Engaging Capacity of African Universities to Support Agricultural Development

Organizational Setup and Partnership Opportunities

REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES FORUM FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN AGRICULTURE (RUFORUM)

ILRI - SFFF Annual Planning Meeting: 6-8 May 2013

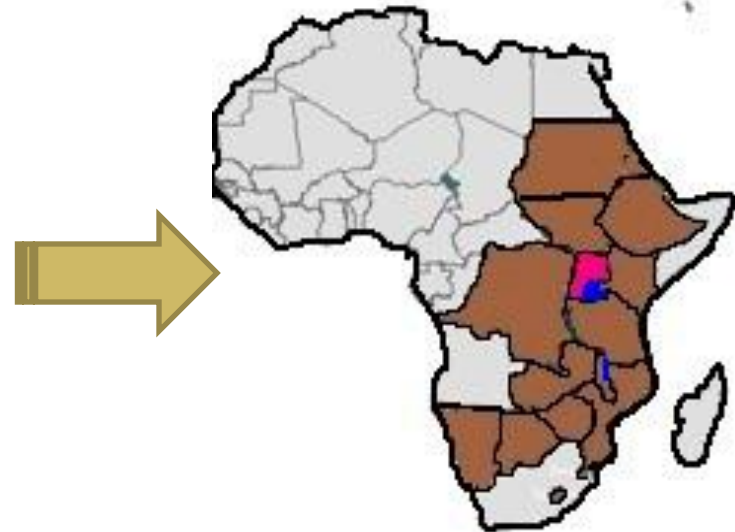# RUFORUM: The Humble Beginning

- Established in 2004; Formerly an RF funded program - (FORUM- 1992 to 2003)
- Taken over by 10 initial universities
- Demonstrable ownership by African universities
- Based on needs assessment and desire to engage universities with development processes

Phased Expansion
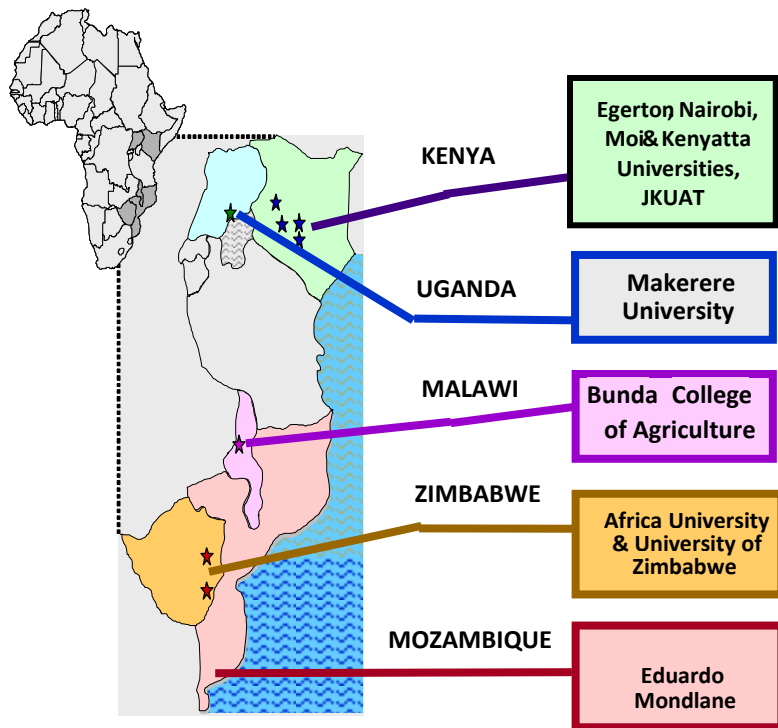
The RUFORUM Vision

A vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities that can produce high performing graduates and high-quality research responsive to the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations, and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development.

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7 Strategic Goals

- Train a critical mass of MSc and PhD graduates who are responsive to stakeholder needs and development goals;

- Develop collaborative research and training facilities that achieve economies of scope and scale;

- Increase the participation and voice of women in research, production and marketing;

- Improve adaptive capacities of universities to produce high quality and innovative training, research, and producing high quality outreach services;

- Increase the use of technology to support effective, decentralised learning and sharing of knowledge;

- Mainstream new approaches within university teaching/research that have impact across the agricultural sector's full value chain;

- Create a dynamic regional platform for policy advocacy, coordination, and resource mobilization for advanced learning/practice.

The RUFORUM Program Design

Improved agricultural productivity and wealth creation by developing effective agricultural universities

4 provide a powerful platform for networking, advocacy and resource mobilization

3 *forge and sustain national, regional and international partnerships*

2 build human resource and institution capacity to support knowledge generation

1 introduce and sustain a 'business unusual' orientation in universities

Rationale: RUFORUM Positioned to respond to a Changing Context (1)

- Sub-Saharan African Agriculture
  - Agricultural set to remain main engine for growth and poverty alleviation
  - Slow growth attributable to weak innovation systems and human resource shortfalls
  - African aspiration of *Agriculture for Development – brink of* agricultural take-off
  - Required - a strong skilled human resource to innovate

Rationale: RUFORUM Positioned to respond to a Changing Context (2)

- Higher Education in National Agricultural Innovation Systems
    - Need to improve effectiveness of agricultural technology generation and dissemination
    - Constraints in NARS - low critical mass of qualified professionals (faculty, extension personnel and scientists)
    - Situation changing - universities engaging in institutional and academic reforms
    - Increasing opportunities to play global role
    - RUFORUM potential vehicle to extend university reach and visibility

RUFORUM model – engaging universities in research to solve development problems

NGOs 8%

Policy 3%

PhD Training 14%

Industry 9%

Extension 6%

Universities 25%

Research Orgaizations 35%

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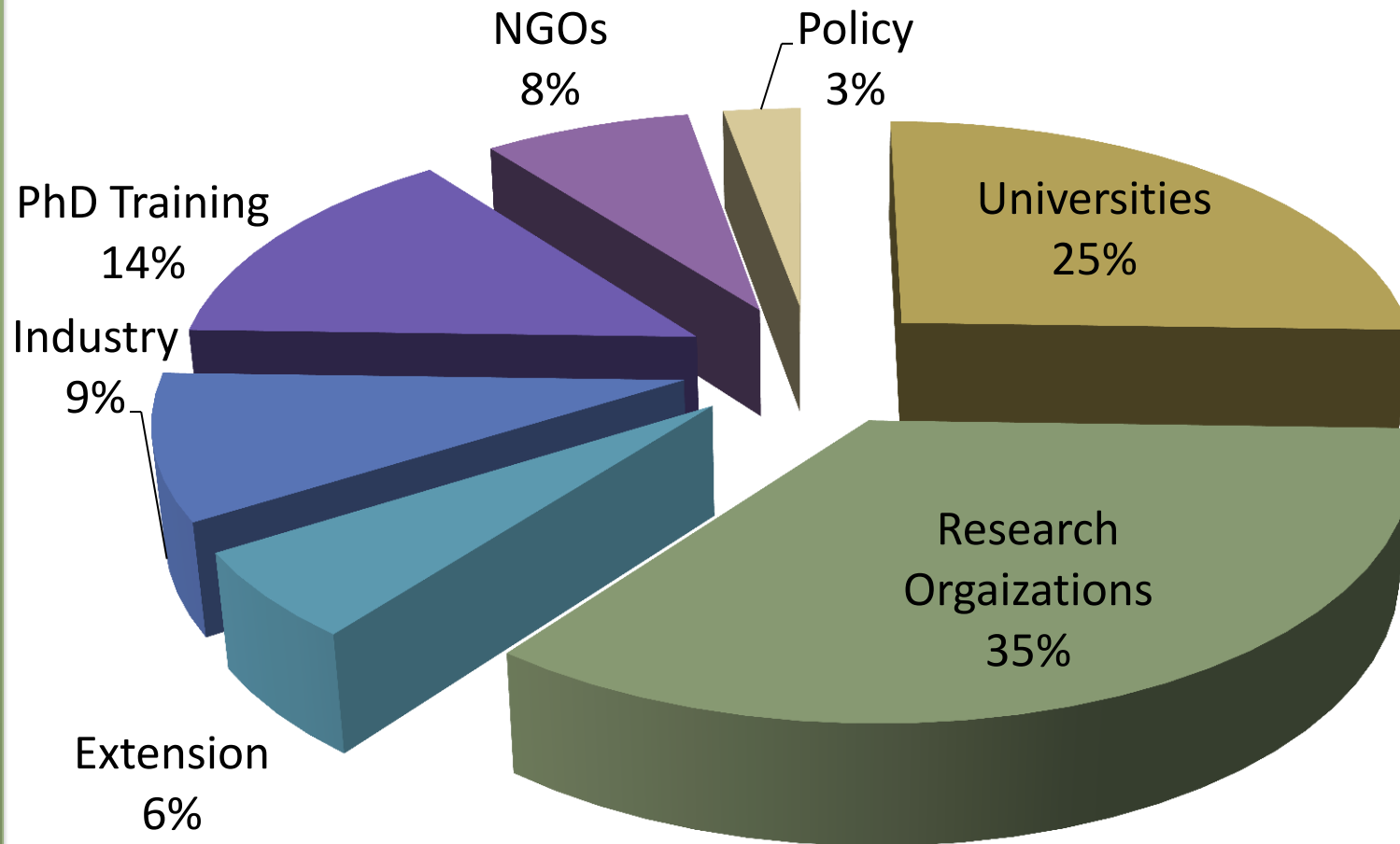
RUFORUM Assumes

- Development is possible through active, well-informed critical mass of locally based agricultural professionals
  - Strengthening the capacity of locally based researchers for agricultural innovation
  - Promoting the retention of this capacity

- Results of research likely to be used if propelled by a demand-driven research agenda
  - Encouraging the application/use of R&D in policy and practice

Impact Pathway

RUFORUM Activities

1. Demand-driven research, community action, institutional strengthening grants (CGS, CARP, regional MSc./PhD programmes)
2. Activities to guide and support research and institutional grants (field attachments, training in research methods, feeding research results back into curriculum, National Forum meetings, professional community building measures)
3. Activities to increase women's voice and participation
4. Partnerships with agro-industry, NGOs, etc.
5. ICT platform development (databases, e-learning capacity building, website upgrade)
6. Dissemination and advocacy (skills training, convening, publications)
7. Capacity in use of M&E
8. Measures to strengthen RUFORUM governance and capacity of the Secretariat
9. Mobilization of resources

Outputs

- Skill enhancement of individual researchers
- High quality, demand-responsive research produced and disseminated
- New university curricula and research capacity that emphasizes quality, innovation, and impact across the agricultural sector's full value chain
- Increased number of women participating in competitive and other research and training courses
- Innovative research methods and tools
- Regularized use of peer review, intergenerational mentoring, thematic forums
- Increased use of ICT-based resources in research, teaching, and learning
- Research agenda setting from conferences and influential reports on critical agricultural issues
- More exchange of information and knowledge about innovation, industry, and policy options among farmers, policymakers, business and higher education sector
- Effective M&E systems
- Improved planning, management and quality assurance of RUFORUM activities

Outcomes

- Critical mass of high-performing MSc and PhD graduates who are responsive to farmers' demands and national/regional development goals
- Universities build curriculum and pedagogy to meet 21st century needs/new geopolitical landscape
- Increased involvement of women in research, production and marketing
- Tighter links between research output/practice/capacity building
- Strong national content networks of African agricultural experts
- Scalable new research, training, convening, and outreach practices

Longer-Term Outcomes

- Increased stock of national knowledge of agricultural innovation systems
- Strengthened capacity of African professionals who can lead research teams and train the next generation agricultural scientists
- Cumulative numbers of experts who can advise and consult government, private bodies, media about high priority agricultural issues
- Stronger ability to influence emerging global conversation on African agriculture
- Increased cooperation among academe, government, NGOs. business to generate and disseminate agricultural knowledge
- RUFORUM as a regional reference point for agricultural development programmes

Ultimate Impacts

- Stronger higher education institutions capable of responding to national priorities
- Improved lives and livelihoods of Africa's poor and disadvantaged people through the creation of a strong national capacity in agricultural research and development
- Employment of high-quality agriculturalists with deep appreciation for world knowledge and respect for citizens of their societies
- Agricultural policy and practice reform

External Factors

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External Factors

Core Areas (1)

CA1: Demand-driven research, community action &institutional strengthening grants

CA 2: Activities to guide and support research & institutional grants

CA3: Monitoring and Evaluation

CA 4: Harnessing ICT for improved Performance at the Secretariat & Universities

1.1 The RUFORUM Competitive Grants Scheme (CGS)
1.2 Institutional Grants for Strengthening Weak Departments and for Emerging Issues
1.3 Commissioned Community-Action Research (CARP) by University Teams of faculty and students
1.4. Regional MSc and PhD programmes

Core Areas (2)

CA1: Demand-driven research, community action &institutional strengthening grants

CA 2: Activities to guide and support research & institutional grants

CA3: Monitoring and Evaluation

CA 4: Harnessing ICT for improved Performance at the Secretariat & Universities

2.1 Field Attachments for MSc students spending additional time in the field as interns with NGOs,
NARs, or private sector organizations
2.2 Training in research methods
2.3 Promoting female participation
2.4 Quality assurance for graduate training in network universities
2.5 Building curriculum in emerging critical areas, e.g., climate change, water, etc.
2.5 Professional Community Building
2.6 Establishment and support of the operations of National Forums3

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Core Areas (3)

CA1: Demand-driven research, community action & institutional strengthening grants

CA 2: Activities to guide and support research & institutional grants

CA3: Monitoring and Evaluation

CA 4: Harnessing ICT for improved Performance at the Secretariat & Universities

3.1 Maintaining M&E System
3.2 Conducting various M&E activities
3.3 Dissemination and Advocacy
3.4 Strengthening M&E Capacity

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Core Areas (4)

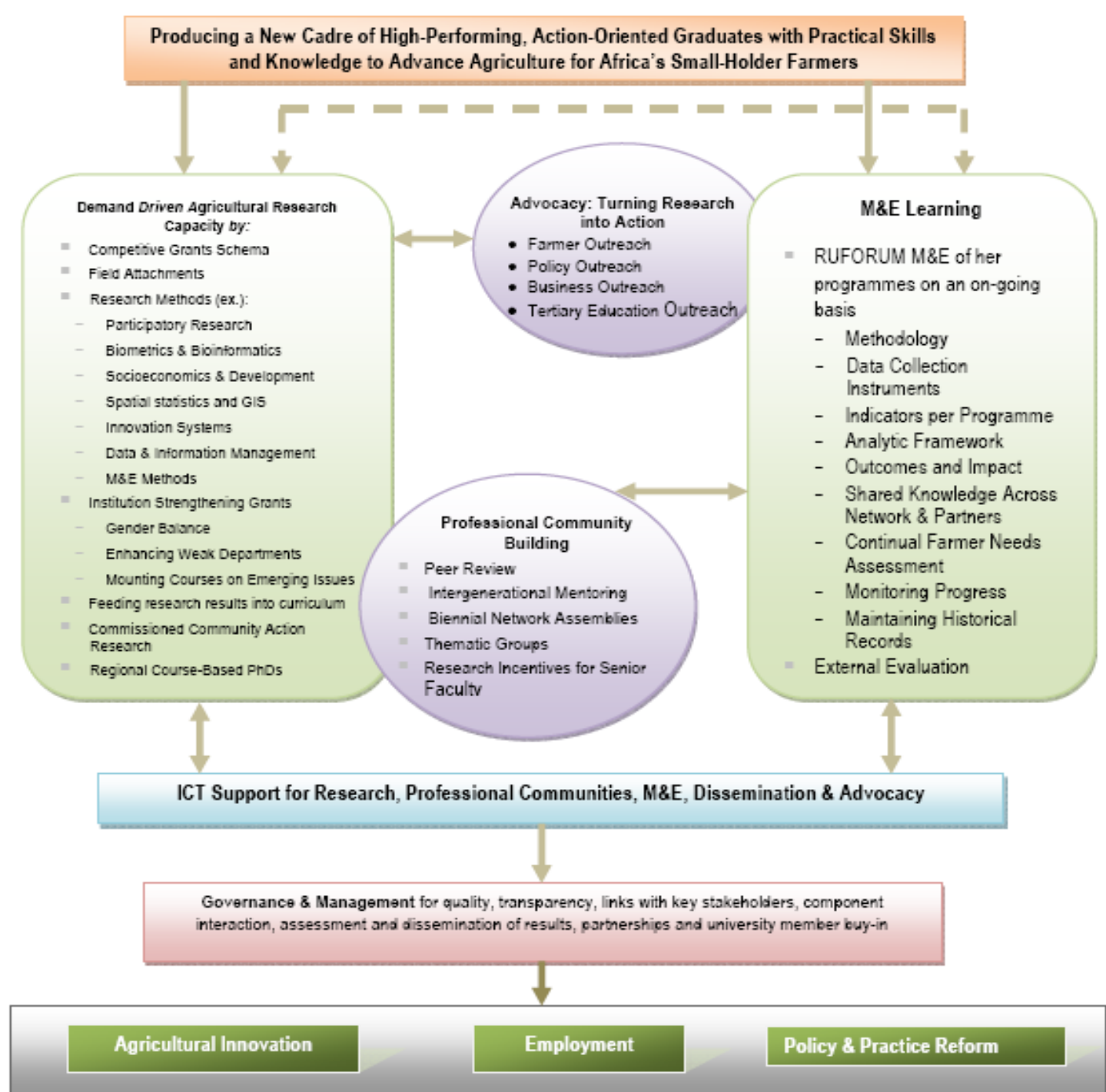CA1: Demand-driven research, community action & institutional strengthening grants

CA 2: Activities to guide and support research & institutional grants

CA3: Monitoring and Evaluation

CA 4: Harnessing ICT for improved Performance at the Secretariat & Universities

4.1 Implement technology-mediated learning, teaching, and research
4.2 Develop RUFORUM network's capacity to create and use open educational resources
4.3 Improve the dissemination of African agricultural research information
4.4 Build Secretariat capacity to manage the information needs of RUFORUM

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RUFORUM Conceptual Framework

Producing a New Cadre of High-Performing, Action-Oriented Graduates with Practical Skills and Knowledge to Advance Agriculture for Africa's Small-Holder Farmers

Demand *Driven* Agricultural Research Capacity by:
- Competitive Grants Schema
- Field Attachments
- Research Methods (ex.):
  - Participatory Research
  - Biometrics & Bioinformatics
  - Socioeconomics & Development
  - Spatial statistics and GIS
  - Innovation Systems
  - Data & Information Management
  - M&E Methods
- Institution Strengthening Grants
  - Gender Balance
  - Enhancing Weak Departments
  - Mounting Courses on Emerging Issues
- Feeding research results into curriculum
- Commissioned Community Action Research
- Regional Course-Based PhDs

Advocacy: Turning Research into Action
- Farmer Outreach
- Policy Outreach
- Business Outreach
- Tertiary Education Outreach

Professional Community Building
- Peer Review
- Intergenerational Mentoring
- Biennial Network Assemblies
- Thematic Groups
- Research Incentives for Senior Faculty

M&E Learning
- RUFORUM M&E of her programmes on an on-going basis
  - Methodology
  - Data Collection Instruments
  - Indicators per Programme
  - Analytic Framework
  - Outcomes and Impact
  - Shared Knowledge Across Network & Partners
  - Continual Farmer Needs Assessment
  - Monitoring Progress
  - Maintaining Historical Records
- External Evaluation

ICT Support for Research, Professional Communities, M&E, Dissemination & Advocacy

Governance & Management for quality, transparency, links with key stakeholders, component interaction, assessment and dissemination of results, partnerships and university member buy-in

Agricultural Innovation   **Employment**   **Policy & Practice Reform**

Emerging Results & Learning Points

Lessons learnt for improvement of training and research in Universities to be more relevant to development

Framework and strategy for incubation, outreach and up-scaling of innovations derived both from University and from development actors

Framework and strategy for scaling-up and sustaining partnerships between universities and the development actors

Improving University Programming

R&T Facilitation, Partnerships, technology sourcing and Stakeholder Engagement:

Feeding back to **teaching, research and Outreach programmes**
For improvement

Opportunities for Collaboration ILRI/SFFF --- 1

- Student/Staff Training Fellowships and Attachment
- Platform for networking through RUFORUM Community of Practice:
  - National Forums
  - Biennial Conference
  - Deans Committee
  - Postgraduate Students
  - VCs
- Sygergy/Learning in Project/Programme Implementation

Opportunities for Collaboration ILRI/SFFF --- 2

- Exploring New Grounds:
  - a veterinary epidemiologist and food safety
  - Animal Disease Risk Assessment and Zoonoses Surveillance/training
  - Bioinformatics and Biosafety
  - ICT – driven research, collaboration and training
- Advocacy
- International Conferences
- New Regional PhD in Food Science and nutrition
  - Strengthening Food Safety & Livestock value chain Component

Fostering Value Adding Partnerships
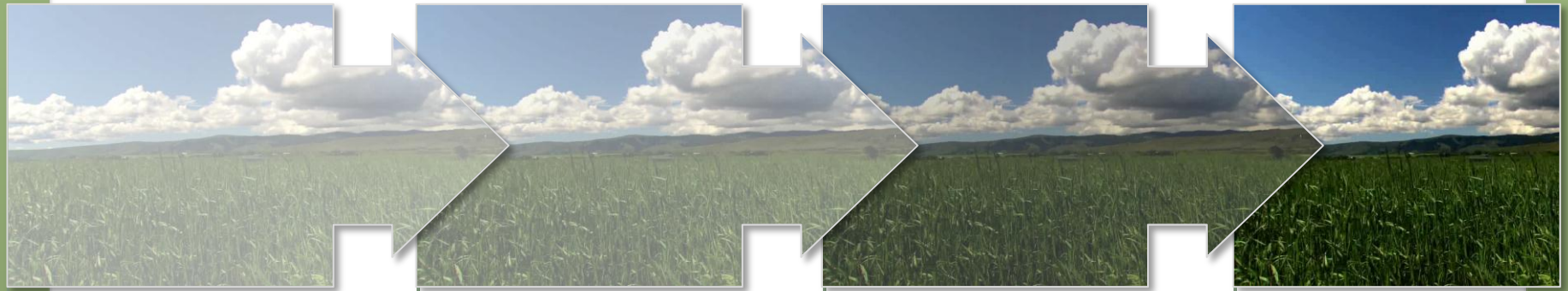
Student Training/Fellowships/Award

New grounds ??

Organizational/ Project Learning – Lesson Sharing

Sharing Human Resources

Collaborative research

Regional/ National Mandate

Short Courses & Skills Enhancement

Training facilities

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