



## **RUFORUM and WACREN Renew Cooperation to Expand Open Science and Digital Services in Africa**

### ***For Immediate Release***

**May 30, 2024** – The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and the West and Central African Research and Education Network (WACREN) are proud to announce the signing of a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This partnership aims to foster a mutually beneficial relationship to promote open science and deliver advanced digital services to African higher education institutions. This new agreement follows the successful implementation of the [2021 MoU](#), in which the two parties agreed to leverage and harness their capacities to provide an environment that fosters the accessibility and visibility of scientific and scholarly communication of RUFORUM researchers and librarians.

The new MoU was signed by Prof. Patrick Okori, the Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, and Dr. Boubakar Barry, the Chief Executive Officer of WACREN. The aim of this MoU is to expand open science in Africa by leveraging strategies and solutions tailored to the African context. By delivering state-of-the-art digital services at scale and reducing costs, the collaboration aims to enhance the quality and accessibility of scientific and scholarly communications across the continent.

### **Key Areas of Collaboration**

1. **Access to Scientific and Scholarly Communications:** Enhance access to scientific publications and research outputs for students, researchers, and faculty across African higher education institutions.
2. **Capacity Building in Digital Technologies for Agriculture and Climate Change:** Develop and implement training programs to build the capacity of higher education institutions and value chain actors to use digital technologies to address agricultural and climate challenges.
3. **Digital Research Infrastructure Development:** Increase investments in digital research infrastructure to improve African agricultural and climate outcomes. This includes developing and maintaining advanced digital platforms and research and data-sharing tools.
4. **Science Policy and Institutional Frameworks:** Collaborate on creating and strengthening science policies and institutional frameworks to support sustainable development and innovation in the agricultural and climate sectors.

While alluding to the successful outcomes of the first phase of the WACREN-RUFORUM cooperation, the CEO of WACREN, Dr Boubakar Barry, expressed hope that the new phase of the journey will yield tangible outcomes which will positively and significantly impact the work of the RUFORUM research community.

"In this new phase, we will leverage WACREN's upgraded infrastructure and our platforms and services to meet the community's needs. We will work with RUFORUM to amplify the voice and impact of African agricultural researchers, making their work count in their local economies and become more visible on the global stage."

Prof. Patrick Okori, Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, remarked, "This partnership with WACREN marks a significant step towards revolutionising access to scientific knowledge and digital services in Africa. By working together, we can enhance the capacity of our higher education institutions to drive innovation and address critical challenges in agriculture and climate change."

### **About RUFORUM**

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 170 universities in 40 African countries. Established in 2004, RUFORUM's mission is to strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of small-scale farmers and value chains through the training of high-quality researchers, the output of impact-oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions, and governments.

### **About WACREN**

The West and Central African Research and Education Network (WACREN) is dedicated to promoting the development and use of advanced network infrastructure to support education and research in West and Central Africa. WACREN's vision is to enable a connected African research and education community, driving collaboration, innovation, and excellence in education and research across the region. Through the [AfricaConnect3](#) and Africa Digital Campus projects, WACREN has provided high-speed connectivity, capacity building and advanced digital services to more than a million academic community members across our region.

### **Contact Information**

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