



Partnerships for Skills in Applied Sciences Engineering and Technology (PASET) Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif)

Rsif Alumni Network (RAN) Inaugural Workshop

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

Theme: Driving Collaborative Research and Innovation for Africa's Developmental Impact

Date: 15th -16th September 2025

Venue: Protea Hotel Kampala Skyz, Kampala, Uganda

For more information contact: Wangari Wanjiku - wwanjiku@icipe.org

Introduction

Africa's ability to address complex challenges and achieve socio-economic transformation depends on building a strong ecosystem of highly skilled scientists, innovators, and technology leaders, and leveraging science, technology, and innovation as key drivers of development. The Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (Rsif), established under the Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (PASET), plays a central role in building a critical mass of highly skilled scientists, innovators, and professionals in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology (ASET) fields.

Since its implementation by International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*), Rsif has steadily contributed to Africa's ASET capacity by supporting talented PhD students through scholarships, mentorship, and global research partnerships. The program has recorded notable progress, including the expansion of African Host Universities (AHUs), enhanced collaboration with International Partner Institutions (IPIs), and a steadily growing number of PhD graduates.

Rsif has grown to support 302 PhD scholars across Africa, with 63 having successfully graduated. From the inaugural cohort of 15 scholars enrolled in 2018, over half have completed their studies, and graduates are steadily emerging from subsequent cohorts.

This growing alumni base presents an invaluable resource, not only to inspire current scholars, but to amplify Rsif's long-term impact on Africa's development agenda. Recognizing this, the Rsif Alumni Network (RAN) has been established to provide a lasting structure for engagement, collaboration, and contribution by alumni across Africa and beyond. RAN's vision is to be a dynamic and holistic network of professionals who are a valuable resource to Rsif, Africa, and the international community. Through targeted initiatives in mentorship and career support,

research collaboration, and program advocacy, RAN aims to drive tangible outcomes aligned with Africa's development priorities and the goals of the Rsif program.

This inaugural Rsif Alumni Network workshop under the theme "Driving Collaborative Research and Innovation for Africa's Developmental Impact" will formally bring together Rsif alumni and key stakeholders to strengthen the foundation and direction of this network.

Objectives

- i)Redefine the structure, values, and strategic priorities of the Rsif Alumni Network through a collaborative process that aligns with its vision and mission.
- ii)Identify and explore practical pathways for alumni to contribute to the ASET ecosystem through research, innovation, networking, policy engagement and entrepreneurship.
- iii)Review and enhance (finalising) collaborative research proposals developed by alumni with the goal of strengthening their relevance, coherence, and competitiveness for funding aligned Africa's development challenges.
- iv)Propose sustainable frameworks for alumni engagement in mentorship, career development, and interdisciplinary research collaboration to support f scholars and institutional partnerships.

Expected Outcomes

- i)A shared understanding and agreement on the Rsif Alumni Network's structure, values, and strategic direction.
- ii)A prioritized set of alumni-led initiatives that contribute to ASET goals in research, innovation, and policy influence.
- iii)Refined and ready-to-submit collaborative research proposals addressing priority thematic areas in Africa's development agenda and tailored to funding opportunities.

Pre- Workshop Note

Prior to the workshop, Rsif alumni are invited to collaborate on joint proposals addressing a major opportunity or challenge in ASET for Africa's development in the thematic areas. These proposals will be presented, reviewed, and streamlined during the event.

Rsif Alumni Network Inaugural Workshop Agenda

Day 1: Anchoring the Network – Vision, Voices & Proposals

08:00hrs– 08:30hrs **Phase Zero:** Network Activation (Arrival, Registration & Settling In)

Ms. Flexidis Muange Mutindi – *Rsif Capacity Building Officer, RCU*
Ms. Jeritah Maungu – *Rsif Capacity Building Officer, RCU*

8:30hrs– 9:00hrs: Welcome Remarks:

- Dr. Esther Aba Eshun - *Rsif Alumni Network Executive Chair*
- Dr. Julius Ecuru – *Head of Policy and Enabling Environment, icipe*
- Professor Buyinza Mukadasi - *Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academics Affairs, Makerere University*

9:00hrs– 9:45hrs: **Keynote address:**
Catalyzing Impact: Rsif Alumni/Early Career Scientists as Engines of Research and Innovation in Africa

Speaker:

- Dr Saliou Niassy – *Coordinator, Inter-African Phytosanitary Council, African Union (AU-IAPSC)*

9:45hrs– 10:45hrs: **Panel Discussion:** Driving Change in ASET: Powering Africa's Research and Innovation Engine

Moderator: Dr. David Afolayan – *Rsif Alumnus*

Panelists:

- Eng Dr. Dorothy Okello – *Dean, School of Engineering, Makerere University*
- Prof. Jibrin Jibrin – *Director, Centre for Dryland Agriculture, Bayero University, Nigeria*
- Dr. Emmanuel Effah – *Rsif Alumnus*
- Dr. Tsion Amsalu Fode – *Rsif Alumna*
- Dr. Theofrida Maginga – *Rsif Alumna*

10:45hrs– 11:15hrs **Health Break (incl. group photo)**

11:15hrs– 11:45hrs: Benchmarking Best Practices from Established Alumni Network

Dr. Joelina Nasaka – *DAAD AUGA Alumni Chair*

11:45hrs– 12:30hrs: Interactive Group Work: Refining RAN's Identity and Priorities

All Rsif Alumni

12:55hrs– 13:00hrs: **Plenary Session:** Feedback on RAN's Identity and Strategic Priorities

Ms. Wangari Wanjiku – *Rsif Capacity Building Officer, RCU*

All Rsif Alumni

13:00hrs Lunch

14:00hrs– 15:30hrs: Joint Proposals Presentation & Panel Review

Presenters – Rsif Alumni

Reviewers

- Prof. Patrick Okori- *Executive Secretary RUFORUM*
- Dr. Michael Kidoido- *Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Rsif, RCU*
- Eng Dr. Dorothy Okello – *Dean, School of Engineering, Makerere University*
- Prof. Jibrin Jibrin– *Director, Centre for Dryland Agriculture, Bayero University, Nigeria*
- Dr. Joelina Nasaka – *DAAD AUGA Alumni Chair*

15:30hrs– 16:00hrs Tea Break

16:00hrs– 16:30hrs: Interactive Group work: Collaborative Proposal Refinement

Moderator:

Dr Everlyn Nguku – *Head, Capacity Building and Institutional Development, Rsif-RCU, icipe*

16:30hrs– 17:00hrs Day 1 Wrap Up

Alumni Rapporteurs

Day 1: Anchoring the Network – Vision, Voices & Proposals

08:30hrs– 09:00hrs	Day 1 Recap Alumni Rapporteur/Facilitator
9:00hrs– 10:15hrs:	Supporting Early Career Scientists Dr. Beatrice Muriithi– <i>Scientist, Gender and Impact Assessment, icipe</i>
10:15hrs– 10:30hrs	Tea Break
10:30hrs– 11:30hrs:	Navigating ASET Careers: Academia, Innovation & Policy. Dr. Moses Osiru – <i>Senior Education Specialist, World Bank</i>
11:30hrs– 12:30hrs:	Fireside Chat: Technology for Research Excellence & Academic Growth Moderator: Dr. Esther Aba Eshun – <i>Rsif Alumna</i> Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shira Mukiibi – <i>Business Development Manager, BioInnovate Africa.</i> • Prof Patrick Okori- <i>Executive Secretary, RUFORUM</i> • Prof. Richard Edema- <i>Managing Director MARCCI, Rsif Coordinator - Makerere University</i>
12:30hrs– 13:00hrs:	Synthesis and Next Steps Ms. Wangari Wanjiku – <i>Rsif Capacity Building Officer, RCU</i> All Rsif Alumni
13:00hrs– 14:00hrs	Lunch
14:00hrs– 17:00hrs:	Regional Science Symposium Opening Ceremony Ms. Cynthia Orangó – <i>Rsif Research and Innovation Grants Officer, RCU</i>
17:00hrs– 19:00hrs	Networking Cocktail