



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

**Strengthening African universities through impactful
monitoring, evaluation, learning, and strategic
communication systems.**



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:

BUAN, New Conference Block 2

Date: 26th — 28th November, 2025

Time: 08:30 — 17:30 Hours

Contact Persons: Petros Mkandawire (p.mkandawire@ruforum.org)

Background

African universities face growing pressure to demonstrate the impact of their teaching, research, and outreach. This demands robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Strategic Communication (SC) systems to enhance accountability, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness. However, many institutions lack systematic frameworks, relying on donor-driven MEL practices and under-resourced SC units, which limits continuous learning and strategic integration. Fragmented data systems and siloed operations further weaken decision-making and program improvement. Encouragingly, rising expectations from quality assurance bodies and regional networks are prompting reforms, including digital systems, institutional research offices, and stronger links between MEL and quality assurance.

Despite progress, African universities still need sustained investment in MEL and SC capacity, resources, and a culture of evidence-based decision-making. To address these gaps, RUFORUM and the Mastercard Foundation are convening a workshop under the TAGDev 2.0 program to assess current MEL and SC practices, share best practices, and build capacity. The goal is to strengthen institutional accountability, academic quality, and effectiveness through more robust and integrated MEL and SC systems.

Objectives

The goal of the workshop is to orient the teams on MEL and SC frameworks to enable TAGDev 2.0 implementing universities to systematically track and report performance, evaluate program outcomes, and apply learning to enhance decision-making, program adaptability, and institutional development.

Specific Objectives:

1. Deepen appreciation of the role played by MEL and Strategic Communication (SC) in enhancing program excellence;
2. Showcase university-specific TAGDev 2.0 impact stories to demonstrate transformative changes to drive uptake by other universities;
3. Take stock of the limitations, existing capacities, and opportunities for structuring MEL and SC as institutional practices; and
4. Strengthen communication and reporting with internal and external stakeholders.

Approach

This workshop will use a co-creative format combining presentations, small group discussions, and plenary sessions. It will explore how universities monitor implementation, report progress, and tell impact stories, while identifying improvements in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Strategic Communication (SC). Participants will collaboratively examine institutional systems and capacities, and develop concrete plans to strengthen MEL and SC frameworks under TAGDev 2.0.

Expected Outcome

The workshop will set TAGDev 2.0 implementing universities on the right path to achieving the following outcomes:

1. Improved delivery, performance tracking and reporting (Progress against targets at output, outcome, and impact levels)
2. Greater institutional accountability and participants confidence in MEL and SC work streams.
3. Strengthened ability to attract funding through evidence-based programming moving forward;

Participants

This workshop will be attended by Mastercard Foundation staff (04), TAGDEV 2.0 Program Coordinators (14), MEL, and Communication personnel (28) of RUFORUM member universities, RUFORUM staff (6), and development partners (11).

Organizers

This event is co-organized by the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and the Mastercard Foundation.

Venue: Okavango Suite/Moremi 1
Session Chair: Dr. Mkandawire Petros
Rapporteurs: Moses Waswa

Day One: 26th November 2025

Date and Time	Activity	Responsible person
08:30 — 09:00	Arrival and Registration	Luise Mwanyangapo (RUFORUM)
09:00 — 09:15	Opening remarks	
		Abigael Otinga (RUFORUM)
09:15 — 09:30	Opening remarks	Annette Mutuku (Mastercard Foundation)
09:30 — 10:30	Mastercard Foundation’s approach to MEL (Presentation; Q & A)	Charles Mugoowa (Mastercard Foundation)
10:30 — 11:00	Health Break	
11:00 — 12:00	Mastercard Foundation’s Impact delivery strategy and framework (Presentation; Q & A)	Eric Tuyisenge (Mastercard Foundation)
12:00 — 13:00	Mastercard Foundations Approach to Communication and Impact Storytelling Framework	Annette Mutuku and Happy Bruce (Mastercard Foundation)
13:00 — 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 — 14:30	Communicating program impact with better data (Presentation; Q & A)	Petros Mkandawire (RUFORUM)
14:30 — 15:30	Group work: Communicating impact data/ information better (practical session where each university team works based on data on one of their impact stories) (discussions)	All participants
15:30 — 16:00	Feedback on group (Presentations; discussions)	All participants
16:00 — 17:30	Key issues to consider when it comes to impact measurement	Eric Tuyisenge and Charles Mugoowa (Mastercard Foundation)
17:30	End of session	

Day Two: 27th November 2025

08:30 — 08:45	Recap of Day One	Sokoine University of Agriculture
08:45 — 10:00	Stakeholder engagement: identifying key stakeholders & developing strategies for their involvement in MEL	Moses Waswa (RUFORUM)
10:00 — 10:30	Health Break	
10:30 — 11:30	Communication plans, choosing appropriate channels	Evaline Acan (RUFORUM)
11:30 — 12:30	Group work: identifying key stakeholders & targeted key communication strategies	All participants
12:30 — 13:00	Feedback on group work (Presentations; discussions)	All participants
13:00 — 14:00	Lunch Break	Service Provider
14:00 — 16:00	Group work: Revision of university impact stories	All participants
16:00 — 17:30	Feedback on group work (Presentations; discussions)	All participants
17:30	End of session	

Day Three: 28th November 2025

08:30 — 08:45	Recap of Day Two	Haramaya University
08:45 — 10:00	What communication support do alumni need to scale? What are we doing right? What haven't we been doing?	2 TAGDev Alumni (TBC)
10:00 — 10:30	Health Break	
10:30 — 11:30	Building partnerships for effective program implementation	Emmanuel Okalany (RUFORUM)
11:30 — 13:00	Sharing best practices — highlighting successful MEL & communication practices from different universities (Group work, Presentation & feedback)	All participants
13:00 — 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 — 15:30	Addressing challenges: discussing common challenges in MEL & communication as well as brainstorming solutions (Group work; Presentation; & feedback)	All participants
15:30 — 17:15	Group work: revision of university impact stories	All participants
17:15 — 17:30	Closing Remarks	Anthony Egeru (RUFORUM) Pauline Gangla (Mastercard Foundation)
17:30	End of session	