

CALL FOR PROPOSALS (R-EOI /NAG/09/02)

Terms of Reference for a Consultancy to develop a Dissemination and Advocacy Strategy for RUFORUM

I. Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 25 universities (12 full members and 13 associate members) in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) established in 2004. It is registered as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) with mandate to oversee graduate training and networks of specialisation in the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) region. RUFORUM recognizes the important and largely unfulfilled role that universities play in contributing to the well-being of small-scale farmers and towards economic development of countries throughout the sub-Saharan Africa region. This contribution is made through producing quality graduates entering the rural development workforce and the production and dissemination of high quality demand-driven, development-oriented research related regional public goods that are defined and applied through participatory processes linking researchers, farmers, policy-makers, and business. RUFORUM mission is to strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to the needs of small-holder farmers through the training of high quality researchers, ensuring that graduates will have the skills and know-how to be attractive to potential employers, and the output of impact-oriented research that will result in agricultural policy and practice reform.

RUFORUM hopes to achieve its mission by (1) focusing on capacity building for the agricultural sector through graduate training at M.Sc. and PhD levels; (2) focusing on promoting innovation and integration within universities to support training and research that is aligned with the emergent rural development strategy of 'Integrated Agricultural Research for Development' (IAR4D) and (3) focusing on value-addition to regional agricultural training and research through building, rationalizing and sharing capacities and resources. A key strategy will be to focus on exploring various innovative approaches in responding to universities challenges which include: how to make university research responsive to a stakeholder-driven research and training agenda; how to influence policy and development practices to generate higher impact and support research and training in universities; how to ensure quality of training and research; how to organize and ensure sufficient staff capacity in universities; how to mobilize adequate resources for research and training; how to organize and rationalize adequate infrastructure for research and training; and, how to reform curricula complying to new requirements.

2. Rationale

Throughout SSA, universities are now being challenged to recreate themselves for development relevance and to produce graduates, with capacity to respond to changing development paradigms, including emerging challenges of climate change and global warming, competition between food demands and bio-fuels, understanding and responding to market dynamics, drivers and shocks, among others. Strengthening agricultural capacity at M.Sc. and Ph.D level for undertaking 'business unusual' using participatory approaches with client and market orientation is thus a much needed intervention. It is important to take stock of successes to inform future activities. The challenge, therefore, is how to plan for, demonstrate and market university

relevance and products to influence policy and development practices to generate higher impact and support research and training in universities.

In pursuit of its wider objectives, RUFORUM has put in place mechanisms to strengthen its lesson-learning framework for harvesting and sharing lessons across and outside the RUFORUM network. RUFORUM intends that the lessons learnt (operational, institutional and scientific) will be built and fed through a dissemination framework to its target audiences to increase impact of its activities. The audiences for the research findings are diverse, as expected, and can be categorized into four main groups of 1) researchers and higher education institutions 2) farmer organizations and national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES) 3) policy makers and 4) agribusiness. RUFORUM would like to build respective capacities of her constituent members and Secretariat capacity to communicate with each of these groups, cognizant that communication means will differ depending on the specific message to target recipients. RUFORUM is thus seeking for a consultant(s) to assist in strengthening of its dissemination and advocacy activities.

3. Overall Objective of the Consultancy

The objective of the consultancy is to deepen impact arising from RUFORUM activities through design and implementation of a dissemination and advocacy strategy for the RUFORUM Network.

4. Specific Objectives/ Tasks

Specific objectives of the assignment are to:

1. Understand and document the current status of advocacy in RUFORUM universities;
2. Develop, with stakeholder participation, objectives of the RUFORUM advocacy strategy;
3. Design specific mechanisms for conveying messages to RUFORUM target audiences;
4. Identify roles of RUFORUM network organs in advocacy;
5. Develop a dissemination and advocacy strategy for RUFORUM;
6. Develop an implementation plan for the Dissemination Strategy;
7. Identify process for ensuring lessons are fed from M&E into the Dissemination and Advocacy Strategy and role of ICT;
8. Identify capacity strengthening needs, with regards to advocacy, of the RUFORUM Network and provide recommendations for redress; and,
9. As a pilot process, package and share key lessons from FORUM and RUFORUM activities to targeted RUFORUM audiences.

5. Roles / Responsibilities

Consultant

1. Source relevant information and undertake literature review of RUFORUM background and operational related documents;
2. Refine methodology for implementing the assignment;
3. Design a Dissemination and Advocacy Strategy, present draft to the RUFORUM Secretariat and key stakeholders, and incorporate comments and suggestions;
4. Refine Draft Dissemination and Advocacy Strategy;
5. Make own arrangements for logistics including accommodation, local transport, stationery, computer services and any other as detailed in the contract; and,
6. Advise RUFORUM on issues related to the assignment in a timely manner.

RUFORUM

1. Review and approve the work plan, including timeframe and approach to be used;

2. Provide reference material including the RUFORUM Strategic Plan, Business plan, etc;
3. Meet the relevant costs related to this consultancy, i.e., travel, per diem, consultancy fee) as agreed to in the contract;
4. Review and approve the draft and final report and other outputs as stipulated in the deliverables section and contract.

6. Deliverables

- Draft report (at least 5 days prior to end of assignment);
- Final report (at the end of consultancy within 1 week of the draft report presentation to RUFORUM) detailing clearly the findings from all specific tasks/ objectives listed in Section 4;
- A Dissemination and Advocacy Strategy document for RUFORUM;
- 4 thematic packages of lessons learnt (1 targeting each RUFORUM audience group); and,
- A draft implementation plan for the Dissemination and Advocacy Strategy.

7. Plan of Work / Duration

- This assignment including any travel is expected to take a duration of 20 person days and be completed before 20th August 2009. We propose the first four days to be spent at the RUFORUM secretariat in Uganda, consulting with the RUFORUM Staff and stakeholders in Uganda. A further 5 days will be spent travelling in Kenya (University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Donors and other stakeholders); Zimbabwe and Malawi. After the travels, 2 days are allotted to report preparation and draft report is expected prior to a further 3 days for refining the report.

8. Expertise Required and Prequalification

Applicants will be evaluated against the following prequalification criteria:

- Clear articulation of capacity and skill, and innovative approaches to carry out the assignment;
- Demonstrated experience and competency in conducting similar assignments of a regional/ international magnitude;
- Demonstrated analytical and report writing skills and experience;
- The organizational/individual competency to deliver the services; and,
- Presentation of one lead consultant and not more than two (2) other consultants in the firm.

9. Reporting

It is the responsibility of consultant to ensure timely and quality reporting for each phase and deliverable in the assignment. All reports will be submitted to the **RUFORUM Networking Advocacy and Grants (NAG)** Programme Manager on dates as may be agreed during the inception meeting and stipulated in the contract. The reports will be reviewed within RUFORUM and also by an external peer team. All draft reports (written in English) will be submitted as soft copies while the final report will be submitted as a soft copy and three (3) hard copies with illustrations where necessary.

10. Proposal Development

A Concept Note of not more than 15 A-4 sized pages should be developed to include the following:

- 1) Background and interpretation of the terms of reference (Maximum 1 page);

- 2) Methodology and approach (Maximum 4 pages);
- 3) Proposed work plan outlining clear timeframe and logical steps in conducting the assignment (Maximum 2 page);
- 4) Competency statement that provides the organization profile including summary CVs of the experts to be employed on the assignment and the relevant references/similar assignments conducted earlier (Maximum 7 pages)
- 5) An itemized budget (use provided template) divided into professional fees and direct cost of activities in United States Dollars (Maximum 2 pages).

The Proposal will be assessed based on the following criteria

- 1) Background Information (10%);
- 2) Methodology and approach (30%);
- 3) Proposed work plan (10%);
- 4) Competency and experience (30%- firm 10%, individuals 20%)
- 5) Budget (20%).

11. Procedures for Submission of Concept Notes

Interested individuals or teams of consultants should submit their Concept Notes (technical and financial proposals) electronically, mentioning the ID number for the Call, 2 page curriculum vitae of all team members, and statement of capability by close of business **12 June, 2009** to the address below.

The Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Manager,

RUFORUM Secretariat,

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Makerere University, Kampala Uganda:

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For further information on RUFORUM, its member universities, partners and the programmes, visit the RUFORUM website: <http://www.ruforum.org> or write to the Head, Networking, Advocacy and Grants (NAG) at m.osiru@rufurom.org copies to ntwalica@gmail.com