

# Press Release



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## Announcing three RUFORUM Grant Recipients for Community Action Research Programmes PLUS (CARP+) 2019

**Kampala 25 February 2019.** The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) a consortium of 105 Universities in 37 Countries in Africa under its [Vision 2030](#) is implementing the TAGDev (<http://www.ruforum.org/MCF/>), one of the four flagships, that aim at transforming African Agricultural Universities and their graduates to meaningfully contribute to Africa's growth and development. Through this Flagship, Community Action Research Programmes Plus (CARP+) projects are implemented. In October, 2018, RUFORUM advertised a call for proposals ([CARP+ Call 2018](#)) targeting RUFORUM member universities in Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana and Zambia.

A total of 10 competitive proposals were received and evaluated by a team of experts. We are pleased to announce three successful competitive projects as follows:

No.	Name of Applicant	University	Project title
1	Jan Swanepoel	University of the Free State, South Africa	Building Competitiveness for communal farmers through developing the wool value chain in the Free State Province of South Africa.
2	Vallantino Emongor	Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources	Enhancing safflower production and product development for food security and improving incomes of small-scale farmers in Botswana
3	Simon Angombe	University of Namibia	Enhancing Community Adaptation through Climate Resilient Agriculture: Encroacher bushes value chains initiative in Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

RUFORUM congratulates the successful teams, and thanks all the applicants for responding to this call. A summary of each of the three successful proposals is presented below:

### Projects summary

#### **Project 1: Building Competitiveness for communal farmers through developing the wool value chain in the Free State Province of South Africa.**

The South African wool industry is in a privileged position and has ample opportunity for growth. Wool prices are doing remarkably well, and economists and wool buyers believe this trend will continue due to international market demand exceeding the supply. The creation of niche products from wool will add to the existing value chain, creating more jobs and an opportunity for enlarging the export market. This project seeks to transform communal wool

growers' production from an underachieving enterprise to a profitable, sustainable, and renewable venture to enhance the livelihoods of communal wool producers. This will be achieved by: (1) assisting in establishing a centralised infrastructure hub, to support wool production and processing - the University of the Free State's experimental farm will be utilised for this purpose; (2) building wool growers', sheep shearers' and women from the community's capacity by knowledge and skills training; (3) introducing formal structures to organise wool growers and link them to markets and as a result give them collaborative advantage; and (4) assisting the beneficiaries to develop commercial market engagements for wool and wool products produced by the communal farmers and community women. This project is designed to incorporate research and dissemination components. The research component will include the evaluation, testing and further development of certain technologies and social and economic situations. The academic staff, students from the University of the Free State and the interns from the TVET will be working closely with communal wool growers, commercial farmers and private-sector industry players.

## **Project 2: Enhancing safflower production and product development for food security and improving incomes of small-scale farmers in Botswana**

Safflower is a drought, heat, cold and saline tolerant crop. In the arid and semi-arid regions loss of yield is the main concern for arable farmers. Growing a multipurpose, drought, saline and temperature tolerant crops such as safflower enhances the farmers' adaptive capacity to mitigate the effects of climate variability and change; improve food security and reduce reliance on food imports and improve the livestock sub-sector through the availability of feed among other benefits. The overall objective of this project is to enhance safflower production and product development among safflower farmers in Botswana. The project will specifically: 1) evaluate safflower genotypes performance for morphological characteristics, seed yield and yield components, oil yield, and composition grown on-farm in four growing sites; 2) evaluate safflower nitrogen and phosphorus requirements in different soils under on-farm trials in three growing sites; 3) determine safflower genotypes suitable for petal production and time of harvesting on petal and seed yield, carthamin and carthamidin content in three growing sites; 4) determine insect pest status, diversity, population dynamics and their natural enemies plus beneficial insects on five safflower genotypes in three growing sites both in winter and summer; 5) evaluate effects of nitrogen fertilizer application on safflower insect pest population dynamics, their natural enemies and beneficial insect; 6) support development of curriculum in two Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions (offering certificate in agriculture) in line with the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF) as required by the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA); 7) enhance TVET students and staff capacities in research and; 8) enhance farmers' capacities in safflower growing, processing, product development and marketing.

## **Project 3: Enhancing Community Adaptation through Climate Resilient Agriculture: Encroacher bushes value chains initiative in Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia**

Namibia is home to the driest climate in sub-Saharan Africa characterised by recurrent droughts with detrimental effects on local farmers. The country is predominated by extensive farming with livestock mainly depending on rangelands for feed resources. It has been estimated that about 45 million hectares of land in Namibia has undergone bush

encroachment leading to reduction in the availability of desirable and palatable grasses and browse, loss of biodiversity as well as loss of ecosystem functions and benefits. This project seeks to sustainably utilise and add value to encroacher bushes through selective thinning as a mechanism to rangeland restoration, creation of economic opportunities and increasing food security as well as enhancing drought resilience. Specifically, the project will: 1) determine the nutritional and anti-nutritional content of selected encroacher bush species at different phenological stages of growth; 2) determine the charcoal and biochar yield potential of different encroacher bush species; 3) evaluate the effect of treatment with wood ash, biochar and PEG on the nutritive value of bush feed with special focus on tannin contents, feed intake and digestibility; 4) evaluate the effectiveness of biochar on preventing plant poisoning to ruminants; 5) determine the ensilability of bush feed using different silage enhancers (lactic acid bacteria (LAB) inoculants, molasses, grain malt; and analyse the effects of three different preservation methods (pelletizing, drying and ensiling) on the nutritive value of bush feed; 6) evaluate the effect of feeding encroacher bush silage on milk yield, milk composition and milk products quality in dairy goats; and further evaluate its effects on growth performance, blood metabolites, and carcass characteristics of Kalahari Red kids; 7) support the production of oyster mushroom, and mushroom value addition. The project will utilise a holistic value chain approach taking advantage of the opportunities that the different parts of the bush confers.

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#### Notes to Editors:

Established by 10 African university Vice Chancellors in 2004, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 105 African universities operating in 37 countries on the continent with a vision to create “*vibrant transformative universities to catalyse sustainable inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa*”. RUFORUM Secretariat is hosted by the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda with Secretariat at Makerere University in Kampala. In 2014, RUFORUM signed an MoU with the African Union Commission to support implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) Priority One on reducing poverty and ensuring food and nutrition security. As of August 2017, RUFORUM has supported the training of 60 Under graduates, 1,883 MSc and 503 PhD graduates of whom, 94% work in their home countries or region, generated over 300 agricultural technologies and mobilized over US\$201 million for strengthening postgraduate education in Africa. Please visit [www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org) for more information.

For additional information, photos and interviews, contact the RUFORUM Corporate Communications & Advocacy Officer below;

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