demand analysis and tracer study report To provide university level and National FORUM baseline against which progress can be assessed, Generate framework for setting institutional change objectives and strategies Analyse and understand process of framing realistic change objectives and effective capacity strengthening interventions.
Setting realistic change objectives for RUFORUM at University level	The specific objectives are aligned to the RUFORUM strategic goals and are set for realistic alignment to the vision of RUFORUM ad member universities. At this level the objectives are converted into measurable outcome statements – e.g. "university level mechanism for monitoring and rewarding good performance by staff designed and operational by June 2012".	Clear change objectives for RUFORUM or each university, Having consensus and ownership of change objectives. Using the framework for understanding process of capacity development.
Logical result based mapping activities would yield desired capacity development, institutional changes and impact	Each outcome statement must be "retro-fitted" and logically mapped against the RUFORUM capacity development strategic goals through appropriate impact pathways. Both rigor and accountability is to be assured by including change process managers taking into account both behaviour and systems.	The logical map and impact pathway. To enable the identification of indicators for measuring change and university and national level capacity development performance.
Reality check of the logical mapping and Appropriate responses	At the university level discussions are to be made on the nature of incentives needed to activate key actors to be innovative. The process also identifies other relevant change is needed in relation to incentive systems. This will involve senior management in negotiating and approving the incentive systems or other capacity development enabling conditions. As an outcome from this process a plan for reality check and responses mechanisms are desirable.	Identification and characterisation of university level internal incentives and dis-incentives for change, Ownership by management of this reality check plan, To enable feedback and adjustments in the change objectives, and/or incentive systems for effective capacity development.
RUFORUM University-wide performance monitoring plan with	A process for identifying, milestones and indicators for system development and the expected changes in behaviour is to be	Monitoring of university and national level CD performance monitoring plans with specific reference to

Main Elements	Process Details	Intended outputs and use of these
relevant and realistic indicators, reporting format, responsibilities and methods to be used,	developed. Format for reporting to be provided in line with the milestones and indicators. Continuous generation of information for ongoing learning and for evaluation. Assignment of responsibilities and resources for monitoring and reporting on progress. Clear definition of and consensus over timeframes and targets.	RUFORUM strategic goals For enhanced ownership of M&E plan

The role of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Results

The RUFORUM 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and Business Plan make emphasis of the fact that all RUFORUM work – core and complementary activities are aimed at one end result: “real improvements in university capacity to train high calibre postgraduate students, do high quality research and be responsive to Africa’s development needs. In managing for capacity development results’ or MfCDR, (equivalent of ‘results-based management’ or RBM), RUFORUM prioritizes planning. The emphasis is on a system for good planning, monitoring, evaluation, learning that feeds back into planning, but seeks to keep the focus on capacity development demonstrating real and meaningful results.

To achieve capacity development results and changes in the quality of university performance, RUFORUM often develops a number of different plans, strategies, programmes and projects. These typically include:

- RUFORUM Strategic Plan
- RUFORUM Business Plan
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks and evaluation plans
- Annual Work Plans for Units, Projects and Secretariat
- Project Implementation Plans

The quality of those plans, programmes and projects, and how well resources are used, are critical factors for success. To improve the chances of success, RUFORUM pays attention to four areas: planning and programme and project design; stakeholder involvement; communication; and monitoring and evaluation. We recognize that good planning, combined with effective monitoring and evaluation plays a major role in enhancing the effectiveness of capacity development interventions. Good planning ensures a focus on the results that matter, while monitoring and evaluation help us learn from past successes and challenges and inform decision making so that current and future initiatives are better able to improve university capacity

Box 1: The basic inter-linkages and dependencies between planning, monitoring and evaluation

Without proper planning and clear articulation of intended results, it is not clear what should be monitored and how; hence monitoring cannot be done well.

- Without effective planning (clear results frameworks), the basis for evaluation is weak; hence evaluation cannot be done well.
- Without careful monitoring, the necessary data is not collected; hence evaluation cannot be done well.
- Monitoring is necessary, but not sufficient, for evaluation.
- Monitoring facilitates evaluation, but evaluation uses additional new data collection and different frameworks for analysis.
- Monitoring and evaluation of a programme will often lead to changes in programme plans. This may mean further changing or modifying data collection for monitoring purposes.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes are treated as distinct from other oversight activities namely inspection, audit, review and other research functions

SCOPE OF M&E

Teaching and learning in the Universities

- Development of Academic Programs
- Review of Curricular
- Dissemination of Information on Training Programmes
- Accreditation of Academic Programmes
- Student Internship / Practical attachments
- Student Supervision
 - Student rating of support from supervisors
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the supervision schemes
- Methods for Ensuring Quality of Student learning
- Methods for Ensuring Quality of Teaching/Instruction and Course Content
- Capacity for Teaching
- Continuous professional and skills development
- Mentoring
- RUFORUM Contribution to Strengthening Teaching and Learning Practices

Research in Universities

- Processes for Demand Articulation
- Extent to which regional perspectives are addressed in Research
- Quality Assurance processes for research
- Capacity to undertake research
 - *Student and Staff rating of capacity of their faculties to undertake research*
 - *Existence of expertise in research methodology*
 - *Availability of equipment to support research process*
- Dissemination of Research findings
- Influence of Research Done at Universities on Policy and Practice Reforms

University Outreach

- Use of ICT at the Universities
- The placement of the ICT unit in the organizations structures
- ICT capacity gaps
- Adequacy of existing ICT capacity and capability to meet ICT needs of Staff
- Utilization of ICT (E-learning techniques)
- Existence and Use of university/faculty based (internal) databases

Partnerships and Collaborations

- Nature of collaboration
- RUFORUM Contributions to Strengthening partnerships and networks
- Effectives, efficiency, quality and impact of partnerships

The RUFORUM Governance and Management

- *RUFORUM Governance and key organs*
- *Annual General Meeting and the Board of Directors*
- *Technical Committee and the International Advisory Panel*
- *Deans Committee and the National Forums*
- *The RUFORUM Secretariat*
 - *Staffing levels at the Secretariat*
 - *Secretariat Departments*
 - *Interventions Implemented at the Secretariat*
 - The Competitive Grants Scheme
 - Strengthening Student Supervision
 - Field Attachment Programmes

- Professional and Skills Development
- Promoting Female Participation
- Partnerships and Networks
- Resource Mobilization
- RUFORUM Alumni Association
- Training and Quality Assurance
- Centres of Excellence
- Communication and knowledge Management
- RUFORUM website
- Other university and secretariat capacity strengthening initiatives

ELEMENTS OF THE M&E STRATEGY

RUFORUM Logical Framework

As the main foundation for both implementation design and M&E, the RUFORUM logical framework is a key component of the M&E strategy. Chief to this end are extensions of the logical framework that describe how indicators will be used in practice to measure, progress, implementation performance, results achievement and influence and impact of the capacity building initiatives. The complete logical framework can be found in Annex A.

M&E Impact and Performance Pathways

As an extension to the logical framework, the M&E plan for data collection and analysis, covering baseline, ongoing monitoring and evaluation strategizes the key impact and performance pathways for the organization. The arrangements for routine data collection based on indicators and results are coupled with the use of baseline and subsequent learning points to gauge change over time in the indicators. There are also arrangements for verifying the quality and accuracy of M&E data and analysis.

RUFORUM believes in reflective learning and use of result –based approaches in planning and performance measurement. The aim of is two-fold: (1) To explore, develop and apply new, innovative approaches and methodologies for planning, monitoring & evaluation from an integrative perspective; and to exchange knowledge and experiences on incorporating these new approaches in PM&E systems and approaches for enhancing impact. (2) To contribute to the further development and applicability of the managing for impact approach in capacity building for agricultural development and university functionality. The approach provides for alternative ways of thinking through the logic of the institutional change processes. RUFORUM focuses on four key impact orientation strategies:

- ◆ Strategic perspective towards its strategic goals (impacts) and reacting quickly to adjust the strategy or even the objectives and activities:
- ◆ Ensuring effective operations – operations at the Secretariat including coordination of financial, physical and human resources to ensure the actions and outputs are effective and efficient
- ◆ Creating a learning platform and a culture and set of relationships with all those involved in an initiative that will build trust, stimulate critical questioning and innovation and gain commitment and ownership.
- ◆ Establishing information gathering and management systems - ensuring that the systems are in place to provide the information that is needed to guide the strategy, ensure effective operations and encourage learning."

Table 2 illustrates the generic RUFORUM impact pathway mapping framework.

Table 2: RUFORUM Impact pathway mapping framework

Activities	Results (Based on OVIs)	Partners and Partner Actions			Links with other Projects	Progress towards Impact	Challenges/ Lessons/ Issues	Visibility (Of Project & Donor)
		Partner	Associate Partners	Other Stakeholders				

Impact Model for Agricultural Tertiary Education Capacity Building

The impact model for RUFORUM’s Agricultural Tertiary Education (ATE) and other capacity strengthening projects that may have multiple subprojects illustrate another level of complexity in assessment of the performance and impact of programs. The initiatives are designed to have impacts both on direct program participants (students, lecturers, university management and universities) and spill-over effects on indirect beneficiaries.

Spill-overs on indirect beneficiaries are difficult to measure. In addition, RUFORUM programmes generally also promote institutional change within the capacity development framework, change which itself leads to indirect impacts of the programmes. A model of ATE impacts is illustrated in Figure 3. Comprehensive assessment of performance and impacts requires measurement of impacts “A”, “B”, “C”, and “D” in Figure 3, as well as measurement of the performance efficiency (in terms of inputs and outputs) of the ATE program and its individual subprojects. In practice, measurement of impacts at “A” is relatively straightforward; “B” and “C” are much more difficult; and “D” is nearly impossible to measure.

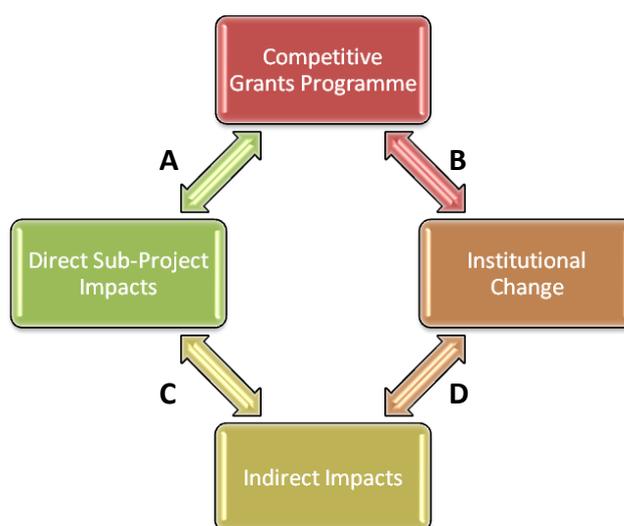


Figure 3: Impact Model for ATE Capacity Building

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation: Separation of Processes

Annually, work plans are developed to inform budgeting, implementation and subsequent monitoring and evaluation. The work plans address a number of issues:

- What is the overall time frame we have for planning the programme or project?
- What are the key milestones in the process that we must meet to ensure that we produce the plan within the expected time frame?

- At what stage will we finalize the monitoring and evaluation plan? (It is usually better to do this as part of the process of preparing the plan so that the same stakeholders can be involved in the process.)
- How participatory should the process be given the context within which stakeholders are operating?
- What resources will be needed for the planning exercises?
- Who will be responsible for the different elements of the planning process?
- How much will it all cost?

The Benefits of Planning

RUFORUM recognizes four main benefits that make planning worthwhile:

1. Planning enables us to know what should be done when
2. Planning helps mitigate and manage crises and ensure smoother implementation
3. Planning improves focus on priorities and leads to more efficient use of time, money and other resources
4. Planning helps determine what success will look like

M&E activities are clearly separated to involve regular tracking (monitoring) and coordinated reviews (evaluations) at designated project and programme periods. Coordinated evaluation instruments are an important element of RUFORUM M&E System. They include standardized evaluation of training activities involving participant surveys of training courses or dialogue conference/output). Every project has to conduct mid-term and end of project evaluations focused primarily on recording and appraising the short and medium term results (outcomes). Selected ex-post evaluations are carried out to document and appraise longer-term, overarching effects (impact). The latter take the form of tracer studies and capacity building impact assessments. Five different types of evaluations are conducted at RUFORUM for its capacity building activities (Figures 4,5 & 6) to track resource use, processes and logical impact pathways.

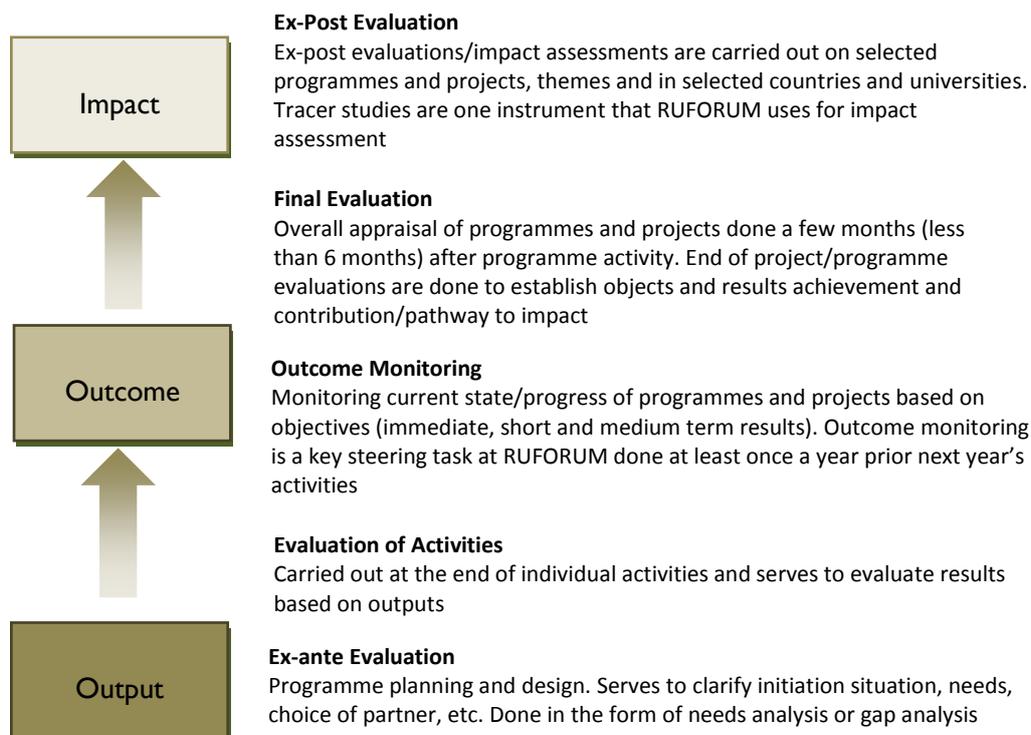


Figure 4: Types of evaluations done at RUFORUM

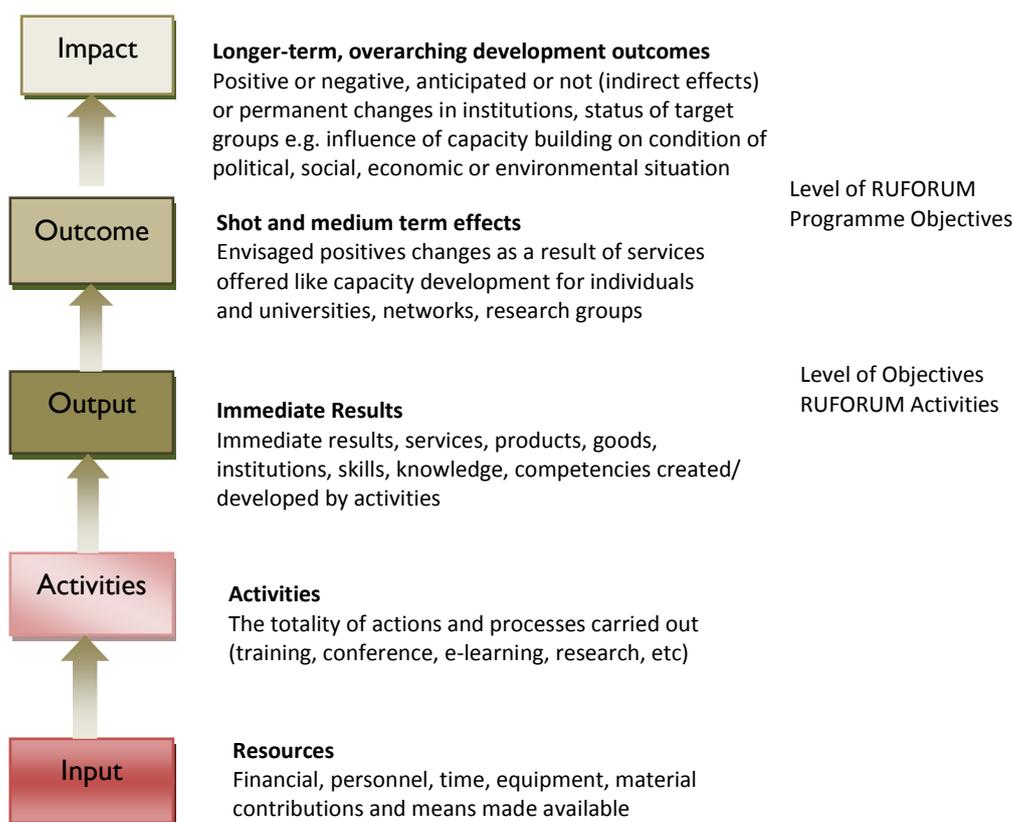


Figure 5: Levels of results and pathways to impact

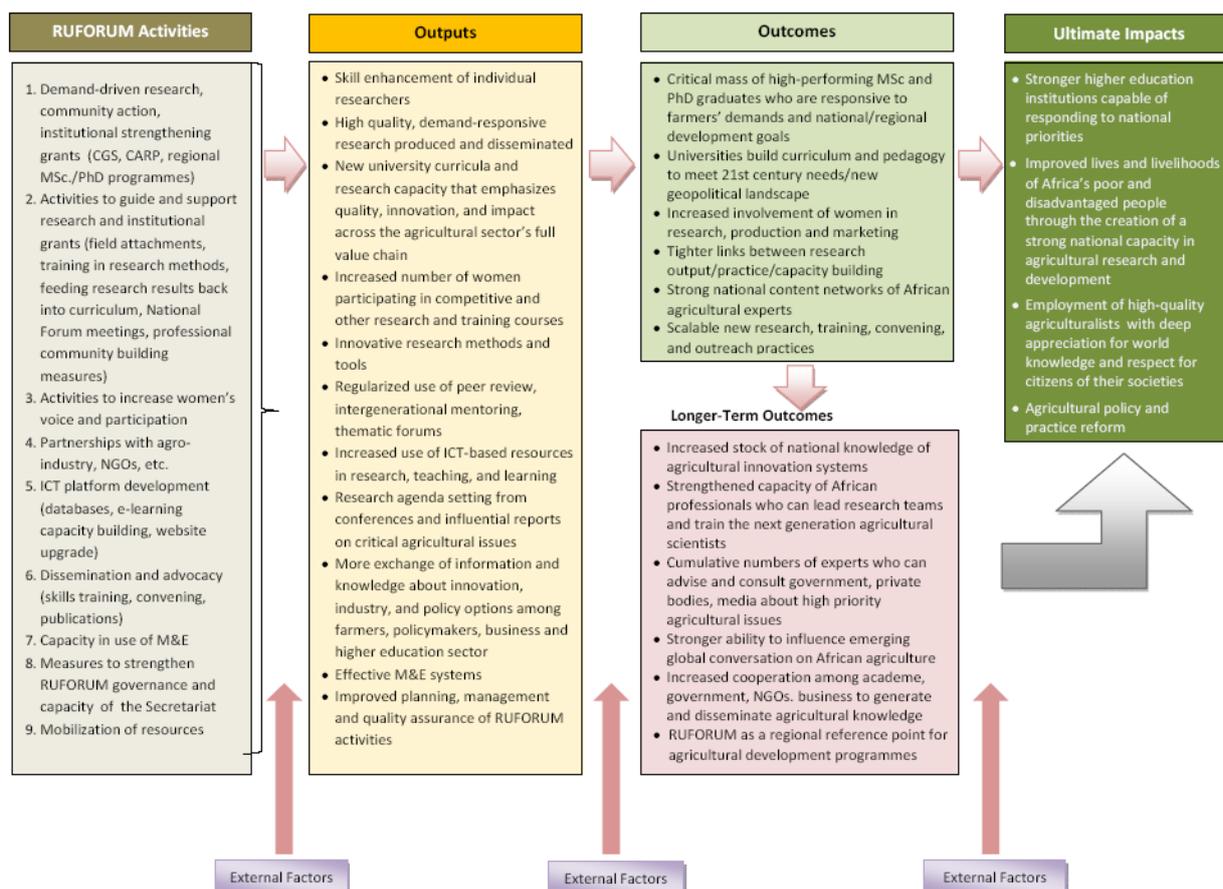


Figure 6: Detailed Input-output-outcome-impact relationship

Monitoring is instrumental and must be clearly separated from evaluations. Monitoring is conducted at RUFORUM to provide opportunities at regular predetermined points to validate the logic of our operations in order to make necessary adjustments. Progress towards achieving results needs to be monitored while information from monitoring is used to encourage improvements or reinforce plans and feeds into the design and implementation of evaluation. Some key questions that we seek to answer while *monitoring* include the following:

- Are the pre-identified outputs being produced as planned and efficiently?
- What are the issues, risks and challenges that we face or foresee that need to be taken into account to ensure the achievement of results?
- What decisions need to be made concerning changes to the already planned work in subsequent stages?
- Will the planned and delivered outputs continue to be relevant for the achievement of the envisioned outcomes?
- Are the outcomes we envisaged remaining relevant and effective for achieving the overall national priorities, goals and impacts?
- What are we learning?

Like monitoring, *evaluation* is viewed at RUFORUM as an integral part of programme management and a critical management tool. Evaluation complements monitoring by providing independent and in-depth assessment of what worked and what did not work, and why this was the case. It is mandatory that all initiatives at RUFORUM are evaluated. This is intended to provide feedback that can be used to improve programming, policy and strategy and also to capture the unintended results and consequences of a capacity development initiative.

Beneficiary Assessment for RUFORUM Initiatives

Beneficiary assessment involves a process of information gathering to assess the value of an activity as perceived by its intended beneficiaries. For RUFORUM capacity building programmes, it involves structured conversational interviews with (students, lecturers, researchers, university managers, farmers, policy makers, coordinators of regional programmes. Capacity building program beneficiary assessment is based on interviews with a fairly representative and informed sample of students (for instance) stratified as needed by country, university, gender, degree programme, or other factors. A variety of tools have been designed for use in collecting the data and M&E feedback. These include surveys administered manually or through internet based survey monkey, interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, topical or thematic reporting/follow-up or other participatory M&E tools for self assessment and program review.

The purpose of the beneficiary assessment is to influence program policy and program management. A review of experience in the regional postgraduate programmes and other capacity strengthening projects such graduate student quality assurance, research methods, leadership and management indicates that the structure for beneficiary assessments has to vary widely based on target group and objective of the assessment. The approach is quite effective as a tool for M&E due to a substantial direct contact with target group. It is considered effective in instituting change programme design and management, and results in more consultative approaches to eliciting feedback, including better links programme coordinators at the universities and in collaborating research institutions for greater responsiveness to student needs.

IMPROVING M&E PRACTICE

This section brings to focus some critical considerations in improving M&E at project, unit, programme, organizational and network levels. It also applies to development of a robust M&E strategy for collaborative projects within member universities, grantees in the GRG and nurturing grant schemes. The following are a few simple recommendations to which the M&E strategy document draws attention of project coordinators to:

A basic assumption, to this regard is that M&E capacity is mandatory at all levels. However, developing M&E capacity is a long-term process and lies at the heart of improving program management and building effective institutions to promote relevant capacity development for Africa's socioeconomic development.

Detailed M&E Plan in Project Proposal or Implementation Document

The Strategy requires detailed attention to be paid to M&E, but does not force or prescribe a comprehensive description and plan for an M&E system. As the basis for a sound M&E plan, all projects should include a comprehensive description of the proposed M&E system, including details of what data are to be collected, how (using what procedures), by whom, when, where, and why (how it will be used). The M&E plan should: describe arrangements for baseline data collection; assess capacity for carrying out M&E; define indicators and targets; identify investments to strengthen M&E capabilities; and identify key assumptions or issues to be addressed in project evaluations (such as mid Mid-Term Review). Data should, in principle, be gender-disaggregated. For competitive grants, for instance, a detail M&E plan must include the following. At the ideas stage of drafting a project/programme, the M&E overview is already designed (Table 3) to help set the outcomes, activity objectives and indicators. This ensures systematic and viable structured of the results framework.

Table 3: Overview of M&E for project/program steering

Programme Objective			
Key questions (optional)	<i>What do I need to know in order to identify and evaluate the outcomes and results?</i>	Indicators (relevant for the evaluation)	<i>What information and data do I need to answer the key questions?</i>
Activity goal 1			
Key questions (optional)		Indicators (relate to the outcome level)	
Activities		Data collection methods (supplementing activity evaluation)	
Activity goal 2			
Key questions (optional)		Indicators (relate to the outcome level)	
Activities		Data collection methods (supplementing activity evaluation)	

Sourcing M&E Data from the Early Stages of a Project

RUFORUM does not underestimate the complexity of M&E and realizes that good M&E plans often remain only plans and are neglected as the myriad of implementation details overwhelm the start-up phase of project. M&E data are not missed until they are needed for evaluation or management decisions later in the project. Program managers and research project coordinators should give early and consistent attention to M&E, beginning during project launch and preparation of a project Detailed Implementation Plan (Operational Manual), and continuing in all follow-up missions. The format and schedule for project implementation reports should be agreed upon at the launch of a new project, and the reports should be prepared at least annually (and possibly quarterly or semi-annually). A macro-driven MS Excel worksheet is recommended for use in scheduling project implementation. Figure 7 illustrates the use of the worksheet in scheduling reporting deadlines for a GRG project. The reports should include updates on performance and impact indicators being tracked by the project (recognizing that some data will be available only infrequently and that some indicators will not change until late in the project). The RUFORUM M&E system (especially with the comprehensive internal MIS) is expected to produce baseline information and regular reports. At the early stages of projects and programmes, it should be ensured that data collection is disaggregated by gender and other key characteristics of RUFORUM network to enable monitoring and evaluation of the dynamics of capacity building

Figure 7: Sample GRG Project schedule based on MS Excel Spreadsheet



Project Title: Soil properties effects and management of organic residues to improve C sequestration, reduce N losses and improve crop yields
Beneficiary: Kenyatta University, Kenya
Principle Investigator: Dr Ben Danga

Enter Original Date of Project Signing as MM/DD/YY

Project Duration: 24
Starting Date: 11/9/2010

	Reporting Period	Annexes	Reporting Period		Deadline for Submission to RUFORUM Secretariat	Partner Report Submission Deadlines
			FROM	TO		
Signature of Contract						
(1st) Narrative Report Year 1 (6 months)	months 1 - 6	1st request for payment	11/9/2010	5/9/2011	Monday, May 30, 2011	Sunday, May 15, 2011
(2nd) Narrative + Financial Report Year 1 (12 months)	months 1 - 12	Annexes to the narrative report (e.g. project deliverables, student list, M&E strategy, dissemination documents, and 2nd request for pre-financing)	11/9/2010	11/8/2011	Tuesday, November 29, 2011	Monday, November 14, 2011
(3rd) Narrative + Financial Report Year 2 (6 months)	months 13 - 18		11/9/2011	5/8/2012	Tuesday, May 29, 2012	Monday, May 14, 2012
FINAL Report (Narrative + Financial)	months 13 - 24	Annexes to the narrative report (e.g. project deliverables, list of participants, student admission and progress report, dissemination	11/10/2011	11/9/2012	Friday, November 30, 2012	Thursday, November 15, 2012

Developing Permanent and Sustainable M&E Capacity for RUFORUM and Member Universities

Within the network and secretariat, project-specific M&E systems or supplemental project M&E activities may occasionally be needed, but RUFORUM lays greater emphasis on basing M&E systems on permanent its permanent PME unit. Development of institutional capacity for RUFORUM Secretariat and member universities is considered a critical institutional development objective in itself, and will require adequate investment in staffing (including training on emerging M&E approaches, tools and methodologies) and system development. Such capacity building will be designed to meet both immediate project requirements and longer-term system needs. In some instances projects may require independent external, project-specific M&E arrangements to monitor and evaluate progress and impacts based on specified Terms of Reference (ToR) to be developed by the PME unit at RUFORUM Secretariat). The guidelines for designing such ToR are presented in Annex E.

Establishing a Comprehensive Set of Key Performance Indicators

According to the RUFORUM logframe (Annex A), a good set of hierarchically linked performance indicators is critical to project M&E. A set of benchmark indicators (See Annex B) has been selected from the menu of illustrative indicators developed for the M&E database after a baseline survey (RUFORUM & NIDA, 2009). Indicators chosen for any M&E exercise at any level should reflect the project/programme impact hypothesis of cause-and-effect progressing from inputs to outputs, outcomes, and impacts. To the extent possible, indicators should have targets, defined in terms of time, quantity, and quality and be gender-disaggregated. Targets should be reviewed regularly and revised as appropriate (probably not as often as every year, but perhaps every other year). The revisions are also made alongside adjustment, where necessary on, milestones.

Establishing Baseline Data

It is the practice to have organization-wide baseline data to help benchmark M&E processes. It is mandatory, that all projects set benchmarks through baseline data collection, needs assessment, gap analysis or other approach to provide will baseline before start. Where baseline data are not available, the

project should provide for surveys or special studies to establish a baseline within the first year of the project. The RUFORUM baseline survey conducted in 2009 was aimed at strengthening of Monitoring and Evaluation by:

- i. Facilitating the synthesis of available data and information on RUFORUM activities and their respective integration in the M&E system;
- ii. Identifying, defining and collecting data on the indicators for M&E that RUFORUM would focus on for the next five years in line with the strategic plan;
- iii. Benchmarking current M&E practices in RUFORUM and among member universities and the broader network;
- iv. Developing a matrix of information (metadata) that will lead to the development of a database of M&E issues and indicators for each RUFORUM programmatic activity and project.
- v. Devising strategies for incorporation of the indicators into the proposed M&E framework;
- vi. Developing strategies for data collection, storage and dissemination of information and lessons on the indicators identified under each RUFORUM programme activities.

M&E Data Collection Methods

To facilitate triangulation, M&E data collection methods are to be varied in type and scope. The comprehensive MIS to support interface between the M&E system and the other facets of RUFORUM performance management such as finance, personnel, CGS, regional programmes and networking n, require regular implementation reports that must provide detailed data on inputs (finances, human resources, infrastructure), outputs (postgraduate students trained, university capacity built), and initial outcomes (institutional change, relevance of universities, technologies adopted). This certainly demands data of different kinds collected by using different tools or instruments. RUFORUM adopts many forms of studies to assess quality of outputs (training), and quantify and assess quality of outcomes (changes in knowledge, attitudes, practices, efficiency and performance in universities and RUFORUM Secretariat). A whole range of secretariat-wide, regional (network), institutional (university) data are collected regularly during project implementation or independently of the project to reflect long-term (generally five to ten years or more) changes in impact indicators. Different data collection methods are indicated below.

Interviews (individual and group)

Individual and group interviews are to be used with many target groups (students, lecturers, farmers, coordinators, university managers) to capture their knowledge and perspectives, identify differences and bias, and as an important tool in triangulation of evidence. The main forms of interviews adopted are:

- Individual interviews
- Expert informants with professionals
- Semi-structured interviews

Surveys

The use of formal questionnaire-type surveys can be manual or virtual using online Survey Monkey evaluations. Appropriate *Survey sampling techniques* have to be used to minimize any systematic errors and raise the statistical power of the process

Discussions, focus groups and workshops

Group discussions are a important component of M&E processes at RUFORUM. Purposively selected groups of target informants are to be evaluations involve discussions and workshops and use of participatory data collection tools especially when the aim is to obtain as wide a range of stakeholder/beneficiary views as possible. Groups should comprise participants who share similar concerns and responsibilities. Specifically this approach uses:

- *Focus groups* -- A focus group is a carefully planned and moderated discussion to obtain perspectives on a defined area of interest in a non-threatening environment.
- *Workshops* -- Formal workshops are to be regularly convened to feed findings back to RUFORUM and partners for validation.

M&E Data Collection Strategy

- Using students to do research on outcomes and impacts of specific RUFORUM interventions for their dissertations.
- Using information already collected by others from samples of interest to RUFORUM

- Use existing RUFORUM structures to collect data where appropriate (e.g. alumni associations to track former students and receiving feed back on course syllabi)
- Separating frequency of collection and reporting of data/information on outcomes/impacts from routine M&E data collection.
- Institute and uphold as a principle to undertake monitoring activities at the lowest level possible.
- Make methodological compromises on comprehensiveness of data collection for aspects of PM&E that needs to be expedited to ensure timeliness of data processing and dissemination for critical management decision making.
- Embrace deeper use of ICT in M&E activities.
- As much as possible streamline data collection activities from the participating faculties
- Identify individuals at the universities and build their capacity to undertake the M&E Coordination
- Support strengthening of M&E capacity in the universities
- Strengthen capacity of RUFORUM staff to undertake their M&E roles
- Make process monitoring a key requirement by including it as a key content area in the M&E data collection formants and progress reporting formats.
- Monitor M&E system - is it working?
- Monitor changes in the M&E strategy

Monitoring for Results

Data Collection for Monitoring

RUFORUM uses an array of approaches and tools for monitoring on-going implementation of projects, programmes and any other programmatic activity. Those who manage programmes and projects must determine the correct mix of monitoring tools and approaches for each project, programme or capacity building undertaking. The appropriate mix of the following should be ensured:

- *Data and analysis* – entailing processes and means of obtaining and analysing documentation from projects that provides information on progress.
- *Validation* – covering the means of checking or verifying whether or not the reported progress is accurate.
- *Participation* - entailing obtaining feedback from partners and beneficiaries on progress and proposed actions.

A list of some commonly employed monitoring tools and mechanisms, categorized by their predominant characteristic, is presented in Table 4

Purpose		
Data Analysis	Participation	Validation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M&E framework • AWP's • Progress and quarterly reports on achievement of outputs • Annual Project Report • Project delivery reports and combined delivery reports • Substantive or technical documents: Progress towards achieving Outputs, outcomes • Standard Progress Reports on outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Field visits • Spot-checks • Reviews and assessments by other partners • Client surveys • Evaluations • Reviews and studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic, project, programme, grant and output/outcome categories and mechanisms • Steering committees and mechanisms • Stakeholder meetings • Focus group meetings • Commissioned surveys • Annual review
← Learning takes place through all monitoring tools and mechanisms →		

RUFORUM recognizes that no one monitoring tool or mechanism can satisfy all needs and different monitoring processes and stakeholders may use different tools or may use the same tools differently. As we are involved constantly in managing for results, monitoring data and gathering information begins at

the planning stages. The main tools and events used for systematic monitoring, data gathering and reporting applicable to most projects and programmes are Annual Work Plans (AWPs), field visits and Annual Project Reports (APRs). In monitoring outcomes, a mix of different tools are required. Annex D presents the guideline for developing an AWP. AWP provides details of the activities to be carried out in a programme or project, including who is responsible for what, time frames, planned inputs and funding sources, in order to generate outputs in relation to the outcome. AWP also serves as good references for monitoring progress later in the year. AWP must be produced at the beginning of the financial year as a planning tool, and their monitoring versions are prepared later in the year at subsequent monitoring schedules. They must be designed to enable:

- A fuller understanding of the contributions and targets set and agreed by the partners for the year to achieve a planned result in a transparent way
- A review of ongoing progress against the plan and identify bottlenecks
- Its use as a basis for reporting at the end of the year (annual report) and planning future work

Annual Reviews with Partners

It is mandatory to perform annual reviews of capacity building projects and programmes at RUFORUM. The annual review with the participation of all key partners is a key monitoring event in the RUFORUM M&E calendar. It is the culmination of monitoring activities that started at the project level and cascaded upwards through the outcome and individual partner activities during the year. The annual review is meant to facilitate a dialogue among managers and respective project coordinators to assess progress towards results (outputs and outcomes). At the forum stronger mutual understanding and consensus among partners is also built on the issues directly relevant to achieving the planned results and for making key high-level decisions.

Annual reviews are ideally held towards the end of the year (but could be dictated by project start time), and the discussions are meant to guide and approve plans and budgets allocation for the following implementation year. It is required that annual reviews are well planned to produce the best results. Annual review should be conducted based on objective monitoring data and analyses of all related projects and in consultation with relevant stakeholders. For some review issues, prior consultation is needed ahead of the review date. It is also desirable that participants of annual review meetings be at the decision-making level of each participating partner. The agenda and process of annual review meetings should be organized to carefully lead to decisions and agreements on the current status of the achievement of the results being pursued; any changes to overall results frameworks; and an updated AWP and budget allocation to partners and activities for the forthcoming year. Box 2 Presents a sample AWP templates to be used for framing the monitoring plan.

Box 2: Sample AWP template with monitoring component											
Outcome											
Expected Outputs	Planned Activities	Time Frame (Quarters)				Responsible Party	Budget			Monitoring Framework	
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount	Expenditures	Progress towards Outputs
Output 1 Targets:										Status of progress towards target contribution towards RUFORUM outcomes	
Output 2 Targets:											
Output 3 Targets:											
Total											

Notes:

1. The above is only illustrative. It may be adapted for practical use as appropriate for units, projects and other capacity building activities.
2. The format is based on the RUFORUM AWP format (see attachment #) and its related monitoring tool.
3. Outputs in column 1 should also give baselines, associated indicators and annual targets as applicable
4. All activities including monitoring and evaluation activities to be undertaken during the year towards the stated outputs must be included in the Activities column
5. Actual expenditures against activities completed should be given in the Expenditures column.
6. The last column should be completed using data on annual indicator targets to state progress towards achieving the outputs. Where relevant, comment on factors that facilitated or constrained achievement of results including: whether risks and assumptions as identified in the RUFORUM M&E framework materialized or whether new risks emerged; and internal factors such as timing of inputs and activities, quality of products and services, coordination and other management issues.

Ensuring Utilization of M&E Data

The RUFORUM M&E system provide a great deal of rich information that is often used for periodic evaluations. Its exploitation depends on effective use for project design, lesson sharing and decision making. The main goal is to use the information for improved performance. Routine reports from programme/project management are expected guide decisions on implementation and on refining plans activities. Other reports such as analytical reports and impact studies (that is, those demonstrating impacts or identifying program constraints) are generated and made available stakeholders including policymakers to influence investment plans and policy reforms and university management and RUFORUM board to influence strategic decision guidance and university innovation in areas such as curriculum review and research orientation.

Effective monitoring generates a solid data base for evaluations. Data, reports, analysis and decisions based on monitoring evidence should be retained with a view to making them easily accessible to evaluations.

Evaluating for Results*Why evaluate? Uses of Evaluation at RUFORUM*

RUFORUM views evaluation as an important aspect of agricultural capacity building and results management. By generating 'evidence' and objective information, evaluations enable informed decision making and also supports strategic planning. The success of capacity building depends, partly, on the capacity of RUFORUM and its partners to conduct credible evaluations and use the results to make evidence-based decisions and support organizational learning: At RUFORUM. Evaluations:

- Support programme and project improvements by putting emphasis on what works and in what context
- Building knowledge for generalizability and wider-application in other capacity building projects and programmes, universities, countries, networks, institutions or platforms
- Supporting accountability to ascertain whether RUFORUM is doing the right things? Is RUFORUM doing things right? Did RUFORUM do what it said it would do? With an interest of determining the merit or worth and value of an initiative and its quality.

It is important to note early enough that these uses are not mutually exclusive and evaluation, in general, has multiple uses.

Box 3: Assessing the use of evaluations**What information is needed?** Examples:

- Information on the relevance of intended outputs or outcomes and validity of the results framework and results map
- Information about the status of an outcome and factors affecting it
- Information about the effectiveness of the RUFORUM partnership strategy
- Information about the status of project implementation
- Information on the cost of an initiative relative to the observed benefits
- Information about lessons learned

Who will use the information? The intended users of evaluation are those individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the evaluation results and are in a position to make decisions or take action based on the evaluation results. Users of evaluation are varied but generally fall within the following categories in the RUFORUM context:

- RUFORUM management and programme or project coordinators and managers, others involved in design and implementation
- National government counterparts, policy makers, strategic planners making decisions on investment in agricultural tertiary education
- Development partners, donors and other funders
- The RUFORUM Board and other oversight organs (IAP, TC, DC and National FORUMs)

How will the information be used? Examples:

- To design or validate capacity development strategy
- To make mid-course corrections
- To improve project or programme design and implementation

- To ensure accountability
- To make funding decisions
- To increase knowledge and understanding of the benefits and challenges of capacity development programmes and projects intended for the enhancement of African agriculture and socio-economic development

Norms and Principles of Evaluation at RUFORUM

Evaluation in RUFORUM is expected to be:

- *Independent* - Management must not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. Evaluators must be free of conflict of interest
- *Intentional* - The rationale for an evaluation and the decisions to be based on it should be clear from the outset.
- *Transparent* - Meaningful consultation with stakeholders is essential for the credibility and utility of the evaluation.
- *Ethical* - Evaluation should not reflect personal or sectoral interests. Evaluators must have professional integrity, respect the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence, and be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments and institutional settings.
- *Impartial* - Removing bias and maximizing objectivity are critical for the credibility of the evaluation and its contribution to knowledge.
- *Of high quality* - All evaluations should meet minimum quality standards defined by the PME unit.
- *Timely* - Evaluations must be designed and completed in a timely fashion so as to ensure the usefulness of the findings and recommendations
- *Used* - Evaluation is a management discipline that seeks to provide information to be used for evidence-based decision making. To enhance the usefulness of the findings and recommendations, key stakeholders should be engaged in various ways in the conduct of the evaluation. Findings of the evaluations are regularly posted at the RUFORUM Monitoring and Evaluation Resource Centre (MERC) - <http://www.ruforum.org/resources/merc.html>

Box 4: Monitoring and Evaluation Resource Center (MERC)

The MERC, available online at <http://www.ruforum.org/resources/merc.html>, is the official RUFORUM M&E information portal to support management accountability for evaluation and information needs of stakeholders on on-going and concluded evaluations. It provides timely data on the status of evaluations in the evaluation plans, management responses and follow-up commitments or requirements. The PME Unit regularly reports on evaluations, using the data and reports/lessons in the MERC in its Annual M&E Report to the Board of Trustees and other oversight organs of RUFORUM.

Types of Evaluations Conducted in RUFORUM

Independent and decentralized Evaluations

RUFORUM's capacity building activities consist of core and complementary activities assembled as programmes, projects, partnerships and one-stop skill enhancement events. These are delivered through a programme/project results framework. Evaluations are carried out to assess their worth and merit and support the organization's learning efforts and accountability. There are two categories of evaluations in RUFORUM: independent and decentralized evaluations. The PME IS is mandated by the Board to carry out or commission *independent evaluations*. Units and partners are also required to conduct decentralized evaluations of projects, programmes or activities.

Outcome Evaluation

Outcome evaluations in RUFORUM assess RUFORUM contributions towards the progress made on outcome achievements (purpose). These outcomes are generally identified in the programme or project results frameworks to which RUFORUM capacity building initiatives contribute.

Outcome evaluations are undertaken to: (1) provide evidence to support accountability of programmes and for RUFORUM to use in its accountability requirements to its investors; AND (2) provide evidence of the RUFORUM contribution to outcomes (university capacity); (3) guide performance improvement within the current Secretariat Programmes/results framework by identifying current areas of strengths, weaknesses and gaps, especially in regard to the appropriateness of the RUFORUM partnership strategy, impediments to the outcome, midcourse adjustments, and lessons learned for the next programming cycle; (4) inform higher level evaluations, such as Impact Assessments and evaluations of regional programmes, and subsequent planning; (5) support learning across RUFORUM about outcome evaluation.

Outcome evaluations are strategic, addressing: broad-based linkages with capacity development; partnerships across universities and other partners; analysis of the external, local, regional and global environment in the analysis of success; and the comparative value of RUFORUM and significance in African agricultural development.

Project Evaluation

Units may commission evaluations of their respective projects as needed. Managing for results requires, as a starting point, a good knowledge of projects, their effectiveness, internal and external factors affecting effectiveness, their added value and their contribution to higher level RUFORUM outcomes. A project evaluation assesses the performance of a project in achieving its intended results. It yields useful information on project implementation arrangements and the achievement of outputs. It is at this level that direct cause and attribution can be addressed given the close causal linkage between the initiatives and the outputs. The fundamental purpose of a project evaluation is to make improvements, to continue or upscale an initiative, to assess replicability in other settings, or to consider alternatives. Therefore, although project evaluations are mandatory only when required by partnership protocols, *programme units are strongly recommended to commission evaluations, particularly of pilot programmes, before replication or upscaling, projects that are going into a next phase, and projects more than two years in duration*

Project evaluations play an important role in accountability to donors, universities, partners and other stakeholders involved in financing and implementing the project. Mid-term and final evaluations of some selected RUFORUM projects may be demanded by development partners or RUFORUM Board as appropriate depending on project duration and capacity building scope. When a project is implemented in partnership with other actors, the evaluation needs to take into consideration the objectives, inputs and contributions by each partner. The overall evaluation conclusions need to highlight how these different elements integrate to achieve the intended outputs, and what can be learned from the added value of the collaboration. It is therefore critical that RUFORUM and the partners involved in a project work together, voice their expectations and issues, and take full ownership of the evaluation at all stages.

Thematic Evaluations

RUFORUM, in addition to project and outcome evaluations, managers of programme units may choose to commission thematic evaluations to assess RUFORUM performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contribution to university capacity development results. These may focus on one or several cross-cutting themes that have significance beyond a particular project or initiative. Some examples of thematic evaluations that may be commissioned by programme units include the evaluation of RUFORUM initiatives in a particular results area, such as secretariat capacity, RUFORUM democratic governance, outreach, research capacity, or gender mainstreaming in RUFORUM programming and ICT effectiveness or utility in a group of universities or RUFORUM programmes.

Impact Evaluation/Assessment

Impact assessments are a form of evaluation focusing on the effects (positive or negative, intended or not) on a system, institution, process or country, and the environment caused by a given capacity development activity or RUFORUM programme/project. They link the final (long-term) impact as well the (medium-term) effects at the outcome level to RUFORUM programming. By helping judge whether RUFORUM capacity development approach is working or not, impact assessments also serves the accountability function. Hence, impact evaluation is aligned with RBF and monitoring the contribution of

activities, projects and programmes towards meeting the RUFORUM goal and super goal. MDGs. Impact assessments are to be commissioned when:

- The project or programme is functioning long enough to have visible effects
- The project or programme has a scale that justifies a more thorough evaluation
- A justification is needed to long-term realignment of RUFORUM approaches and strategies

To be useful, impact assessments must include the full range of impacts at all levels of the results chain, including ripple effects on universities and farming communities, employers of graduates, governments, and other networks. Therefore it is important to understand the consequences of capacity development initiatives in the longer term. When conducting impact assessments, care should be taken to make logical attribution - that is, determining to what extent an initiative, rather than other external factors, has contributed to observed impacts. This aspect must be included in the design of the project/programme as well as the evaluation ToR and design.

Box 5: Types of evaluations in RUFORUM and their primary users										
Mandated Responsibility for Evaluation	Evaluation Types									
	Strategic Plan	Programme/unit Areas (Training and Quality, CGS, ICG, M&E)	Thematic Areas & Topics (gender, climate change, capacity building, etc)	Programme Evaluations				RUFORUM Outcomes	Projects and Activities	
			ICT capacity and use in teaching, learning and research	Regional Post Graduate Programmes	Grants	University Level Programmes & national FORUM Programmes				
Evaluations Conducted or Commissioned by PME Unit										
PME Unit	Thematic Evaluations			Evaluation of Global and Institutional, Regional Capacity	Evaluation of RUFORUM Secretariat Capacity	Assessment of Capacity Building results				
Primary Users: Board and RUFORUM Management										
Evaluations Conducted by Programmes and Units/Organs										
ICT	Cross-programme Evaluations	Outcome or Outcome-oriented Thematic Evaluations				Outcome or Outcome-oriented Evaluations			Project/Activity Evaluations	
NAG										
FAM										
TQA										
National FORUMS										
TC	Grants Management		TC Effectiveness/ Self Review	TC Effectiveness/ Self Review	TC Effectiveness/ Self Review		TC Effectiveness/ Self Review	TC Effectiveness/ Self Review	TC Effectiveness/ Self Review	
Board	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	Board Effectiveness/ Self Review	
Primary Users: Management, Board, Partners, Development Partners										

*The PME Unit is required to conduct all evaluations outlined in the programme of work approved by the Board. Other Units are required to conduct all evaluations planned in their evaluation plan and annual work plan. Where there are programmes, the units are to conduct evaluations in liaison with PME unit as relevant

OPERATIONALIZING M&E

The M&E Framework

The generic RUFORUM M&E Matrix (Table 5) is meant for use in guiding M&E data collection and management protocols indicating the data that is needed, the source of the data, how often it will be collected, by whom it will be collected, what methods will be used in collection as well as the use the data will be put into in the whole M&E system. The matrix is critical for establishing clear roles and responsibilities of RUFORUM and its partners. It is an extension of the logical framework and develops assumptions by identifying relevant indicators and ensuring that the related data is collected, analysed and used in RUFORUM knowledge management system.

Table 5: The M&E Framework Template²

Result Hierarchy (Logframe Element)	Indicators (Including Targets)	Means of Verification				Use of Information	
		Data Source(s)	Frequency & Cost of Collection	Responsibility for Collection	Collection Method	Report-ing	Present-ation
Impact							
Assumptions & Risks							
Outcome							
Assumptions & Risks							
Output							
Assumptions & Risks							
Inputs and Processes							
Assumptions & Risks							

Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity: A Conceptual Framework

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a recognized management practice that allows for learning and change when implemented regularly (MacKenzie *et al*, 2006). Specifically, M&E is meant to help answer a range of questions about: (1) the *process* of capacity change (how capacity building takes place); (2) capacity as an *intermediate step toward performance* (what elements of capacity are needed to ensure adequate performance); and (3) capacity as an *outcome* (whether capacity building has improved capacity). At RUFORUM a conceptual basis that is underpinning the design of this M&E strategy assumes that the first step in developing a vision of African agricultural capacity development, and a plan to measure it, is to understand the role capacity plays in the rural sector. It holistically addresses key questions such as “what are the expectations and assumptions surrounding capacity and its relationship to performance of CAADP outcomes” This helps in defining realistic objectives for regional and university based capacity-building interventions as well as in expressing desired capacity outcomes explicitly and precisely.

The parameters used in developing a capacity building M&E plan. Figures 8 and 9 illustrate the basis of the conceptual framework used as a reference to develop and envision the role of capacity (and capacity building) in Africa. It has been found, from various consultative fora that directed discussion using the framework prior to M&E planning can stimulate strategic thinking within project, programmes and

² See the comprehensive RUFORUM M&E Matrix/Plan in Annex #

network or work teams, clarify individual and collective expectations and thereby improve capacity-building M&E. The conceptual basis takes a system-wide view of capacity, including all possible levels where agricultural capacity development might take place. The frameworks provide a starting point for identifying the key variables that influence capacity and performance at that level.

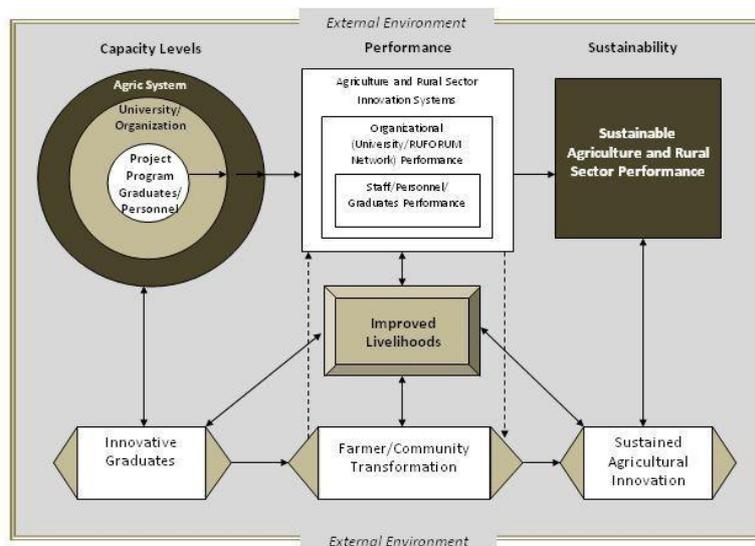


Figure 8: Overview of the conceptual basis for M&E for capacity development

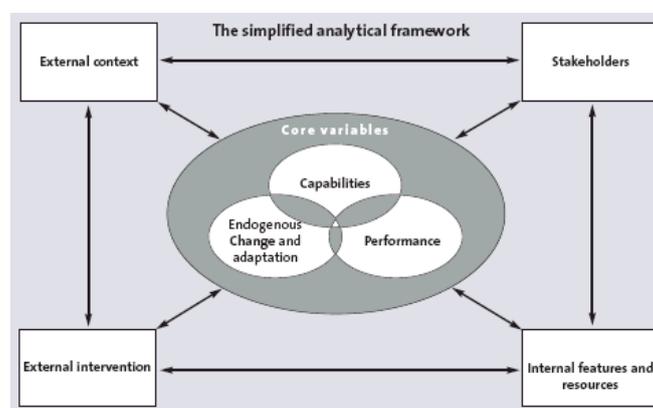


Figure 9: Simplified conceptual basis of core variables and context of M&E for capacity development

From the RUFORUM experience, the criteria for choice of effective monitoring and evaluation framework include utility in the (1): Recognition of the complexity and non-linearity that characterize agricultural capacity development programmes and therefore seek to integrate variables at more than one spatial and temporal scale ; (2) Integration of both social and economic variables; (3) prediction, and identification of surrogates for resilience that help to identify when capacity building systems are approaching thresholds; and (4) monitoring both the outcomes (performance) of capacity development initiatives and the process of implementation.

RUFORUM is implementing a comprehensive approach to capacity building and networking program M&E which is characterized by the following features:

- is based on a logical framework of cause-and effect relations that conceptually relate programs to impacts on targeted strategic goals;
- addresses both project and programme performance and impact;
- utilizes different tools for monitoring different stages of the capacity development and project/programme design, implementation and impact processes;

- relate project/programme progress and results to planned targets based on ex-ante projections of impact;
- has a management information system for regular reporting on inputs and outputs and on outcomes as possible;
- utilizes special studies for monitoring and evaluation of output quality and outcomes;
- utilizes currently available information and review processes to keep costs down and remain sustainable; and
- include mechanisms to feed information back to stakeholders and key decision makers.

Evaluating the RUFORUM network

RUFORUM as a network embodies:

- *Networks of international donor supported programmes, projects and initiatives* within ECSA
- *A supra-network of its constituent national chapters, the national FORUMs* within each country from where member universities come, who have contact with each other, work with each other and who may also compete with and complement each other for regional opportunities
- *Networks of university staff (academic, administrative, research, technical)*, who are connected formally and informally
- *Networks of activities* which form different kinds of RUFORUM operational and business processes that generate different types of services. Such as workshops, training events and communication
- *Networks of communities of practices* linked by overlapping membership, or by disciplinary and thematic relationships.
- *Networks of University Managers and Leaders*, through a regional platform for Vice Chancellors, deans, principals and other leaders
- *Networks of postgraduate students* undergoing regional training who interact formally and informally through collaborative research, student exchanges, conferences and academic fairs.

Measuring the significance of the network, demands a complex yet relevant framework that would simplify the effect of the network using indicators of contribution of the network to RUFORUM strategic goals, mission and vision. For instance, the new RUFORUM M&E strategy proposes to use the following simple indicators of network effectiveness in fulfilling the dream of university relevance to Africa's agricultural and rural sector development:

- *Existence of a relationship*: Described by using a numerical or qualitative value to the presence or absence and degree of a link in network.
- *Type of relationship*: Describing different categories of relationships of interest to capacity development
- *Frequency of interaction*: Indicating frequency of useful interaction between components units of the network over a given period or in total.
- *Value of the relationship*: Signifying a rating or ranking of the relative value or priority of different relationships
- *Sequence of the relationships*: Representing a sequence of events over time, or dates representing actual times
- *Details of a relationship*: A qualitative and quantitative narrative/account of relationship at different levels of the network

Reporting Flows and Formats

At the Secretariat and continuously among the partners, systems are designed to guide the flow of reporting and lesson sharing including report formats for both monitoring and evaluation unique to RUFORUM and in line with donor reporting system. The system also guides feedback and project and activity management review.

Table 6: Format for Monitoring: The M&E report

Programme Outcome level (medium-term impact)	Evaluating the present status of implementation on the programme/project objective level. What direct contribution is RUFORUM making to strengthen capacities? What indicator-related data is available on this? How far do the activity goals support the achievement of the programme/project objective? Is the programme/project in the "target range"?		Lessons learned for further programme/project steering
Programme objective			
Activity goals Outcome level (use and transfer)	Main data from carrying out and evaluating activities, expert appraisals, and evaluation of other information (e.g. see data collection methods)	Applying the indicators to evaluate the present state of implementation on the activity goal level	Lesson learned for further programme/project steering
Activity goal 1			
Activity goal 2			

Overall Capacity Building Design

RUFORUM has chosen to use the generic capacity development (CD) matrix as an analytical framework for identifying capacity development areas, impact pathways to logically follow-up on processes, outputs and outcomes. The framework is applied in all kinds of planning, monitoring and evaluation stages. It is important in identifying capacity gaps for individuals, member universities and other agricultural tertiary education partners. Both capacity for agricultural development and capacity for M&E analysis uses the framework in the form presented in Table 7. All indicators for programme/project M&E are chosen comprehensively using the matrix.

Table 7: Generic CD Matrix Analytical Framework for CD planning and M&E

Level/CD Issue		Technical Skills	Cross-Cutting Professional Skills	Leadership and Management
Individual	RUFORUM Secretariat Staff			
	University Staff			
	Postgraduate Students			
	Other members of Stakeholder Groups including farmers			
Organizational	RUFORUM Secretariat			
	Universities			
	Other RUFORUM Network Institutions and Groups			
Enabling Environment	RUFORUM Internal Systems			
	National Systems (FORUM)			

	Regional/Continental/Global HEI support Systems			
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OTHER M&E FUNCTIONS AND GUIDES

Risk Management Plan and Strategy

Risk Management at RUFORUM

RUFORUM recognizes that risk management is an integral part of good management practice and safeguards the organization from uncertainties and unforeseen costs. There is strong committed to the protection and promotion of RUFORUM resources and strategic opportunities through a comprehensive Risk Management Plan and Framework. As a network, we recognize that the management of risk is not only an operational function but is also a fundamental component of strategic, budget and project planning. Risks and risk management strategies/plans are also monitored to support this goal of achieving best practice in the area of risk management, there is an elaborate scheme to register, allocate, budget and evaluate risk, This is done in a timely, consistent and user-friendly manner. We are committed to demonstrating the achievement of this policy through regular monitoring, audit and reporting.

The main policy objectives for managing risks are to: (1) assist RUFORUM and its member universities achieve operational, tactical and strategic objectives; (2) safeguard the organizations assets – human, financial, reputation, physical and information; (3) create an environment where Secretariat staff and members RUFORUM network assume responsibility for risk management and take pride in the outcomes of effective risk monitoring and evaluation.

It is clear that successful risk taking leads to a competitive advantage and can maximize stakeholder value. In addition to this risk/return equation, it is assumed at RUFORUM that risks are interconnected across the units, universities and the entire network hence the traditional silo approaches to managing these risks are not effective. Part of the internal control systems involves systematically sharing risk and internal control knowledge from M&E across the various operational functions and departments to obtain best practices.

Risks at RUFORUM constitute chance of something happening that will have an negative impact on achievement of objectives. It is measured in terms of consequence and likelihood and indicators for monitoring and evaluation risk occurrence, their impacts and management mechanism are linked to their degree of uncertainty. Systematic policies have been put in place as integral part of other strategies and in a separate risk management policy (RMP) to define the systematic application of management policies, practices, and procedures to the task of identifying, analyzing, assessing, treating and monitoring risk. The risk management policy embeds an organization-wide risk management culture into all our operations. This is believed ensures that decisions that trade value and risk will be made on an informed basis and will be aligned with our risk tolerance and strategy. Greater transparency to ourselves and our stakeholders will is also assured.

The RPM has an elaborate approach to risk management and guidelines for identifying risks at project/programme design, inclusion in logframe and results framework, indicator definition and evaluation procedures. During all M&E activities, risks assessment is carried out. Risk assessment is the identification and analysis of relevant risks to achievement of the objectives, forming a basis for determining how the risks should be managed. The objective of risk assessment is always established conducting M&E with a risk analysis is done. The process of identifying and analyzing risk is an ongoing process and is a critical component of an effective internal control system. Attention must be focused on risks at all levels and necessary actions must be taken to manage and recorded to future lesson learning and sharing. Aspects of risk management that are monitored include:

- Occurrence of risks that were anticipated or not anticipated
- Effectiveness of any measures taken by the organization for the purpose of reducing the impact of risks by protecting its resources against waste, fraud, and inefficiency, ensuring accuracy and

reliability in accounting and operating data, securing compliance with the policies of the organization and donors; and evaluating the level of performance in all organizational units and projects.

Key Questions for Risk Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Has the organization managed income and expenditure more effectively by?
 - a) Operating within the budget and services existing debt
 - b) Making sufficient provisions for the maintenance of facilities of the organization
 - c) Generating funds from disposals and operations to improve working capital balances and reduce debt
 - d) Identifying opportunities for greater capacity development and networking output which enhance the RUFORUM portfolio and its resource base
 - e) Maximising the contributions from member University receives and other grants and other non-core, income-generating activities and partnerships
 - f) Ensuring prudent management of resources to support the needs of the organization

2. Has RUFORUM maintained an effective internal control framework that meets the needs of the organization under the firm guidance of the Executive Secretary and management:
 - a. Did we continue the annual review of the Financial Rules and Regulations to ensure that controls continue to meet the needs of the organization in a changing context
 - b. Did we continue the development of a comprehensive framework of Financial Rules and Regulations to ensure compliance, supported by detailed desktop instructions for basic and practical assistance
 - c. Did we ensure that the resources available and the ways in which they are utilised observe that the best standards of procurement as guided by established acts and regulations within the law

Framework for Risk Assessment and Monitoring

The framework for risk identification assessment and management

Stages of risk management and monitoring

1. Define a framework
2. Identify the risks
3. Identify probable risk owners
4. Evaluate the risks
5. Set acceptable levels of risk
6. Identify suitable responses to risk
7. Implement responses
8. Gain assurances about effectiveness
9. Embed and review

Having identified the risks and the risk owner the risk should then be evaluated for impact and likelihood. An assessment of the proximity (timing) of the risk can also be made. The scales used for impact and likelihood are as follows:

Impact:

1. Insignificant
2. Minor
3. Moderate
4. Serious
5. Very Serious

Likelihood:

1. Very Low
2. Low
3. Medium
4. High
5. Very High

The combined scores on a 5 x 5 matrix will give scores ranging from 1 to 25 depending on the severity of the risk. These numbers are indicative, the process is not an exact science but most importantly is assists risk owners in thinking about the risk. The total risk score divisions may then be classified are as follows:

- 1 - 6 Low
- 8 - 12 Medium

- 14 - 20 High
- Over 20 - Very high

Once this has been completed the risks should be prioritized and ranked according to score and proximity. Risks are classified depending on the various criteria, and a lot of emphasis should be made in identifying and planning for the management of significant risks. One can use the following chart (Figure 10) to classify the risk:

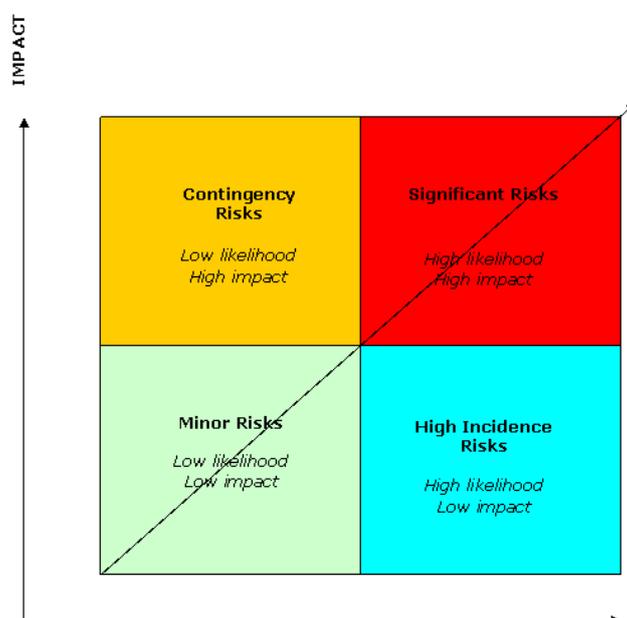


Figure 10: Risk classification chart

The risk register will be used to document and monitor with all risks identified and should be updated regularly accordingly. An annual review of the register would be most appropriate.

The principle risks often identified and monitored at RUFORUM include but not restricted to the following:

- ~ Governance and planning
- ~ Financial risks including financial health, availability and access as well as funding flow and policies changes:
- ~ Secretariat Staff matters
- ~ Member university staff matters
- ~ Student matters including sustaining and expanding student admissions and unique experiences in regional postgraduate programmes
- ~ Partnerships and networking risks
- ~ Environmental health and hazards
- ~ Use of ICT facilities
- ~ Political-social environment in the region
- ~ Work attitude and ethics
- ~ Disaster preparedness and management.
- ~ Crime (internal or external oriented)

Table 8: Sample M&E Risk Management Register

Identified risks to the organization				Description of Risk Controls	Control Rating	Calculated Risk Rating
(1) Area of Risk Exposure	Description of the Risk	(4) Assessment of the Risk				
(2) Identified Risk		Likelihood Rating	Impact Rating			
Risk Area 1						
1.1						
1.2						
1.3						
Risk Area 2						
2.1						
2.2						
2.3						

On an annual basis the risk management framework is monitored and updated as follows:

- ~ Facilitating the updating of the Risk Registers between April and June each year
- ~ Analysing and evaluating programs to identify new or confirm existing risks on the Risk Register
- ~ Identifying new or confirm control processes on the Risk Register
- ~ Assigning a rating (High, Medium or Low) against each risk and control identified on the Risk Register
- ~ Reviewing the accuracy of the Risk Registers
- ~ Approving the Risk Registers
- ~ Ranking risk areas identified in the Risk Registers according to priority for action/Internal Audit coverage
- ~ General oversight of Risk Management Strategy for the Organisation
- ~ Preparing the 5- Year Strategic Internal Audit Plan – reflecting program and audit priorities as part of the strategic and business plans
- ~ Approving the 5- Year Strategic Internal Audit Plan as part of the strategic and business plans

Foresighting and “Monitoring the Future”

Rationale for “Monitoring the Future”

RUFORUM adopts an active foresighting principle. With the conviction that the landscape of African agricultural landscape is complex and dynamic, the need to monitor both current capacity needs and future directions is real. In attempting to “monitor the future”, RUFORUM M&E strategies incorporates at every capacity development planning and programme design an attempt to explore future agricultural capacity needs. Foresight planning is appropriate for RUFORUM’s capacity development programmes as it offers the ability to create and maintain a high-quality, coherent and functional forward view and to use the insights in useful ways, for example, to: detect future management and agricultural tertiary education challenges and opportunities, set research agenda; guide strategic management and policy; design new academic and research programmes; explore new niches, markets, products and services; and manage to remain visible and relevant to sustainable development.

Valuing the future is at the core of a RUFORUM’s M&E strategy through an overt and explicit approach. This provides the base from which effective strategic management is embodied. In order to manage uncertainties in future, interest in new planning approaches and need for constructive management decision making and communications strategies and tools among member universities and key stakeholders. Figure 11 illustrates how, in combination with the CD matrix, RUFORUM employs foresighting to explore lessons from the future for current planning, implementation, performance monitoring and programme design

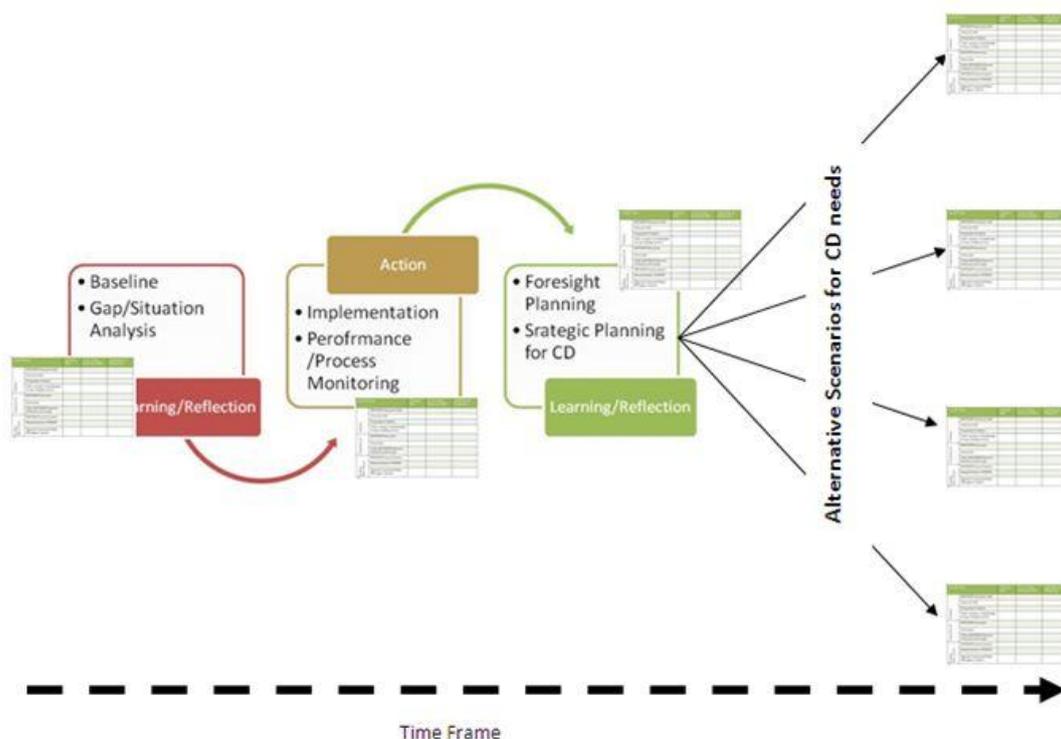


Figure 11: Strategic capacity needs assessment and foresighting using the CD matrix at different M&E learning points

Purpose of M&E of Futures

The primary purpose of adopting scenarios as a foresighting tools in M&E is to create holistic, integrated images of how the future capacity development issues might evolve. These images, in turn, become the context for planning, a testing ground for current projects and programs, or the stimulus for creating new capacity development initiatives.

Further, the M&E scenarios inform management decision making and influence as well as enhance decision making. In addition, the use of the scenarios building is aimed at:

- ~ augment understanding by helping us see what possible futures might look like, how they might come about, and why this might happen
- ~ produce new management and performance decisions by forcing fresh considerations to surface
- ~ reframe existing decisions by providing a new context for decisions
- ~ identify contingent decisions by exploring what an RUFORUM might do if certain circumstances arise.
- ~ anticipate future threats and opportunities to funding, student niche, university membership and project performance
- ~ develop multiple futures based on optimistic and pessimistic projections of past events
- ~ foster strategic thinking and learning
- ~ facilitate the art of strategic conversation among staff and stakeholders
- ~ challenge or dispel assumptions about the 'official' future,
- ~ create a rallying point among stakeholders and Secretariat staff
- ~ provide leadership for new initiatives or direction
- ~ create frameworks for a shared vision of the future to influence organisational development and individual employee behaviour
- ~ create an internal or external communication channel that transcends RUFORUM boundaries, time and space.

More specific cases for use of scenarios in M&E and performance management are indicated below:

Managing risk: This is designed to help manage risk and develop concrete contingency plans and exit strategies. Describing how and why possible futures might occur enables RUFORUM to reflect on how changing contexts including funding environment, political, social, and economic changes affect capacity building operation and to plan accordingly.

Building consensus for change: As a learning organization RUFORUM uses scenarios as logically rigorous and transparent means to give stakeholders a role in planning capacity development initiative. The process helps programme designers share their thinking about uncertainty and risk, develop mutually understood contingency plans, and defuse blame-casting when forces outside their control lead to a change in strategic direction.

Augment understanding about the future: Foresighting for M&E brings up issues that otherwise would not be considered by exposing the underlying forces in African Agricultural development. In M&E and learning this is used to when dealing with big issues and strategic directions, rather than tactical decisions, and should not be used for short-term planning.

Monitoring progress and scanning changes in the environment. Establishment of indicators that create a framework to monitor the execution of project and programme strategy.

Communication and Dissemination Strategy

A database with all the monitoring and evaluation reports is kept and regularly updated at RUFORUM and also available on RUFORUM website. However, universities, development partners and other stakeholders are promptly informed through many channels about the results of RUFORUM work. To ensure the requisite transparency, M&E findings are made available as selected publications online. As an organisation dedicated to disseminating knowledge and facilitating continuous learning, RUFORUM is committed to a policy of continually improving its range of capacity building activities. For this reason, the processing of evaluation findings is of considerable significance to RUFORUM. When planning new programmes and projects, the findings from the changes recorded have to be systematically integrated as lessons learned, i.e., feedback and evaluations are used to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of programme and project work. Similarly, monitoring and evaluation results have to be jointly analysed with all partners in planning and implementing a programme, and any adjustments to further evolve current programmes or change future programmes have to be agreed on. Institutional learning is anchored in RUFORUM's sustainability strategy too, with its own dimension of "continuous learning".

At M&E plan formulation, consideration is given how to manage communication and lesson learning. In designing an M&E advocacy and communication strategy, alignment must be made to the RUFORUM organizational communication strategy. A number of factors need consideration:

- a) The *identification of the key stakeholders and stakeholder committees* who need to be informed and involved, either directly or indirectly;
- b) The *levels of participation* that will be required from different players. For example, how often will key stakeholders meet and require information/feedback? And will this be through group meetings, personal discussions, through information sharing in presentations or through the circulation of the final M&E reports?
- c) The *levels of transparency* about the results of the M&E, as well as during the M&E process. For example, if there are very negative criticisms that emerge during the M&E, with whom will the outcomes be discussed?

A dissemination strategy is required that spells out exactly how to deal with the outcomes of the M&E activity, how widely the results will be circulated and to whom. This is particularly important if M&E is to be regarded as a potential means of increasing knowledge and improving the outcomes of existing and future projects. The matrix in Table 9 summarizes key elements of the M&E dissemination strategy, which spells out how to communicate with different stakeholders.

M&E Capacity Building Design

Basis for M&E Capacity Building

RUFORUM places a premium on results and is committed to strengthening the capacity of its staff, member universities and crucial partners to design, implement and manage effective M&E systems. This is with assumption that strong M&E and learning systems are the cornerstones of effective impact-oriented capacity building for agricultural development. Capacity building for M&E also builds the quality of RUFORUM's M&E, both in the form of self-evaluation by operational units/programmes of capacity development interventions, and independent evaluation of these by external teams and partners. To guide, coordinate and support capacity to conduct M&E at the RUFORUM Secretariat, among member universities, the M&E Strategy sets out the capacity building needed and means and plans for strengthening it including any specification of training if required.

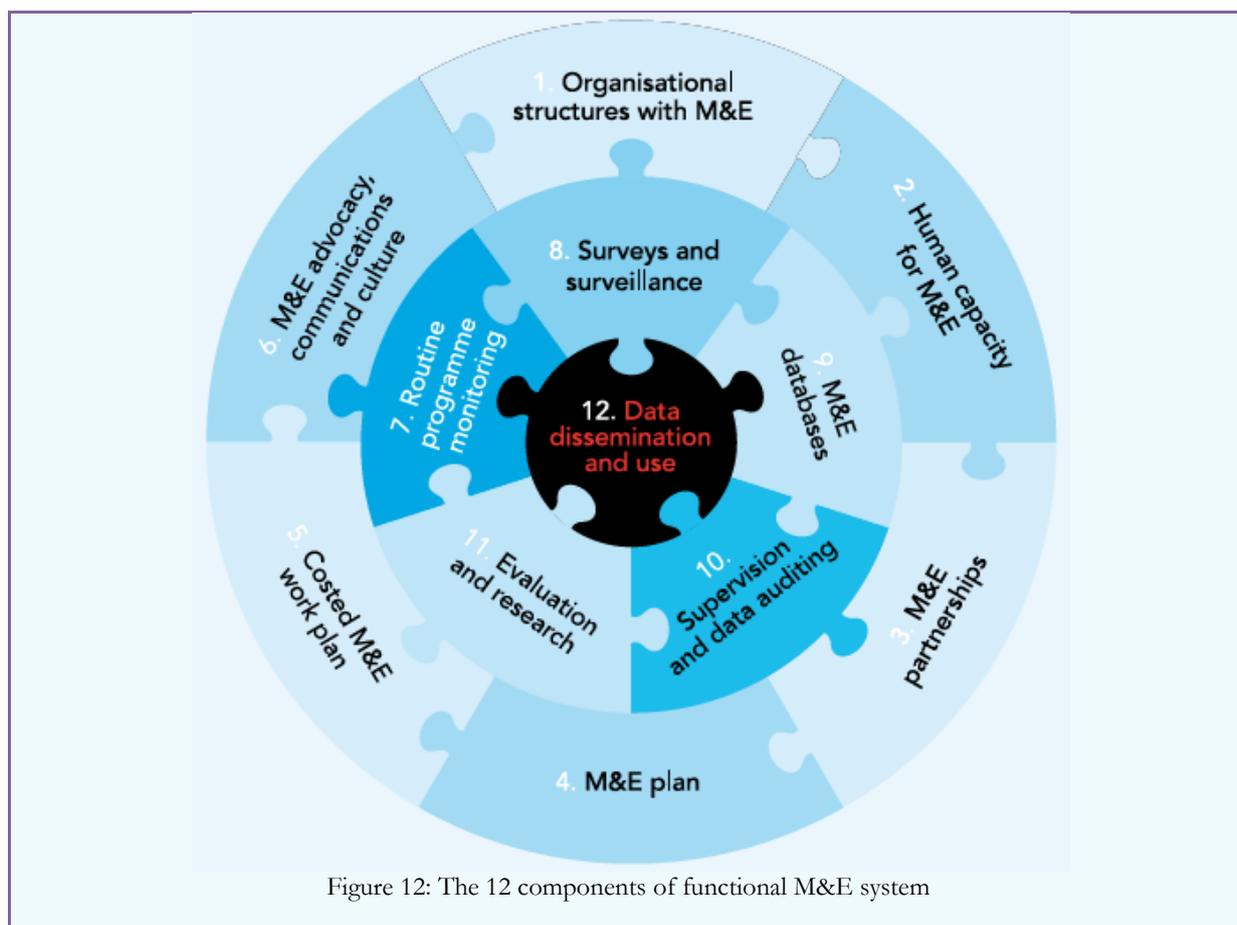
For these reasons, RUFORUM has backed evaluation capacity development (ECD) to raise awareness of the critical role that M&E can play in promoting the transparency, accountability, results orientation, and effectiveness of management systems. Principally at the Unit, Secretariat, University and national Forum levels, the interventions so far have (i) stimulated thinking on the function of M&E in good governance and performance; (ii) explored the complementarities between M&E, results-based management, and internal auditing; (iii) identified strategies and resources for building demand for and supply of M&E; and (iv) encouraged and supported the creation of regional networks to facilitate learning and follow-up actions.

However, the changing capacity development context in Africa and increasing responsibility placed on universities and their networks to respond to priorities in CAADP as well as and the advent of learning organizations and knowledge-based management have placed a stronger accent on ECD. This decision is also congruent with items on the international development agenda, such as the Millennium Development Goals, national development priorities, university strategic plans and NEPAD's support for these. From experience with RUFORUM Secretariat and other network-based M&E systems, it is meaningful to strengthen ECD at the regional level in the framework of CAADP and other regional initiatives. The impact of capacity building in agriculture through postgraduate programmes and research is expected to be a higher efficiency and effectiveness in service provision, leading to poverty reduction. In the staff and institutions targeted for M&E capacity building, the outcome is intended to be improved ranges of skills, resources, systems, and attitudes for performance of results-based M&E of capacity building partnership strategies, university strategies, policies, programs, and projects in the member universities. Three principle outputs will accomplish the outcome of the M&E capacity building: (i) proficiency in M&E will be raised, (ii) research and special studies on M&E for impact will be conducted, and (iii) knowledge sharing and learning for M&E will be bolstered.

Box 6: Defining M&E Capacity Building Operationally

Capacity building is a process for improving the ability of persons, groups, organisations or systems to meet objectives, address stakeholders' needs and, ultimately, perform better (Horton et al, 2003; LaFond & Brown, 2003; Goodman et al, 1998). It refers to the creation, expansion or upgrading of a stock of desired qualities and features called capabilities that can be continually drawn on over time. Capacity building generally involves an ongoing, systematic and planned process with measurable performance objectives, defined outcomes, implementation strategies and ways to measure capacity building outcomes and performance over time.

The purpose of capacity building in RUFORUM M&E processes is to improve the performance of the Secretariat M&E system. At a minimum, M&E system performance includes the production of timely and quality data on processes and results as well as the use of data for evidence-informed decision-making in programme planning, programme improvement and resource allocation at all levels. M&E capacity building focuses on boosting the performance of the overall organization M&E system in 12 aspects (See Figure 12). These components are regularly reviewed to inform M&E capacity efforts.



RUFORUM adopts the CD matrix approach to defining and implementing capacity development for M&E. Table 9 summarizes the standard M&E capacity building levels and areas of focus.

Table 9: Definition of the levels and elements of M&E Capacity building needs at RUFORUM

Level of M&E Capacity Building	Definition	Capacity Elements
Individual Level	The individual level refers to the individual job performance and behaviours/actions of staff with M&E responsibilities at the RUFORUM Secretariat, member universities, National Forums and the entire network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ M&E job requirements ~ Skill levels and needs for the 12 M&E system components ~ Reporting and performance reviews ~ Accountability and career progression ~ Access to information, training / re-training ~ Professional networking
Organisational Level	The organisational level refers to the infrastructure and operations that need to be in place within RUFORUM to support the collection, verification and use of data for programme management and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Management process ~ Communication process ~ Human resource system and personnel structure ~ Financial resources ~ Information infrastructure ~ Organisational motivation
System Level	The system level refers to the	~ Policies, laws and regulatory actions that

	M&E functions across different units, member university, RUFORUM organs and partners and how they interact, as well as the supportive enabling environment, policy and legal environment for M&E.	govern the collection and use of capacity development or project/programme performance information ~ Resource generation and allocation for M&E ~ Systems for management and accountability ~ Resources, processes and activities across different units ~ Operationalization of M&E and Learning policy
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Strategies for M&E Capacity Building

Individual Level Strategies

Human capacity is one of the critical components required in the RUFORUM M&E system. In the context of M&E, this may take the form of M&E training, education for M&E, and human resource development for M&E. At the individual level, it is important for staff and other players to obtain and maintain the knowledge, skills and competencies (KSC) required to carry out the variety of duties for a particular M&E function for professional position or among a team of people responsible for M&E. The specific KSC requirements at the individual level that enable people or teams to contribute to the performance of each of the 12 main components the M&E system include:

- ~ Analytical skills; presentation; writing skills; communication skills; skills to interpret the programmatic implication of M&E data.
- ~ assessment procedures; modeling; information/data auditing/validation.
- ~ Behavioural/basic capacity building dynamics and processes related to M&E; process management and tracking systems; quantitative data collection and analysis; qualitative data collection and analysis; indicators selection/target setting; survey research, including questionnaire development; rapid
- ~ Emerging M&E approaches, tools and methodologies
- ~ Logic framework analysis and results formulation
- ~ M&E technical skills: Information systems; data use, including audience analysis; data use constraints analysis.
- ~ Managerial skills: M&E team leadership, teamwork and cooperation, presentation and communication skills, design of evaluation activities and ToR.
- ~ Project management, including budgeting; resource mobilisation; negotiation.

Individuals – most often as part of a team/organisation – can and should:

- ~ Develop and use a personal performance-review checklist as a job aide.
- ~ Make a case to their supervisor for participating in additional training and other capacity building activities such as mentoring, coaching and supportive supervision.
- ~ Obtain an in-depth understanding of the most recent standardised protocols, tools and guidelines to be able to design, conduct and/or critically review M&E activities.
- ~ Obtain training (on-the-job, off-the-job, short-term and/or long-term) on specific M&E methods.
- ~ Obtain train-the-trainer instruction to enhance their own presentation skills as a formal or informal trainer or communicator on M&E issues.
- ~ Regularly self-assess their own knowledge, skills and competencies in relationship to key responsibilities of the job and develop a personal capacity building plan, including needs and opportunities for training, re-training, mentoring and coaching in order to address areas that are deemed to be important for good job performance. This plan should not focus exclusively on technical KSC; it should also include general knowledge and skills such as basic computer knowledge and organisational skills.
- ~ Regularly update themselves with developments in M&E at universities, research institutions, the RUFORUM M&E systems and its MIS

- ~ Remain up-to-date on specific M&E methods, tools and guidelines as well as the general professional literature. Opportunities include regularly consulting guidelines or handbooks on M&E, visiting credible websites specialising in M&E resources and joining credible list serves that organise moderated discussions on M&E of capacity development programmes and networks.
- ~ Work with managers, supervisors, and/or peers to learn new skills or refine existing skills.

Organizational and System Level M&E Capacity Strategies

Capacity building interventions at the organisational and system levels are coupled at RUFORUM since the inherent synergy between interventions at these two levels often makes it difficult to determine which strategies and interventions are most relevant at each level. It is also maintained that efforts to build organisational capacity also benefit the system level and efforts to improve the system lead to improvements in the organisations that make up the system. These strategies are aimed at enhancing the overall performance of the M&E system. It captures ‘what we are aiming for’ in building system capacity, ‘how we get there,’ and ‘what the component/system should look like when we are done. Owing to resource constraints, when prioritising investment in the M&E system, the critical role of data use is considered. M&E data, regardless of who collects it, should be collected with the intent to use it for programme management, programme improvement and accountability. Consequently, capacity building for the use of M&E data is a priority for all units and partners.

Strategies for building capacity for dissemination and use of M&E data at system level:

- ~ Coordinating the efforts of the M&E from the PME unit with other units or organs responsible for data collection to develop a protocol for learning as a system and for data triangulation.
- ~ Developing and communicating a mandate for sharing data publicly and in a timely fashion.
- ~ Developing and implementing a communication strategy and plan for M&E products tailored to different audiences
- ~ Guidelines on data confidentiality and data release with explicit decision-making processes and authorities; support a mechanism for enforcing adherence.
- ~ Provide budgetary resources for supporting staff and activities focused on standard reporting formats and the reporting timetable.
- ~ Regular analysis of barriers to data use and feed results into a strategy to address these barriers through training, mentoring, leadership and/or defining new organisational procedures and standards, as appropriate.
- ~ Working with key players in the M&E system to develop a decision calendar (RUFORUM annual learning points) to identify key points in the year when critical decisions are made and data are needed to support decisions (Figure 13). This decision calendar is used regularly as a management tool for M&E.

What RUFORUM does to build organisational capacity for M&E?

- ~ Clear procedures for personnel hiring and training / re-training of existing staff focusing on performance goals.
- ~ Clear roles and responsibilities with respect to M&E within the organization, units and other organs, including well-defined job descriptions and their relationship to the overall performance goals for M&E.
- ~ Conducting participatory workshops and consultation to define routine mechanisms for (1) M&E planning and management and when designing M&E strategies, Annual work plans and budgets; (2) stakeholder coordination and consensus building; and, (3) for monitoring the performance of the M&E system
- ~ Conducting regular performance reviews – both individual and organisational – and providing incentives / rewards for good performance.
- ~ Defining and securing technical, human and financial resources to implement the organizational M&E capacity building work plan, including provision of leadership training and mentoring of junior staff by senior staff.

- ~ Defining basic organisational performance measures and (1) periodically coordinating organizational performance self-assessment, using a standard checklist and guidelines; (2) redefining the performance measures as needed; and, (3) facilitating the development of organizational capacity building work plan.
- ~ Introducing leadership development opportunities for M&E managers and implementers.
- ~ Standardizing and communicating M&E planning and management processes and procedures and applying them consistently.

A Feedback and Review Plan

The RUFORUM strategy sets out the measures to be taken to ensure timely decision-making by units and relevant management organs and other stakeholders based on monitoring and evaluation findings. Depending on the project, annual reviews, face-to-face and e-platforms are encouraged to allow for a participatory assessment of performance and results obtained to-date as well as for planning the next phase of implementation and M&E activities.

Participation, Key Roles and Responsibilities

All RUFORUM programme units (ICT, FAM, TQA, PME, NAG) have important roles in planning, monitoring and evaluating for results. The units have specific programmatic and project-based function in support of planning, monitoring and evaluation. The units develop specific strategies, project documents and annual work plans, including M&E framework for managing activities under them. They are also responsible for the collection of monitoring data, writing programme and project monitoring reports, and coordinating evaluations as planned in the evaluation plan. The units also implement management responses to evaluations with respect to unit activities.

In addition to the units, the RUFORUM organs have key responsibilities in supporting planning, monitoring and evaluation in the network:

- The *RUFORUM Management* provides corporate guidance as well as quality support and assurance on issues related to planning and corporate monitoring. The management also plays a key role in fostering a results-based management (RBM) culture. It leads the programme planning process and ensures that monitoring takes place and the resulting information is used to strengthen programme implementation. Management also ensures that decentralized evaluations are conducted and lessons learned from both decentralized and independent evaluations are taken into account in future planning.
- The *LAP* provides the strategic policy framework for programming, including monitoring, and provides advice and support to RUFORUM Secretariat in this regard.
- The *PME Unit* conducts independent evaluations and provides standards, guidance on procedures and quality assurance for 'RUFORUM-wide' evaluations. The PME unit also provides relevant programme units with direct advisory support in monitoring and evaluation
- At the *RUFORUM Member Universities*, a number of functions that support the overall M&E system are performed by the various contact organs and individuals:
 - Regional postgraduate programme coordinators are the custodians of M&E data channeled through them from various other actors in the university (students, lecturers, administrators, etc). The coordinators manage the feedback mechanisms for improving M&E and institutionalization of the regional programmes. They work closely with the deans and directors of postgraduate schools and international student offices to main the database and report on selected training and student welfare and research issues
 - The Principal Investigators (PI) of the graduate research grants (GRG) provide feedback through progress reports on the activities and results of the research supported by RUFORUM as well as student progress.
 - Deans, as members of RUFORUM Dean's committee and national FORUM's anchor the capacity building activities and represent RUFORUM in institutional review processes. By articulating national and university demand for capacity strengthening, the

deans support M&E through feedback and communication of commitment to institutional change from the universities.

- *National FORUMs* provide direct oversight regarding monitoring and evaluations carried out by member universities and partners at the country levels. They monitor the quality and implementation of planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- The *RUFORUM Board of Directors* plays an overarching role in shaping and approving the broader programmatic framework of RUFORUM. It also reviews regular monitoring reports on the programme’s performance, as provided by RUFORUM Secretariat, and evaluation reports on different aspects of RUFORUM programmes. Based on regular organizational reporting and evaluation findings and recommendations, it provides guidance and makes decisions on subsequent strategic programme planning.

The Annual Implementation Schedule

Within the M&E strategy the planned M&E activities are configured to the implementation schedule and budget. See Annex D for the template of the Annual Work Plan that include M&E activity plan and budget. The schedule of Monitoring activities and evaluation events are summarized in Figure 13.

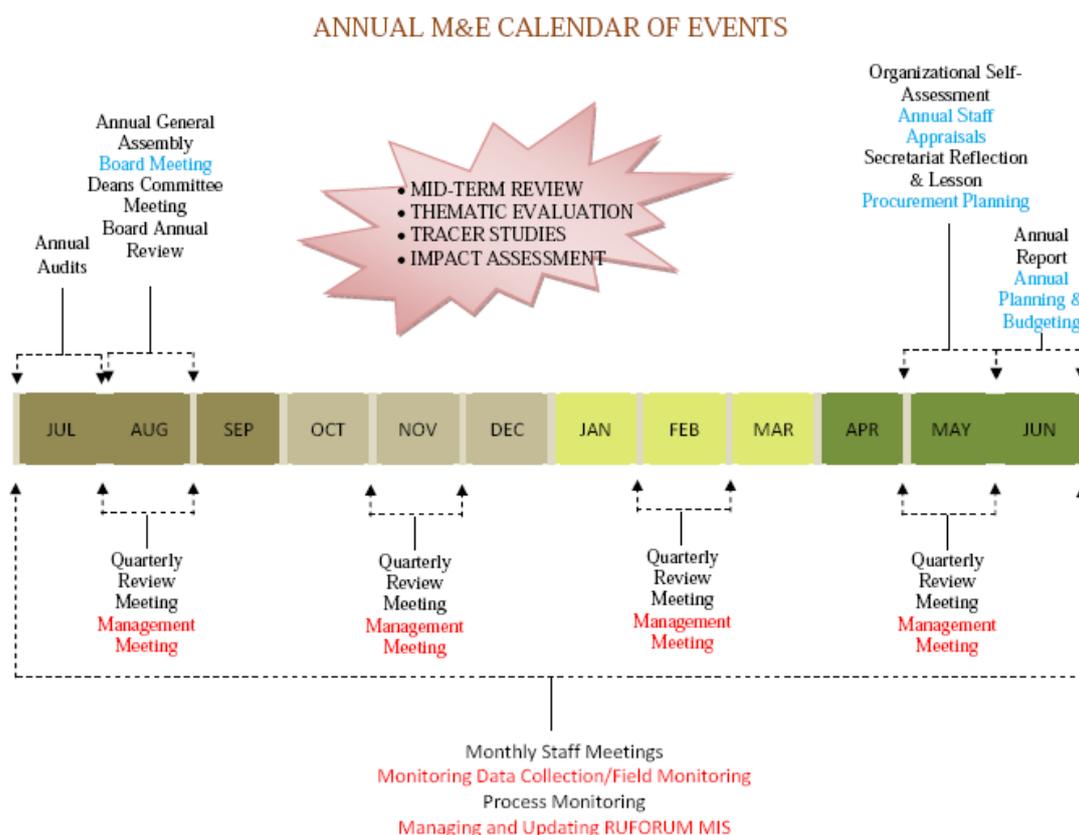


Figure 13: The annual monitoring and evaluation calendar with key RUFORUM learning points

Annual M&E Budget and Resources

Monitoring and evaluation activities at RUFORUM are considered part of organizational operations and adequate financial and human resources must be set aside to ensure good quality monitoring and evaluation. The required financial and human resources for monitoring and evaluation are to be considered within the overall costs of delivering the agreed capacity development results and not as additional costs. *Financial resources* for monitoring and evaluation are estimated realistically at the time of planning for monitoring and evaluation. In principle, each project should have two separate budget lines for its monitoring and evaluation agreed in advance with partners. This will help RUFORUM and its partners be more realistic in budgeting. It will also reduce the risk of running out of resources for evaluation, which often takes place towards the end of implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation *costs* associated with projects must be identified and be charged directly to the respective project/programme budgets with prior agreement among partners through inclusion in the project budget or Annual Work Plan (AWP) endorsed by all partners and approved by the Board. Since sourcing and securing financial resources for monitoring and evaluation of outcomes is often challenging, it is recommended that resources can be pulled together from relevant projects. Some additional possibilities include: (1) For RUFORUM core activities, the following mechanisms are in place for funding M&E work: (2) separate monitoring and evaluation budget for projects associated with an major evaluation types (mid-term), baseline, impact assessment, etc); (3) mobilizing funds from partners to fund thematic reviews; and (4) allocating the required M&E funds annually for each outcome on the basis of planned costs of monitoring and evaluation budget. All in all RUFORUM M&E operations are planned according to annual and long-term schedule and funds allocated accordingly

It is also recognized that **human resources** are critical for effective monitoring and evaluation, even after securing adequate financial resources. To assure high-quality monitoring and evaluation, RUFORUM has put in place: (1) dedicated staff time for M&E function (2) availing skilled personnel at the Secretariat and constantly building M&E capacity of staff; (3) setting up systematic monitoring frameworks and developing an evaluation plan; (4) meeting regularly (see M&E annual schedule/plan section) within the Secretariat and with key partners and stakeholders to assess progress towards achieving the results; (5) conducting joint field monitoring and evaluation missions to assess achievements and constraints at the universities; (6) identifying, documenting and sharing any lessons or good practices; (7) Identifying additional M&E capacity development needs among stakeholders and partners responsible for various aspects of RUFORUM M&E processes; and (8) reporting regularly on the result areas and seeking opportunities to influence policy and decision-making processes; (9) ensuring the quality of monitoring and evaluation work and providing guidance as needed; (10) regularly assessing the relevance of the M&E framework based on emerging capacity development priorities and changing agriculture and rural sector context.

In, for instance, designing an external evaluation exercise, the issues to consider in establishing the cost of the evaluation are stipulated in Box 7.

Box 7: Main issues to be considered in costing an evaluation exercise

Evaluators and other external advisers, and expenses related to their duties

Evaluation consultants and expert advisory panel members (if any)

- One evaluator or a team? How many in a team? What is the composition (national or international)?
- How many days will be required for each consultant and adviser?
- What would be the daily rate range for each one of them?
- Any cost associated with hiring?
- Are the advisory panel members paid (daily fees, honorarium)?

Travel requirements

- What types of travel expenses will be incurred? For example, how many times does the team need to travel to the country or field? What travel requirements exist for briefings in RUFORUM member universities, interviews with stakeholders, data collection activities, stakeholder meetings, etc.?
- What would be the primary mode of travel (air, project vehicle, etc.)? Is there a need for special modes of transportation due to accessibility and security considerations?
- For how many days and what are the allowances?

Requirements for consultations with stakeholders

- Are there regular meetings to discuss the progress of the evaluation? Will there be a meeting with wider stakeholders to discuss the findings and recommendations of the evaluation? How many and who will be invited? What would be the cost associated with renting venues, and bringing in stakeholders (allowances and travel expenses) and refreshments?

Data collection and analysis tools and methods

- What are methods of data collection? If surveys and/or questionnaires will be used, what is the target population and area to be covered? What resources are required (fees for enumerators, including their travel expenses, etc.)? Is there a need for researchers to complete a detailed analysis of data collected?
- Any supplies needed? For example, office supplies, computer software for data analysis, etc.

Communication costs

- What are the phone, Internet and fax usage requirements?
- If surveys or questionnaires are conducted, how will they be administered (mail, Internet, telephone, etc.)?
- Publication and dissemination of evaluation reports and other products, including
- Translation costs, if needed.
- Are there any resources allocated for incidentals?
- Are there partners for the evaluation? Is this evaluation cost-shared? What would be the cost to RUFORUM?

Monitoring and Evaluating the M&E System

RUFORUM M&E systems provides for unit, programmatic, project and organization-wide M&E coordination mechanism that is informed by benchmarks for capacity levels and operational indicators. In doing so the system offers plausible lines of questioning for the preliminary assessment of capacity and M&E practices as follows:

- Are there documented institutional or programme/project monitoring and evaluation policy that clarifies the mandates of monitoring and evaluation entities and programme or project teams/coordinators, their responsibilities, and accountability measures for effective data collection and data management of RUFORUM programmes or projects?
- Does the institutional and programme mandate require: establishing standard tools and templates, aligning organizational data with donor data requirements, defining standards for monitoring and evaluating skills, and ensuring proper training?
- Are sufficient resources, including availability of skilled staff and financial resources, allocated for monitoring and evaluation activities in respective monitoring and evaluation entities? Do monitoring staff have proper statistical and analytical skills to compile and analyse sample and snapshot data?
- Are external evaluations truly independent from management and subject to evaluation? What is the reporting line of those responsible for carrying out evaluations? What mechanisms are there to safeguard the independence of the evaluation function?

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Glossary³

<i>Accountability</i>	Obligation of government, public services or funding agencies to demonstrate to citizens that contracted work has been conducted in compliance with agreed rules and standards or to report fairly and accurately on performance results vis-à-vis mandated roles and/or plans. This may require a careful, even legally defensible, demonstration that the work is consistent with the contract terms. Projects commonly focus on upward accountability to the funding agency, while downward accountability involves making accounts and plans transparent to the primary stakeholders. Ensuring accountability is one part of the function of monitoring and evaluation (learning and management are the other two).
<i>Activity</i>	Actions taken or work performed in a project to produce specific outputs by using inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources.
<i>Adaptive management</i>	A process that integrates project design, management and monitoring to provide a framework for testing assumptions, adaptation and learning.
<i>Annual review</i>	See "Review".
<i>Annual work plan and budget (AWPB)</i>	The annual commitment of the project towards the RUFORUM strategic goals upon which implementation progress will be measured. It details the operational aspects of a unit/programme or project, based on the strategic plan and the situation at the Secretariat. It is the basis for the detailed scheduling of activities and specific assignments in monthly management meetings. It is also the foundation for monitoring progress at the activity level and regarding resource use/allocation. Importantly, in the more demand-driven projects, the AWPB is also the formal (and legal) expression of the consolidated set of projects and initiatives of the primary stakeholders that will be supported over the coming year.
<i>Appraisal</i>	Assessment, in accordance with established decision criteria, of the feasibility and acceptability of a project or programme prior to a funding commitment. Criteria commonly include relevance and sustainability. An appraisal may also relate to the examination of opinions as part of the process for selecting which project to fund.
<i>Appraisal report</i>	The document that results from the appraisal mission and serves as the basis for project operational planning and annual planning. It is the overall framework (but not a blueprint) for the project strategy.
<i>Assessment</i>	A process (which may or may not be systematic) of gathering information, analysing it, then making a judgment on the basis of the information.
<i>Assumption</i>	External factors (i.e. events, conditions or decisions) that could affect the progress or success of a project or programme. They are necessary to achieve the project objectives, but are largely or completely beyond the control of the project management. They are worded as positive conditions. Initial assumptions are those conditions perceived to be essential for the success of a project or programme. Critical (or "killer") assumptions are those conditions perceived to threaten the implementation of a project or programme.

³ The listing of terminology has been compiled to ensure consistency in their use and common reference to guide common approaches to M&E. It is based on similar glossary and organizational definitions including the compendiums by ASARECA, the World Bank, IFPRI, IFAD and others. They have been contextualized for RUFORUM use.

<i>Attribution</i>	The causal link of one thing to another; e.g. the extent to which observed (or expected to be observed) changes can be linked to a specific intervention in view of the effects of other interventions or confounding factors.
<i>Audit</i>	Verification of the legality and regularity of the implementation of resources, carried out by independent auditors. An audit determines whether, and to what extent, the activities and organisational procedures conform to norms and criteria set out in advance. An audit helps RUFORUM accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and government processes. In an internal audit the auditors report to RUFORUM, while in an external audit the auditors report to either the board (when requested) or other development partners who fund specific activities.
<i>Baseline information</i>	Information – usually consisting of facts and figures collected at the initial stages of a project – that provides a basis for measuring progress in achieving project objectives and outputs.
<i>Baseline survey/study</i>	An analysis describing the situation in a project area – including data on individual stakeholders – prior to a development intervention. Progress (results and accomplishments) can be assessed and comparisons made against it. It also serves as an important reference for the completion evaluation.
<i>Benchmark</i>	Reference point or standard against which performance or achievements can be compared. A benchmark might refer to what has been achieved in the past, by other comparable organizations or networks, or what could reasonably have been achieved under the circumstances.
<i>Beneficiaries</i>	The individuals, groups or organisations who, in their own view and whether targeted or not, benefit directly or indirectly from the capacity development intervention. In this Guide, they are referred to as the target group or primary stakeholders of a project.
<i>Capacity</i>	The ability of individuals and organisations to perform functions effectively, efficiently and in a sustainable manner.
<i>Capacity – building</i>	The processes through which capacity is created or strengthened.
<i>Causal relationship</i>	A logical connection or cause-and-effect linkage existing in the achievement of related, interdependent results. Generally the term refers to plausible linkages, not statistically accurate relationships.
<i>Causality analysis</i>	The study of cause-and-effect relations that link a project to its impacts.
<i>Completion</i>	The final phase in the project cycle, when a project completion report is produced. "Lessons learned" are identified and the various project completion activities take place. It can include an end-of-project evaluation.
<i>Completion evaluation</i>	An external evaluation that occurs after project completion.
<i>Completion report</i>	See "Project completion report".
<i>Conceptual</i>	A diagram of a set of relationships between factors that are believed to impact or lead to a target condition. It is the foundation of project design, management

<i>model</i>	and monitoring; and it is the first part of a complete project plan.
<i>Cost-benefit analysis (CBA)</i>	The comparison of investment and operating costs with the direct benefits or impact generated by the investment in a given intervention. It uses a variety of methods and means of expressing results.
<i>Cost effectiveness</i>	Comparison of the relative costs of achieving a given result or output by different means (employed where benefits are difficult to determine).
<i>Critical assumption</i>	An important factor, outside of aid itself, that influences the success of the activity, but over which the manager has no influence. Initial assumptions constitute perceived conditions for the success of a project. See "Assumptions".
<i>Downward accountability</i>	The process by which a project is accountable to the partners and universities. It entails greater participation and transparency in RUFORUM'S work.
<i>Effect</i>	Intended or unintended change resulting directly or indirectly from a Capacity development intervention.
<i>Effectiveness</i>	A measure of the extent to which a project attains its objectives at the goal or purpose level; i.e. the extent to which a capacity development intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way.
<i>Efficacy</i>	The extent to which the project's objectives were achieved or expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.
<i>Efficiency</i>	A measure of how economically inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into outputs.
<i>Evaluability</i>	The extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.
<i>Evaluation</i>	A systematic (and as objective as possible) examination of a planned, ongoing or completed project. It aims to answer specific management questions and to judge the overall value of an endeavour and supply lessons learned to improve future actions, planning and decision-making. Evaluations commonly seek to determine the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and the relevance of the project or organisation's objectives. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, offering concrete lessons learned to help partners and funding agencies make decisions.
<i>External evaluation</i>	Evaluation of a project carried out by RUFORUM and implementing partners by outside experts, consultants or agencies of development partners.
<i>Feedback</i>	The transmission of evaluation findings to parties for whom it is relevant and useful so as to facilitate learning. This may involve the collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from experience. Specifically in the context of evaluation, to return and share the evaluation results with those who participated in the evaluation.
<i>Formative evaluation</i>	Evaluation conducted during implementation to improve performance. It is intended for managers and direct supporters of a project.
<i>Goal</i>	The higher-order programme or sector objective to which a capacity development intervention, such as a project, is intended to contribute. Thus it is a statement of intent.

<i>Horizontal logic</i>	A summary of the project approach whose objective in a logframe is to define how objectives specified in the project description will be measured and the means by which the measurement will be verified. In this Guide, it is a summary of the M&E matrix
<i>Impact</i>	The long-term changes in the social, political, environmental, economic status of target groups, as perceived by them and their partners at the time of evaluation, plus sustainability-enhancing change in their environment to which the project has contributed. Changes can be positive or negative, intended or unintended. In the logframe terminology these "perceived changes" may correspond either to the purpose level or to the goal level of a project intervention.
<i>Impact assessment</i>	The process of assessing the impact of a programme or project.
<i>Implementing partners</i>	Those organisations either sub-contracted by RUFORUM or those organisations officially identified in the project design as responsible for co-implementing a defined aspect of the project. Also known as "co-implementing partners".
<i>Independent evaluation</i>	See "External evaluation". An evaluation carried out by entities and persons free of control by those responsible for the design and implementation of the capacity development intervention.
<i>Indicator</i>	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable basis for assessing achievement, change or performance. A unit of information measured over time that can help show changes in a specific condition. A given goal or objective can have multiple indicators.
<i>Indirect effects</i>	The unplanned changes brought about as a result of the intervention.
<i>Information management system</i>	A system of inputting, collating and organising data that should provide selective data and reports to the management, to assist in monitoring and controlling the project, resources, activities and results.
<i>Input</i>	The financial, human and material resources necessary to produce the intended outputs of a project.
<i>Intervention logic</i>	See "Objective hierarchy".
<i>Interim evaluation</i>	A project evaluation undertaken by RUFORUM or an outside entity/expert toward the end of the project implementation period when partners are considering plans for a second phase or a new project.
<i>Joint evaluation</i>	An evaluation to which different institutions and/or partners contribute.
<i>Learning</i>	Reflecting on experience to identify how a situation or future actions could be improved and then using this knowledge to make actual improvements. This can be individual or group-based. Learning involves applying lessons learned to future actions, which provides the basis for another cycle of learning.
<i>Lessons learned</i>	Knowledge generated by reflecting on experience that has the potential to improve future actions. A lesson learned summarises knowledge at a point in time, while learning is an ongoing process.
<i>Logical</i>	An analytical, presentational and management tool that involves problem

<i>framework approach (LFA)</i>	analysis, stakeholder analysis, developing a hierarchy of objectives and selecting a preferred implementation strategy. It helps to identify strategic elements (inputs, outputs, purpose, goal) and their causal relationships, as well as the external assumptions (risks) that may influence success and failure. It thus facilitates planning, execution and evaluation of a project.
<i>Logical framework matrix</i>	Also known as "logframe" or "logframe matrix". A table, usually consisting of four rows and four columns, that summarises what the project intends to do and how (necessary inputs, outputs, purpose, objectives), what the key assumptions are, and how outputs and outcomes will be monitored and evaluated.
<i>Managing for impact model</i>	The process of guiding the overall project strategy, creating a learning environment, and ensuring effective project operations by developing and using an effective M&E system.
<i>Management information system</i>	See "Information management system".
<i>Means of verification</i>	The expected source(s) of information that can help answer the performance question or indicators. This is found in the third column of the standard logframe. It is detailed further in the M&E Matrix
<i>Mid-term evaluation</i>	An external evaluation performed towards the middle of the period of implementation of the project, whose principal goal is to draw conclusions for reorienting the project strategy.
<i>Mid-term review (MTR)</i>	An elaborate version of a supervision mission, with the same actors, that sometimes questions the design of the project. There is no standardized format and so can range from a supervision mission to a full-scale mid-term evaluation-like exercise.
<i>Monitoring</i>	The regular collection and analysis of information to assist timely decision making, ensure accountability and provide the basis for evaluation and learning. It is a continuing function that uses methodical collection of data to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing project or programme with early indications of progress and achievement of objectives.
<i>Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)</i>	The combination of monitoring and evaluation which together provide the knowledge required for: a) effective project management and b) reporting and accountability responsibilities.
<i>M&E framework</i>	An overview of the M&E system developed during the design phase of a project and included in the project implementation plan and appraisal documents
<i>M&E matrix</i>	A table describing the performance questions, information gathering requirements (including indicators), reflection and review events with stakeholders, and resources and activities required to implement a functional M&E system. This matrix lists how data will be collected, when, by whom and where.
<i>M&E (learning) plan</i>	An overall framework of performance and learning questions, information gathering requirements (including indicators), reflection and review events with stakeholders, and resources and activities required to implement a functional M&E system.

<i>M&E (learning) system</i>	The set of planning, information gathering and synthesis, and reflection and reporting processes, along with the necessary supporting conditions and capacities required for the M&E outputs to make a valuable contribution to project decision-making and learning.
<i>Narrative summary</i>	The first column of the logframe matrix in which the inputs, outputs, purpose and goal are formulated. See "Objective Hierarchy".
<i>Objective</i>	A specific statement detailing the desired accomplishments or outcomes of a project at different levels (short to long term). A good objective meets the criteria of being impact oriented, measurable, time limited, specific and practical. Objectives can be arranged in a hierarchy of two or more levels (see "Objective hierarchy").
<i>Objective hierarchy</i>	The different levels of objectives, from activities up to goal, as specified in the first column of the logframe. If the project is designed well, realisation of each level of objectives in the hierarchy should lead to fulfillment of the project goal.
<i>Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI)</i>	A group of criteria (not necessarily measurable) used to verify the degree of accomplishment (foreseen or actual) of the sectoral purpose, the objective, and the inputs and outputs of a project. They can be quantitative, and therefore both verifiable and measurable, or qualitative, and therefore only verifiable.
<i>Operational plan</i>	See "Annual work plan and budget".
<i>Outcome</i>	The results achieved at the level of "purpose" in the objective hierarchy. Outcome is part of impact (result at purpose and goal level).
<i>Outputs</i>	The tangible (easily measurable, practical), immediate and intended results to be produced through sound management of the agreed inputs. Examples of outputs include goods, services or skills, capacities, reports produced by a project and meant to help realise its purpose. These may also include changes, resulting from the intervention, that are needed to achieve the outcomes at the purpose level.
<i>Output indicators</i>	Indicator at the output level of the objective hierarchy, usually the quantity and quality of outputs and the timing of their delivery.
<i>Participation</i>	One or more processes in which an individual (or group) takes part in specific decision-making and action, and over which s/he may exercise specific controls.
<i>Participatory evaluation</i>	A broad term for the involvement of primary and other stakeholders in evaluation. The primary focus may be the information needs of stakeholders rather than the donor.
<i>Performance</i>	The degree to which a development intervention or a development partner operates according to specific criteria/standards/guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans.
<i>Performance question</i>	A question that helps guide the information seeking and analysis process, to help understand whether the project is performing as planned or, if not, why not.
<i>Primary stakeholders</i>	The main intended beneficiaries of a project.
<i>Process</i>	An evaluation aimed at describing and understanding the internal dynamics and

<i>evaluation</i>	relationships of a project, programme or institution.
<i>Process monitoring</i>	The activities of consciously selecting processes, selectively and systematically observing them to compare them with others, and communicating about what has been observed to learn how to steer and shape the processes.
<i>Project</i>	An intervention that consists of a set of planned, interrelated activities designed to achieve defined objectives within a given budget and a specified period of time.
<i>Project completion report</i>	The report that describes the situation at the end of a development intervention, including lessons learned.
<i>Project cycle management</i>	A tool for understanding the tasks and management functions to be performed in the course of a project or programme's lifetime. This commonly includes the stages of identification, preparation, appraisal, implementation/supervision, evaluation, completion and lesson learning.
<i>Project evaluation</i>	Evaluation of an individually planned capacity development intervention designed to achieve specific objectives within a given budget and time period.
<i>Project impacts</i>	The changes in a situation that arise from the combined effects of project activities, or the extent to which the goal or highest-level project objectives are achieved. Impact also refers to any unintended positive or negative changes that result from a project. Impact sometimes means anything achieved by the project beyond direct outputs.
<i>Project implementation manual</i>	A project-specific document that sets out the project strategy, operational activities, steps and procedures, and responsibilities of key stakeholders. This often includes a detailed M&E operational plan.
<i>Project management</i>	The process of leading, planning, organising, staffing and controlling activities, people and other resources in order to achieve particular project objectives.
<i>Project performance</i>	The overall quality of a project in terms of its impact, value to target groups, implementation effectiveness, and efficiency and sustainability.
<i>Project strategy</i>	An overall framework of what a project will achieve and how it will be implemented.
<i>Proxy indicator</i>	An appropriate indicator that is used to represent a less easily measurable one.
<i>Purpose</i>	The positive improved situation that a project or programme is accountable for achieving.
<i>Relevance</i>	The extent to which the objectives of a project are consistent with the target group's priorities and the recipient and donors' policies.
<i>Reliability</i>	Consistency or dependability of data and evaluation judgements, with reference to the quality of the instruments, procedures and analyses used to collect and interpret evaluation data. Information is reliable when repeated observations using the same instrument under identical conditions produce similar results.
<i>Resources</i>	Items that a project has or needs in order to operate, such as staff time, managerial time, local knowledge, money, equipment, trained personnel and socio-political opportunities.
<i>Result</i>	The measurable output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive or

	negative) of a development intervention.
<i>Review</i>	An assessment of the performance of a project or programme, periodically or on an as-needed basis. A review is more extensive than monitoring, but less so than evaluation.
<i>Risk</i>	Possible negative external factors, i.e. events, conditions or decisions, which are expected to seriously delay or prevent the achievement of the project objectives and outputs (and which are normally largely or completely beyond the control of the project management).
<i>Self-evaluation</i>	An evaluation by those who are administering or participating in a programme or project in the field and/or by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of (part of) a development intervention. As with any evaluation, a self-evaluation focuses on overall impact and performance, or specific aspects thereof.
<i>Situation analysis</i>	The process of understanding the status, condition, trends and key issues affecting people, ecosystems and institutions in a given geographic context at any level (local, national, regional, international).
<i>Strategic planning</i>	A broad description of the activities that would normally be carried out as part of project development, from start to finish, and the milestones that would generally be achieved along the way, such as implementation agreements, registration, etc. The plan should also explain the different aspects that need to be addressed as part of project development, and illustrate basic principles that are to be followed. The sequence of and relationship between main activities and milestones should also be described. The appraisal report should be used as a starting point for refinement of the strategic plan as well as detailed operational planning.
<i>Sustainability</i>	The likelihood that the positive effects of a project (such as assets, skills, facilities or improved services) will persist for an extended period after the external assistance ends.
<i>Target group</i>	The specific group for whose benefit the project or programme is undertaken, closely related to impact and relevance.
<i>Triangulation</i>	Use of a variety of sources, methods or field team members to cross check and validate data and information to limit biases.
<i>Validity</i>	The extent to which something is reliable and actually measures up to or makes a correct claim. This includes data collection strategies and instruments.
<i>Validation</i>	The process of cross-checking to ensure that the data obtained from one monitoring method are confirmed by the data obtained from a different method.
<i>Vertical logic</i>	A summary of the project that spells out the causal relationships between, on the one hand, each level of the objective hierarchy (inputs-outputs, outputs-purpose, purpose-goal) and, on the other, the critical assumptions and uncertainties that affect these linkages and lie outside the project manager's control.
<i>Work plan</i>	A detailed document stating which activities are going to be carried out in a given time period, how the activities will be carried out and how the activities relate to the common objectives and vision. The work plan is designed

according to the logical framework and contains a description in each cell of the work plan table of each activity and output, its verifiable indicators, the means of verification and its assumptions.

Annexes

ANNEX A: RUFORUM CORPORATE LOGFRAME/RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Hierarchy of objectives	Objectively Verifiable indicators (OVIs)	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Super Goal			
Contribute to increased economic growth and improved livelihoods of Africa's poor and disadvantaged people in the ECSA region while enhancing the quality of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction by half the proportion of household living below the poverty line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COMESA, SADC, and other regional organization reports - UN human development indicators and reports - National / Government statistics & reports - NEPAD, World Bank, ADB, Economic Commission for Africa statistics and reports - Reports on achievement of MDGs 	
Goal / Impact			
Contribute to enhanced capacity of African agricultural research, training and advisory services (AAS) institutions to implement the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6% increase in agricultural productivity - Increased number of agricultural professionals (gender disaggregated) fostering change by facilitating agricultural growth and development in various capacities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National / Government statistics & reports - Economic Commission for Africa statistics and reports - NEPAD, CAADP and other regional organization reports - Evaluation and impact assessment reports - AAU, FARA, ASARECA reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevant regional and national policies are properly implemented - Governments continue to support agriculture and higher education as priorities - Trade between and across African countries continue to improve
Purpose / Outcome			
Enhanced capacity of African universities to produce competent graduates and conduct high-quality research, responsive to the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations, agricultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased beneficiary (employers) satisfaction with agricultural graduates (gender disaggregated) by June 2016 - Increased number of high performing Master's and Ph.D. graduates (gender disaggregated) who are responsive to farmers demands and national / regional development goals by June 2016 - By 2015, at least 8 of the RUFORUM member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline survey - Various thematic assessment and case study reports - RUFORUM impact evaluation reports - Tracer study reports - National / Government reports - Client Satisfaction Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agriculture continues to be seen as the engine of economic development and agricultural tertiary education remains high in the priorities of governments - Commitment for implementation of Country CAADP compacts remains from key partners - Global trends favour investments in

Hierarchy of objectives	Objectively Verifiable indicators (OVIs)	Means of Verification	Assumptions
growth and development	universities have reviewed agriculture curriculum and pedagogy to reflect new teaching and learning needs meeting the 21 st century socio-geopolitical landscape	Reports	agriculture - Complementary organizations i.e. local government and other ministries, policy makers implement their responsibilities
Results			
1. Capacity of African universities to train high calibre graduates and to support rural based agricultural innovation enhanced	<p>1.1. 800 MSc and 150 PhD students trained in agricultural related sciences between 2006 and June 2016, of which both males and females represent at least 30%</p> <p>1.2. Increasing level of university institutional and staff engagement with new teaching and learning approaches (problem solving, e-learning, field attachments, action research) over the years to 2015</p> <p>1.3. At least 8 technologies / information / knowledge packs responsive to client demands produced annually by 2015</p> <p>1.4. By 2015, at least 25 university agricultural faculty have established linkages with various value chain actors for the purpose of training, research and/or AAS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research project progress reports - RUFORUM annual reports - Journals - Flyers / brochures / leaflets / booklets / newsletters - Inventory of technologies / innovations - University annual reports - Partner reports - Various (thematic) MIS reports - National Forum Reports - Inventory of Alumni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market opportunities prevail - Universities continue to have socio-political support - Adequate human, financial, and physical resources maintained within the universities and other partner organisations
2. Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and lesson learning structures and systems strengthened	<p>2.1. At least one (thematic) study / evaluation / review undertaken annually and findings used for performance improvement</p> <p>2.2. The RUFORUM management information system regularly up-dated and used for decision making purposes</p> <p>2.3. Increasing numbers of various types of publications/stories on lessons learnt, outcomes and impacts over the years to 2015</p> <p>2.4. At least 5 evidenced based policy briefs developed by 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - M&E strategy /framework - RUFORUM Annual Reports - RUFORUM (thematic) Evaluation reports - Tracer study reports - Various MIS reports - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate human, financial and physical resources are maintained within the universities and other partner organisations

Hierarchy of objectives	Objectively Verifiable indicators (OVIs)	Means of Verification	Assumptions
3. The use of ICT harnessed for improved performance at the secretariat and universities	<p>3.1. Increasing numbers of agricultural faculty and alumni actively interacting around key thematic areas including through ICT enabled platforms by 2015</p> <p>3.2. At least fifty 3-credit hour agricultural courses developed as e-content by 2015</p> <p>3.3. The RUFORUM Management Information Systems Modules implemented by 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive and user-friendly website - Management Information System - Teaching Content shared as open educational resources - ICT Audit Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Universities continue to appreciate the value addition of ICT enabled teaching and learning and show commitment through adaptive ICT policies and strategies - ICT remains the main vehicle for communication - Supportive national government policies are in tandem with needs for ICT use in universities - The on-going global ICT infrastructural initiatives bear fruit to the region in terms of reach, bandwidth, cost and access
4. RUFORUM governance and management structures and systems strengthened	<p>4.1. Increasing amounts of financial resources mobilized to support the RUFORUM networking activities by June 2016</p> <p>4.2. Systems and procedures to support RUFORUM business operations as assessed annually as functioning effectively and efficiently</p> <p>4.3. Various RUFORUM organs (IAP, Board, TC, NF) annually operating effectively</p> <p>4.4. RUFORUM network progressively operating as a dynamic platform for policy advocacy, resource mobilisation, and exchange of agricultural information and knowledge by 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RUFORUM Constitution and Governance Manual - RUFORUM Operational Manuals - RUFORUM financial and audit reports - RUFORUM Annual Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate stewardship and oversight provided by the governance body - Regional and national mechanisms for approval of technologies/ innovations/ policies exist.

RUFORUM Activities 2011-2016

Super Goal

Contribute to increased economic growth and improved livelihoods of Africa's poor and disadvantaged people in the ECSA region while enhancing the quality of the environment

Goal / Impact

Contribute to enhanced capacity of African agricultural research, training and advisory services (AAS) institutions to implement the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)

Purpose / Outcome

Enhanced capacity of African universities to produce competent graduates and conduct high-quality research, responsive to the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations, agricultural growth and development

Results	Activities	Budget
1. Capacity of African universities to train high calibre graduates and to support rural based agricultural innovation enhanced	1.1. Implement the RUFORUM Competitive Grants Scheme (CGS)	
	1.2. Provide Institutional Grants for strengthening weak departments and for emerging issues	
	1.3. Commission Community Action Research by University Teams	
	1.4. Support the coordination and implementation of regional MSc and PhD programmes	
	1.5. Commission field attachments	
	1.6. Support training in research methods	
	1.7. Promote female participation	
	1.8. Quality assure graduate agricultural training in network universities	
	1.9. Building curriculum in emerging critical areas	
	1.10. Skills enhancement of individuals staff and students	
	1.11. Professional community building	
2. Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and lesson learning structures and systems strengthened	2.1. Carry out various strategy and planning activities	
	2.2. Undertake performance improvement and lesson learning activities	
	2.3. Conduct various evaluations / reviews / impact studies	
	2.4. Disseminate M&E findings	
	2.5. Disseminate research findings, information, knowledge, and technology	
	2.6. Undertake advocacy activities	
3. The use of ICT harnessed for improved performance at the secretariat and universities	3.1. Support the implementation of technology-mediated learning, teaching, research, and communication	
	3.2. Develop RUFORUM network's capacity to create and use open educational resources	
	3.3. Support the improvement of dissemination of African agricultural research information through ICT	
	3.4. Build RUFORUM capacity to manage the information needs of the network	
4. RUFORUM governance and management structures and systems strengthened	4.1. Strengthen and ensure functionality of the RUFORUM governance structures	
	4.2. Strengthen and ensure functionality of the RUFORUM Secretariat	
	4.3. Strengthen partnerships and networking for economies of scale and scope	
	4.4. Support the establishment and/or strengthening of the National Forums	
	4.5. Support to activities for development and growth of RUFORUM	
	4.6. Undertake resource mobilisation activities	

ANNEX B: RUFORUM INDICATOR REFERENCE MATRIX

See Separate Document

ANNEX C: GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING TOR FOR EVALUATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Within RUFORUM, A Terms of Reference (ToR) — also known as a Scope of Work — is a plan or blueprint outlining the key elements of the purpose, scope, process and products of an M&E activity or assignment, including management and technical aspects as necessary.

Developing a ToR constitutes a critical early step in any evaluation. In the narrowest sense, it is the basis for contractual arrangements with external consultants. It is first developed as a means of clarifying expectations, roles and responsibilities among different capacity building stakeholders, providing the plan for the overall activity, including follow-up and judging and selecting consultants or teams to engage. RUFORUM M&E strategy requires that adequate time and effort be spent in preparing a good ToR in order to have quality, relevant and useful M&E product.

The depth and details in the ToR varies with the programme/project, timing, purpose and nature of the evaluation. The ToR for an externally facilitated programme evaluation involving numerous stakeholders has to be detailed, while for an internal evaluation of an activity could be just a simple outline.

For collaborative projects and programmes, ToRs are to be developed in stages. In programme evaluation, stakeholders' first discussions will focus on the details on purpose and evaluation questions. A further developed version used for recruiting external consultants requires more detail on existing information sources, team composition, procedures and products, but may describe methodology and a calendar of activities only in broad terms. The ToR may be further refined once an evaluation team is on board, with a careful review of the purpose and key questions and corresponding elaboration of methodology.

We value ToRs as they are important:

For all stakeholders

- They explain the agreed expectations in terms of the parameters and process of the exercise, and are a guide to each stakeholder's specific role.

For the evaluation or assessment/M&E team

- They ensure that expectations are clear. They provide a reference to check back on whether the objectives are met.
- External teams may require more detail on background context and on intended audiences and uses; internal teams may simply need to clarify the parameters of the assignment.

For RUFORUM unit/project coordinators/managers guide of M/E activities

- They are a place to establish performance standards (e.g. reference to specific policies, standards).
- They are a means of building desired good practice into the process of the M/E activity (e.g. establishing a stakeholder consultation workshop in the methodology).
- They establish opportunities for quality control (e.g. presentation and review of intermediate products).

CONTENT OF M&E TOR

The following can also be used for a project or activity-level evaluation.

Title

- Identifying what is being evaluated. Must use appropriate programme/project/unit titles. The time period covered by the evaluation to be covered.

Background

- Briefly description of the history and current status of RUFORUM, including objectives, logic of programme design or expected results chain, duration, budget, activities.
- Situating reference to the RUFORUM's overarching country programme, as well as parallel or linked national programmes.

- Situating the important stakeholders, including donors, partners, implementing agencies/organisations in the context of M&E exercise at hand.

Purpose of the evaluation

- Why the programme is being evaluated.
- How the evaluation process and/or results will be used and what value added they will bring.
- Identification of the key users/target audiences.
- Situating the timing and focus of the evaluation in relation to any particular decision-making event (e.g. review meeting, consultation, planning activity, national conference) and/or the evolution of the programme.

Scope and focus

- An “objectives” format can be used with or instead of evaluation questions. Where both are used, one objective is usually discussed through a number of questions.
- List the major questions the evaluation should answer — they should relate to the purpose and be precisely stated so that they guide the evaluator in terms of information needs and data to collect. Group and prioritise the questions. They should be realistic and achievable.
- Specify evaluation criteria to be used given the evaluation’s objectives and scope. Evaluations should use standard M&E criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, quality, financial viability, sustainability and impact) as well as additional criteria for evaluation of capacity building initiatives response (coverage, relevance, cost-effectiveness, co-ordination, coherence and capacity needs). An explanation for the criteria selected and those considered not applicable should be given and discussed with the evaluation team
- Evaluations of RUFORUM-supported postgraduate programmes should include two-additional criteria – institutionalization and programme/results based management system/strategies.
- Include a cost analysis of the programme. Good cost analysis strengthens results-based management and increases the utility of the evaluation.
- Specify key policies and performance standards or benchmarks to be referenced in evaluating the programme, including international standards.

Existing information sources

- Identify relevant information sources that exist and are available, such as monitoring systems and/or previous evaluations. Provide an appraisal of quality and reliability.

Evaluation process and methods

- Describe overall flow of the evaluation process — sequence of key stages.
- Describe the overall evaluation approach and data collection methods proposed to answer the evaluation questions. An initial broad outline can be developed further with the evaluation team. Ultimately it should be appropriate and adequate providing a complete and fair analysis. The final TOR should define:
 - Information sources for new data collection
 - Sampling approaches for different methods, including area and population to be represented, procedures to be used and sampling size (where information is to be gathered from those who benefited from the programme, information should also be gathered from eligible persons not reached.)
 - The level of precision required
 - Data collection instruments
 - Types of data analysis
 - Expected measures put in place to ensure that the evaluation process is ethical and that participants in the evaluation – e.g. interviewees, sources -- will be protected
- Highlight any process results expected, e.g. networks strengthened, mechanisms for dialogue established, common analysis established among different groups of stakeholders.
- Specify any key intermediate tasks that evaluator(s) are responsible for carrying out, and a preliminary schedule for completion. Consider for example:
 - Meetings, consultation, workshops with different groups of stakeholders
 - Key points of interaction with a steering committee

- Process for verification of findings with key stakeholders
- Presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations.

Stakeholder participation

- Specify involvement of key stakeholders as appropriate providing a sound rationale — consider internal stakeholders (at RUFORUM secretariat and Universities) and external stakeholders (including RUFORUM partners, donor representatives, etc). Roles might include liaison, technical advisory roles, observer roles, etc., or more active participation in planning and design, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination, follow-up.
- Specify expectations in terms of involvement of, or consultation with, primary stakeholders. Be clear about where they would participate, i.e. in planning and design, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination, and/or follow-up.

Accountabilities

- Specify the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation team leader and team members, as well as other stakeholders and advisory structures involved, e.g. steering committees. This section should clarify who is responsible for:
 - Liaison with the evaluation team
 - Providing technical guidance
 - Co-ordinating the stakeholders involved
 - Selection, orientation and training of team members, data collection assistants where applicable, interpreters
 - Approval of intermediate and final products
 - Capacity-building with stakeholders, regional, national or other (a possible responsibility of the evaluation team).
 - Specify any concerns or restrictions related to conflicts of interest.

Evaluation team composition

- Identify the composition and competencies of the evaluation team. This should follow from the evaluation focus, methods, and analyses required. Distinguish between desired and mandatory competencies, as well as whether competencies are required by the whole team or by certain members.
- Multidisciplinary teams are often appropriate. The qualifications and skill areas to be specified could include:
 - Areas of technical competence (sector, issue areas)
 - Language proficiency
 - In-country or regional work experience
 - Evaluation methods and data-collection skills
 - Analytical skills and frameworks, such as gender analysis
 - Process management skills, such as facilitation skills
 - Gender mix if any (not to be confused with gender analysis skills).

Procedures and logistics

- Specify as necessary logistical issues related to staffing and working conditions:
- Availability and provision of services (local translators, interviewers, data processors, drivers)
- Availability and provision of office space, cars, laptops, tape recorders, and procedures for arranging meetings, requirements for debriefings
- Work schedule (hours, days, holidays) and special considerations such as in emergencies (e.g. often a 7-day work week is combined with any breaks)
- Special procedures, for example on relations with media, farmers, students and other stakeholders
- Seasonal constraints, travel constraints/conditions and socio-cultural conditions that may influence data collection
- Reporting requirements apart from products to be delivered (e.g. as accompanying invoices)

Products

- List products to be delivered, to whom and when. Consider:

- The evaluation report
- Completed data sets (filled out questionnaires or surveys)
- Dissemination materials (newsletter articles, two-page summaries, presentation materials)
- For RUFORUM, evaluation consultants should be required to provide all of the information for the network in the require formats
- Assessment of the evaluation methodology, including a discussion of the limitations.
- Specify the format for deliverables, including software, number of hard copies, translations needed and structure of the evaluation report. See, for instance the RUFORUM M&E Technical Notes Series no. 5 “Writing a good M&E Reports”
http://www.ruforum.org/evaluation/TechNote5_evaluation_report.pdf

Resource requirements

- Estimate the cost and prepare a detailed budget. Note the source of funds. Link the budget to the key activities or phases in the work plan. Cost estimates may cover items including:
- Travel: international and in-country
- Team member cost: salaries, per diem, and expenses
- Payments for translators, interviewers, data processors, and secretarial services.
- Estimate separately any expectations in terms of time costs for:
- Staff (before, during, after)
- Other stakeholders, including primary stakeholders – the universities.

The Annual Work Plan (AWP) Monitoring Tool

Year _____

Project/Programme: _____

EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND INDICATORS INCLUDING ANNUAL TARGETS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List all the activities including monitoring and evaluation activities to be undertaken during the year towards stated outputs</i>	EXPENDITURES <i>List actual expenditures against activities completed</i>	RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES <i>For each activity, state the results of the activity</i>	PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING OUTPUTS/OUTCOME Using data on annual indicator targets, state progress towards achieving outputs. Where relevant, comment on factors that facilitated and/or constrained achievement of results including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whether risks and assumptions as identified in the LOGFRAME & M&E Framework materialized or whether new risks emerged - Internal factors such as timing of inputs and activities, quality of products and services, coordination and/or other management issues
OUTPUT 1: INDICATOR 1.1 WITH TARGET FOR THE YEAR: INDICATOR 1.2 WITH TARGET FOR THE YEAR: INDICATOR 1.3 WITH TARGET FOR THE YEAR:				
OUTPUT 2: INDICATOR 2.1 WITH TARGET FOR THE YEAR: ETC.				

ANNEX E: RUFORUM EVALUATION REPORT GUIDELINES

Preamble⁴

This **evaluation report template** is intended to serve as a guide for preparing meaningful, useful and credible evaluation reports for RUFORUM that meet quality standards. The template does not prescribe a definitive section-by-section format that all evaluation reports should follow but merely proposes the general content that should be included in a quality evaluation report. All in all, the evaluation report should be complete and logically organized. It should be written clearly and understandable to the intended audience and must respond to the evaluation questions/objectives consistent with the Terms of reference. Over and above this, the report should also include the following:

Title and opening pages—Should provide the following basic report identifiers such as:

- Name of the project/intervention/theme/project/implementation period being evaluated
- Time-frame of the evaluation and date of the report
- Regional coverage of the evaluation intervention
- Names and organizations of evaluators
- Name and Logo of RUFORUM and RUFORUM commissioning the evaluation
- Acknowledgements

Table of contents—Must include any lists of boxes, plates, figures, tables and annexes with page references.

List of acronyms and abbreviations

Executive summary—Introductory summary presented as a stand-alone section of a few pages that should:

- Briefly describe the project/programme/theme/intervention of the evaluation that was evaluated.
- Explain the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audience for the evaluation and the intended uses.
- Describe key aspect of the evaluation approach, tools and methods.
- Summarize principle findings, conclusions, and recommendations in tandem with the ToR.

Introduction—This should give crisp explanation of:

- Why the evaluation was conducted (the purpose), why the intervention is being evaluated at this point in time, and why it addressed the questions it did.
- The primary audience or users of the evaluation, what they wanted to learn from the evaluation and why, and how they are expected to use the evaluation results.
- The project(s), programme(s) policies, or other intervention being evaluated
- The overall structure and contents of the report and how the information contained in the report will meet the purposes of the evaluation and satisfy the information needs of the report's intended users.

Description of the intervention—Elaborates the basis for report users to understand the logic and assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results. The description should provide sufficient detail for the report user to derive meaning from the evaluation. This may include:

- Describe **what is being evaluated, who seeks to benefit**, and the **problem or issue** it seeks to address.
- The **expected results map or results framework, implementation strategies**, and the key **assumptions** underlying the strategy.
- A link of the intervention to RUFORU strategic goals and results, or other national, regional and global **plans and goals**
- The **phase** in the implementation of the intervention and any **significant changes** (e.g., plans, strategies, logical frameworks) that have occurred over time, and explain the implications of those changes for the evaluation.
- The **key partners** involved in the implementation and their roles.
- The **scale of the intervention**, such as the number of components (e.g., phases of a project)
- The **total resources**, including human resources and budgets.
- Describe the context of the **social, political, economic and institutional factors**, and the **geographical landscape** within which the intervention operates and explain the effects (challenges and opportunities) those factors present for its implementation and outcomes.

⁴ The template is based largely on the UNDP evaluation report template and quality standards (See <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/Annex7.html>)

- Point out **design weaknesses** (e.g., intervention logic) or other **implementation constraints** (e.g., resource limitations).

Evaluation scope and objectives—The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation’s scope, primary objectives and main questions.

- **Evaluation scope**—The parameters of the evaluation, for example, the time period, the segments of the target population included, the geographic area included, and which components, outputs or outcomes were and were not assessed.
- **Evaluation objectives**—The types of decisions evaluation users will make, the issues they will need to consider in making those decisions, and what the evaluation will need to achieve to contribute to those decisions.
- **Evaluation criteria**—The evaluation criteria or performance standards used. The report should explain the rationale for selecting the particular criteria used in the evaluation.
- **Evaluation questions**—Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation will generate. The report should detail the main evaluation questions addressed by the evaluation and explain how the answers to these questions address the information needs of users.

Evaluation approach and methods—The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis; the rationale for their selection; and how, within the constraints of time and money, the approaches and methods employed yielded data that helped answer the evaluation questions and achieved the evaluation purposes. The description on methodology should include discussion of each of the following:

- **Data sources**—The sources of information (documents reviewed and stakeholders), the rationale for their selection and how the information obtained addressed the evaluation questions.
- **Sample and sampling frame**—If a sample was used: the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria; the process for selecting the sample (e.g., random, purposive); if applicable, how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of sample for generalizing results.
- **Data collection procedures and instruments**—Methods or procedures used to collect data, including discussion of data collection instruments (e.g., interview protocols), their appropriateness for the data source, and evidence of their reliability and validity.
- **Performance standards**—The standard or measure that will be used to evaluate performance relative to the evaluation questions (e.g., national or regional indicators, rating scales).
- **Stakeholder participation**—Stakeholders’ participation in the evaluation and how the level of involvement contributed to the credibility of the evaluation and the results.
- **Ethical considerations**—The measures taken to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants (see RUFORUM ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators’ for more information).
- **Background information on evaluators**—The composition of the evaluation team, the background and skills of team members, and the appropriateness of the technical skill mix, gender balance and geographical representation for the evaluation.
- **Major limitations of the methodology**—Major limitations of the methodology should be identified and openly discussed as to their implications for evaluation, as well as steps taken to mitigate those limitations.

Data analysis—Describe the procedures used to analyse the data collected to answer the evaluation questions. It should detail the various steps and stages of analysis that were carried out, including the steps to confirm the accuracy of data and the results. The report also should discuss the appropriateness of the analyses to the evaluation questions. Potential weaknesses in the data analysis and gaps or limitations of the data should be discussed, including their possible influence on the way findings may be interpreted and conclusions drawn.

Findings and conclusions—The report should present the evaluation findings based on the analysis and conclusions drawn from the findings.

- **Findings**—Should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data. They should be structured around the evaluation questions so that report users can readily make the connection between what was asked and what was found. Variances between planned and actual results should be explained, as well as factors affecting the achievement of intended results. Assumptions or risks in the project or programme design that subsequently affected implementation should be discussed.

- **Conclusions**—Should be comprehensive and balanced, and highlight the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the intervention. They should be well substantiated by the evidence and logically connected to evaluation findings. They should respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to the decision-making of intended users.

Recommendations—The report should provide practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation. They should address sustainability of the initiative and comment on the adequacy of the project exit strategy, if applicable. Recommendations should also provide specific advice for future or similar projects or programming.

Lessons learnt—As appropriate, the report should include discussion of lessons learnt from the evaluation, that is, new knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (intervention, context outcomes, even about evaluation methods) that are applicable to a similar context. Lessons should be concise and based on specific evidence presented in the report.

Report annexes—Suggested annexes should include the following to provide the report user with supplemental background and methodological details that enhance the credibility of the report:

- ToR for the evaluation
- Additional methodology-related documentation, such as the evaluation matrix and data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, observation protocols, etc.) as appropriate
- List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted and sites visited
- List of supporting documents reviewed
- Project or programme results map or results framework
- Summary tables of findings, such as tables displaying progress towards outputs, targets, and goals relative to established indicators
- Short biographies of the evaluators and justification of team composition
- Code of conduct signed by evaluators

ANNEX F: RUFORUM EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TEMPLATE

RUFORUM Management Response Template
 [Name of the Evaluation] Date:



Prepared By: _____ Position _____ Unit _____
 Approved By _____ Position _____ Unit _____
 Input into MERC _____ Position _____ Unit _____

Evaluation Recommendation 1:				
Management Response				
Key Actions	Timeframes	Responsible Units/Officer	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1				
1.2				
1.3				
1.4				
Evaluation Recommendation 2:				
Management Response				
Key Actions	Timeframes	Responsible Units/Officer	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1				
2.2				
2.3				
2.4				
Evaluation Recommendation 3:				
Management Response				
Key Actions	Timeframes	Responsible Units/Officer	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1				
3.2				
3.3				
3.4				

* Tracking is continuously conducted by updating the evaluation findings and management actions in the MERC and MIS