



Republic of Botswana



21st Annual
General Meeting
01-05 December 2025
Botswana



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

**Exploring Alternative Higher Education Academic
Programs: Case for Engineering Masters and Engineering
Doctorate programmes**



THEME

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:

GICC, Moremi 2

Date: 27th - 28th November 2025

Time: 8:00 - 16:30 pm

Contact Persons: Professor Patrick Okori, (p.okori@ruforum.org)

Background

The global higher education landscape is under immense pressure to demonstrate relevance for the value on investment beyond the traditional return of investment conversation. This has particularly been heightened by the fact that there is a global digital disruption, hyper-connectivity and shortened time span for the emergence of powerful technologies such as artificial intelligence that are redefining the place of innovation and education in general. These disruptions are generating extensive opportunities as well as heightening inequalities. However, in the developing countries in the global south, these disruptions are both opportunities as well as challenging calling for dramatic adaptations in the systems, processes, practices and its academia. The global south is under immense pressure to adopt, adapt and deliver education that expands opportunities for its young people population as well as expands the structure of its economies.

While the global north has advanced with the fourth-generation universities approaches focused on universities missions and competitiveness, in many respects the global south is striving to transition from second to third generation universities and attempt a long-haul with the fourth-generation universities notion. There are certainly islands of success such as with University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria, University of Free State, University of Cairo, UM6P, and in part-University of Nairobi that are operationalizing aspects of the fourth-generation universities. Across all the aisle in Africa today, there's a common push for universities to move beyond to the tradition notions of education and research to aggressively pursue entrepreneurship, innovation ecosystems, and deep engagement with industry and society which underpin aspirations of the fourth-generation universities in both the north and the south.

Accordingly, universities today are exploring alternative pathways for innovative options for delivering unique offering for learning, skills acquisition and innovations translation into products and services. In this regard, the question of the environment, ecosystem and operational space within which this is supposed to happen has arisen. Specifically, do the universities of today in the global south have the design and architecture to deliver competitive alternative pathways to education, research, innovation

and industry advancement that significantly departs from the current practice. Fortunately, there are alternative models that have been tried in the global north that have delivered results and have good evidence of value on investment as well as return on investment that is verifiable.

Wageningen University and Research (WUR) has implemented unique model of Engineering Masters and Engineering Doctorates programs that has orchestrated greater connections with industry, delivered outstanding innovations and start-ups that are creating jobs and wealth in the economy. It has provided a new model to the university of creating disruptive pathways for challenging the traditional notions of graduate training. Accordingly, RUFORUM working in partnership with WUR are seeking a collaborative initiative for framing an adapted Africa agenda and programs for Engineering Masters and Engineering Doctorates for Africa coordinated by the RUFORUM Secretariat.

Overall objective

The overall objective of this consultative engagement is to develop a draft African framework for engineering Masters and Doctorate programs and road map for collaborative engagement between RUFORUM Secretariat, WUR and prioritized universities.

Specific objectives

1. Convene an explorative dialogue on transformative post-graduate training models (engineering masters and engineering doctorates)
2. Co-create a draft African framework for transformative post-graduate training models
3. Co-develop a common road map for RUFORUM network

Expected Outputs

1. Clearly articulated transformative post-graduate education approach
2. Draft framework for the transformative education
3. Common-framework outline for designing, developing and implementing engineering masters and doctorate degrees
4. A road-map for collaborative action for RUFORUM, WUR and prioritized Universities

Participants:

This is a closed Face-to-Face meeting that will draw participants from Wageningen University, Mastercard Foundation, University of Pretoria, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and Makerere University.

Venue: Operations B/Room
Session Chair: Dr Arfang Badji
Rapporteurs: Polite M. Molathegi

Time	Event	Person in-charge
08:00-08:10	Arrival, Registration	Mary Kulabako
08:10-08:30	Introductions	Moderator
08:30-08:45	Opening Remarks from RUFORUM	Patrick Okori
08:45-09:00	Opening Remarks from Wageningen University Research	Jennie van der Mheen, WUR, Netherlands
09:00-09:15	Opening Remarks from Mastercard Foundation	Pauline Gangla, Mastercard Foundation
09:15-09:45	How do multi-national companies think and what opportunities are there for innovation and business creation	George Osure
09:45-10:15	Evidence from RUFORUM network Universities Performance in Innovation	Prof. Majaliwa Mwanjalolo
10:15-10:30	Discussions	Patrick Okori
10:30-11:00	Health Break	Hotel
11:00-11:30		
	Exposition on the transformative Education Models including Engineering Masters and Doctorates	Jorieke Fennis, WUR, Netherlands
11:30-13:00	Round Table Discussions	Prof Okori Patrick
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	Hotel
14:00-16:30	Round Table Discussions continued	Prof Okori Patrick
16:30	Close of the day	

Day 2: 28th November 2025: Deepening Consortium Engagement

08:00-08:30	Arrival and open conversations	All participants
08:30-09:15	Review of the Day one actions	Mary Kulabako
09:15-11:15	Engineering Masters and Engineering Doctorates; Philosophy, Structure and Content.	Jorieke Fennis, WUR, Netherlands
11:15-11:45	Health Break	Hotel
11:45- 13:00	Framework Actions and Structure of the programmes	Jorieke Fennis, WUR, Netherlands
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	Hotel
14:00-16:00	Road Map and directions for the framework	Jorieke Fennis, WUR, Netherlands
16:00-16:30	Summary of Actions	Mary Kulabako

