



## **TAGDEV PROGRAM CONCEPT NOTE FOR VIRTUAL NATIONAL FORUM FOR UNIVERSITIES, TVETS AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY PLAYERS**

Egerton University, Kenya in partnership with the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and Gulu University in Uganda received support from MasterCard Foundation to implement a Program titled “**Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa’s Growth and Development (TAGDev)**” for a period of eight years (2016-2024). The program provides scholarships to students from across Africa, it aims at training competent, and highly skilled African youth, develop the capacity of African universities to effectively train, and nurture graduates with relevant skills. The Program has up to date offered full scholarships to 80 students 55 at undergraduate level and 25 at postgraduate level. The program has also offered partial support to over 100 students at both undergraduate and master’s level within the university. Students are drawn from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria, Benin, Lesotho, Rwanda, Cameroon, and Liberia. TAGDev program aims at transforming students into innovative leaders who will catalyze Africa’s growth and development. The program also aims at facilitating students’ transitions to livelihoods with a special focus on career-fairs, internship and entrepreneurship.

To achieve the program’s objectives, engagement with policy makers at national and international levels to influence higher agricultural education policies and guide agriculture-training processes at University and TVET levels is crucial. Objectives can also be achieved by improving linkages between Universities and agricultural industry players and other partners. The process begins with an engagement between Egerton University and Agricultural industry players.

The contribution of the agricultural sector in Kenya and the sub Saharan countries at large cannot be understated since on average it contributes 15% of total GDP and employs more than half of the total labour force in Africa (FAO, 2018). In Kenya, agriculture is key to the economy, contributing 26 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) directly and 27 per cent indirectly through linkages with other sectors. The agricultural sector employs more than 40 per cent of the total population and more than 70 per cent of Kenya's rural people. Sixty-five per cent of all the exports in Kenya are accounted for by the agricultural sector and the sector provides livelihood for more than 80 per cent of the. The sector is also the main driver of the non-agricultural economy through providing inputs and market for non-agricultural operations (FAO 2018).

Agriculture in Kenya is large and complex, with a multitude of public, parastatal, non-governmental and private sectors. However, smallholder farmers in Kenya face some of the most difficult agricultural challenges as they strive to grow food and market it. There is therefore a strong call for collaborative approaches to transform the lives of smallholder farmers and improve their livelihoods through increased rural incomes and achievement of maximum benefits from agriculture. This approach provides opportunities for players to learn how approaches from complementary disciplines may be applied to existing problems, and lead to the development of innovative solutions when discussions among colleagues stimulate new ideas.

Collaboration between academia and private sector players allow researchers to see real world application of research. This results in social and economic benefit to society, science, and private industry. Partners in the government sector ensure that technology cooperation projects are well aligned with real needs in the agricultural community. Equally important in these partnerships is the participation of nongovernmental organizations. Companies in the private sector are increasingly joining partnerships that have been formed to meet the country's research needs. Companies can contribute a variety of resources to such partnerships, including fundamental scientific data (such as access to genomics information); specific technology, including genes and traits; training to develop or move proven technology into crops important for food security; consultation on intellectual property, environmental stewardship, biosafety and regulatory matters, and food safety; and royalty-free licenses to patented technology. The global agricultural community has a long history of sharing knowledge, expertise, enthusiasm, and ingenuity with

smallholder farmers in a common cause. Together, innovative solutions can be discovered and developed to be used by smallholder farmers to grow more and better food, care for the land, enhance their economic future, and protect and preserve the environment for generations to come.

The engagement between Egerton University and agricultural industry is therefore, critical for skills development, the generation, acquisition and adoption of knowledge amongst the students and staff. It also helps in coordination of research and development agendas for both the university and industry. The collaboration can also expand the relevance of research carried out in public institutions as well as fostering commercialization of research outputs. This National Forum meeting was initially scheduled to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 at Egerton University, Njoro. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the meeting was postponed. To meet the objectives of the national forum, the university will host two sessions virtually. The theme for the two sessions is: “*Agricultural Innovation, Research and Transformation for Sustainable Development*”. The first session will be held on **27<sup>th</sup> May, 2020** focusing on agricultural innovations, from creation to utilization. The second session will be held on **17<sup>th</sup> June 2020** with a focus on fostering university- industry linkages.

#### **Main Objective of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Forum**

The main objective of the national forum is to enhance collaboration between Egerton University, policy makers and key industry players for agricultural growth and development.

#### **Specific objectives of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National forum for Agricultural Industry players and Entrepreneurs**

1. To develop new linkages and partnerships with other like -minded organizations
2. To strength the existing partnerships and linkages
3. To identify agricultural industry innovations for incorporation into students’ learning
4. To expose the students to national agricultural innovation systems actors and entrepreneurs
5. To provide linkage between the University and Tertiary and Vocational Education Training

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020