



## RUFORUM 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

### CONCEPT NOTE

## CLIMATE HACKATHON: RUFORUM'S Agricultural Innovation Hackathon Initiative (RAIHI)



## THEME

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### **Positioning Africa's Universities and the Higher Education Sector to effectively impact development processes on the continent**

#### **Hosts:**

The Government of Botswana and  
RUFORUM member Universities in Botswana led by Botswana University of  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

#### **Venue:**

BUAN ICT LAB-BLOCK 305/DO1

**Date:** 24th – 30th November, 2025

**Time:** 08:30-16:45 CAT SAT

**Contact:** Nimrod Muhanguzi ([n.muhanguzi@ruforum.org](mailto:n.muhanguzi@ruforum.org))

## Background

The RUFORUM Agricultural Innovation Hackathon Initiative (RAIHI) launches its inaugural national edition in Botswana to institutionalize a replicable model for agricultural innovation discovery and commercialization across African universities. This initiative targets deep-tech solutions that address agricultural productivity, climate resilience, and value chain efficiency. Through a structured innovation-to-market pipeline, student-led ventures and startups will transform ideas into field-validated Minimum Viable Products (MVPs), culminating in live pitches to investors and corporates at the RUFORUM AGM.

**Overall Objective:**

To catalyze the discovery, development, and commercialization of deep-tech agricultural innovations that enhance climate resilience, market access, financial inclusion, and productivity for smallholder farmers, especially women, across Botswana and the RUFORUM university network.

**Specific Objectives**

- Identify and support scalable agricultural innovations aligned with climate-smart practices and inclusive market systems.
- Equip early-stage ventures with product development and commercialization skills.
- Facilitate investor and corporate engagement for pilot partnerships and funding.
- Showcase Botswana’s capacity for grassroots-driven, tech-enabled agricultural transformation.
- Empower women farmers and youth innovators through tailored digital solutions.
- Workshop Participants
- University students, young researchers, and early-stage startups from Botswana.
- Technical, commercial, and impact-focused judges from academia, industry, government, and RUFORUM.
- Investors, corporate partners, and cooperative leaders attending the RUFORUM AGM.
- RUFORUM Innovation Talent Pool (ITPs) and selected finalists for the hackathon showcase.

**Expected Outcomes**

- Development and exhibition of MVPs addressing four thematic areas: market access, digital finance, precision farming, and advisory systems.
- Seed funding and post-hackathon support for winning teams, including mentorship, technical resources, and investor introductions.
- Strengthened innovation ecosystem linking universities, agribusiness, and grassroots communities.
- Enhanced visibility and commercialization of climate-smart agricultural solutions across RUFORUM’s network.

**Approach**

RAIHI adopts a multi-stage pipeline:

1. Pre-AGM Masterclasses: Focused sessions on product development and investor readiness.
2. Selection & Judging: A 9-member panel evaluates applications using weighted digital scoring.
3. Demo Day: Finalist’s pitch lives to investors and corporates, with real-time feedback and Dealroom integration.
4. Post-Competition Support: Winners receive seed funding, incubation, mentorship, and partnership facilitation over 12 months.
5. Thematic Design: Innovations are curated around Naledi’s persona a representative woman farmer ensuring relevance, inclusivity, and impact.

**Venue:** BUAN ICT LAB-BLOCK 305/DO1  
**Session Chair:** Muhanguzi Nimrod  
**Rapporteurs:** Nanono Lois

| DATE                 | EVENT                                                         | TIME                          | DURATION                              | VENUE                      | ACTIVITY                                      |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Monday 24th November | Master Class for early-stage ventures (Product)               | 11:00 - 12:30 pm              | 1.5 hours                             | BUAN ICT LAB-BLOCK 305/DO1 | Pitching Skills: From Idea to MVP             |
|                      |                                                               | 12:30 - 12:40 pm              | Tea Break                             |                            |                                               |
|                      |                                                               | 12:40 - 2:00 pm               | 1.4 hours                             | BUAN ICT LAB-BLOCK 305/DO1 | Q&A Session                                   |
| 25th November        | Master Class for early-stage ventures (Commercial)            | 11:00 - 12:30 pm              | 1.5 hours                             | BUAN ICT LAB-BLOCK 305/DO1 | Pitching Skills: Building Investor Confidence |
|                      |                                                               | 12:30 - 12:40 pm              | Tea Break                             |                            |                                               |
|                      |                                                               | 12:40 - 2:00 pm               | 1.4 hours                             | BUAN ICT LAB-BLOCK 305/DO1 | Q&A Session                                   |
| 26th November        | Arrival of ITPs                                               | TBD                           | 2 hours                               | TBD                        | Networking: ITP x GHC                         |
| 27th November        | Deal Room Readiness and Investor Engagement Prep (Product)    | 10:00 - 10:20 am              | 20 mins                               | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | Investor engagement overviews with ITPs       |
|                      |                                                               | 10:20 - 12:00 pm              | 20 mins per ITP                       | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | ITP Individual mock pitch session             |
|                      |                                                               | 12:00 - 12:30 pm              | Tea Break                             |                            |                                               |
|                      |                                                               | 12:00 - 12:30 pm              | 30 mins                               | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | Q&A/Feedack Session                           |
|                      |                                                               | 1:00 - 2:00 pm                | Lunch Break                           |                            |                                               |
|                      |                                                               | 2:00 - 5:00 pm                | 25 mins (20 mins/5mins break) per ITP | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | Office hours with each venture                |
|                      | Arrival of Investors                                          | Pre-event Investor Engagement |                                       |                            |                                               |
| 28th November        | Deal Room Readiness and Investor Engagement Prep (Commercial) | 10:00 - 10:20 am              | 20 mins                               | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | Investor engagement overviews with ITPs       |
|                      |                                                               | 10:20 - 12:00 pm              | 20 mins per ITP                       | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | ITP Individual mock pitch session             |
|                      |                                                               | 12:00 - 12:30 pm              | Tea Break                             |                            |                                               |
|                      |                                                               | 12:00 - 12:30 pm              | 30 mins                               | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | Q&A/Feedback Session                          |
|                      |                                                               | 1:00 - 2:00 pm                | Lunch Break                           |                            |                                               |
|                      |                                                               | 2:00 - 5:00 pm                | 25 mins (20 mins/5mins break) per ITP | Tsodilo B1 & B2            | Office hours with each venture                |

|               |                           |                   |                                |                 |                                                        |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 29th November | Botswana Innovation Day   | 10:30 - 12:00 pm  | 1.5 hours                      | Tsodilo B1 & B2 | Fireside Chat with Innovators, ITPs, & Investors       |
|               |                           | 12:00 - 1:00 pm   | 1 hour (20 mins per Innovator) | Tsodilo B1 & B2 | Hackathon fire round pitching session 1 (3 Innovators) |
|               |                           | 1:00 - 2:00 pm    | Networking lunch               |                 |                                                        |
|               |                           | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm | 1 hour (20 mins per Innovator) | Tsodilo B1 & B2 | Hackathon fire round pitching session 2 (3 Innovators) |
|               |                           | 3:00 - 4:30 pm    | 1.5 hour                       | Tsodilo B1 & B2 | Investor <> Innovator One-on-One Session (Speed Round) |
| 30th November | Investor <> Innovator Day | 9:00 - 9:10 am    | 10 mins                        | Okavango Suite  | Welcome Remarks                                        |
|               |                           | 9:10 - 9:55 am    | 45 mins                        | Okavango Suite  | Panel session addressing access to capital             |
|               |                           | 9:55 - 10:10 am   | Tea Break                      |                 |                                                        |
|               |                           | 10:10 - 12:40 pm  | 2.5 hours                      | Okavango Suite  | Pitch session from ITPs                                |
|               |                           | 12:40 - 1:40 pm   | Lunch Break                    |                 |                                                        |
|               |                           | 1:40 - 3:20 pm    | 1.6 hours (20 mins each ITP)   | Okavango Suite  | Investor <> ITP One-on-One Session                     |
|               |                           | 3:20 - 4:00 pm    | 40 mins                        | Okavango Suite  | Closing Remark by RUFORUM leadership                   |