



## News from Pro-RUWA

Promoting Academic Capacities for  
Sustainable Agricultural  
Resources Use in West Africa

## Welcome to the 2nd newsletter of the Pro RUWA network!

Roughly, a third of the gross domestic products of Pro RUWA partner countries Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger are contributed by the agricultural sector. With such an important share, the effects of increasing climate variability and change, of soil erosion, water scarcity, and loss of agro-biodiversity are posing a great challenge to the economic future of these countries and their (still predominantly rural) population. While globally food security has become an even more vulnerable luxury for many countries since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine War, regionally, the people in West Africa, foremost Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger are suffering in the ongoing hardships of violent attacks and disruptions in infrastructure and security. All in all, such situations call for a stronger and determined regionalisation in order to (i) foster regional food security, (ii) increase national food self-sufficiency, and (iii) strengthen national and regional agricultural value chains.

Pro-RUWA has long term plans to tackle these problems by reaching out to its project goals that focus on academic research capacities, infrastructure at the three West African universities UAC (Bénin), UAM (Niger) and UDDG (Burkina Faso) and the qualification of graduates in methods on resource use and as well as state-of-the-art academic and business soft skills. Future decision makers will be capacitated to jointly overcome bottlenecks in resource overuse and food insecurity at the national and regional level. Operational links between the academic, public and private sector tied together through the Pro-RUWA transfer center create a security net and igniting power to upcoming solutions for a world of dynamic challenge

We appreciate humanitarian, regional and international aid responding immediately to needs of people under threat worldwide. And together as a growing network, we at UAC, UAM, UDDG and University of Kassel express confidence in our joint efforts towards scientifically based, sustainable solutions for food security, one among many important challenges we thrive to encounter.

Best regards,  
Pro RUWA Team

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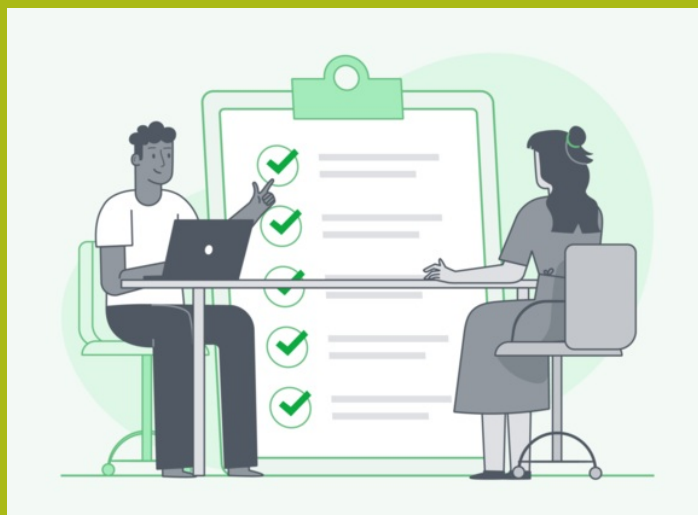
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## Highlights of this newsletter edition

- Meetings in West Africa, August 2022
- PhD Selection in progress
- Pro-RUWA IT-Hubs on campuses of UAM and UDDG
- Pro RUWA Transfer and Incubator Center
- Calls for Application

### Meetings in West Africa, August 2022

Beginning of August, Pro RUWA's principal investigator from Germany Prof. Andreas Bürkert and coordinator Dr. Martin Wiehle were on a seven-day project meeting trip to Burkina Faso and Niger. The activities included the selection of the 2nd PhD cohort and a steering committee meeting in Ouagadougou as well as visits of the newly installed Pro-RUWA IT-Hubs/classrooms on campuses of UAM and UDDG.



### PhD Selection in Progress

Our joint Graduate School for Sustainable Resources Use and Food Security offers modular PhD training program (Graduate Academy) in Agricultural Sciences. Every year, outstanding graduates from our West African partner institutions with a background in subjects related to agriculture and sustainable resources use are granted a fully funded scholarship to conduct their research. Due to security issues in the region of Dédougou, we had to shift the PhD selection to the University of Ouagadougou – thanks for hosting the Pro-RUWA team consisting of Prof. H. Dossa, Prof. D. J.-P. Lompo, Prof. A. Bürkert and M. Wiehle! Out of the 11 shortlisted PhD candidates, the PhD board currently decides on the final candidates who can be requested to join the Pro-RUWA graduate school. Learn more about Pro RUWA Graduate School [here](#).

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### Pro-RUWA IT-Hubs and class rooms on campuses of UAM and UDDG



**Pro RUWA's solar-powered, state-of-art IT hub funded by DAAD finalized and active at Université de Dédougou. All students and staff welcome!!!**



International communication, education and capacity building across nations and disciplines strongly depend on access to state-of-the-art IT infrastructure. The often unstable internet connections with low bandwidth make live online communication and teaching at the partner universities in West Africa unpractical. In 2021 and 2022, the technical infrastructure needed for digital teaching and supervision and location-specific requirements were installed at all partnering universities, some still in progress. We are happy to share the good news and welcome all graduates and staff to use the new facilities! Our appreciation goes out to DIGI Face who provided additional filming equipment and to DAAD for additional funding in 2021. Due to security issues in Burkina Faso, the inauguration events at UDDG and UAM did not yet take place. Please, stay updated via [twitter](#) for upcoming announcements.



Ongoing constructions of class rooms in Niamey, Niger

### Pro RUWA Transfer and Incubator center

Fostering university education, international relations, and regional development is right at the top of our goals. One overarching branch within Pro RUWA is the so called RUWA-Transfer Center. This centre, intends to foster innovative business ideas and simultaneously promote and support a strong network of regional expertise among Pro-RUWA alumni as well as academic, private, and public partners at individual and organisational level. providing infrastructure (meeting rooms, IT-facilities, administrative support) and fostering synergies, RUWA-Incubator will help in the creation of new quality jobs, to create ties to potential employer, value and work options at place, thus contributing to halt the brain drain of qualified alumni, and cultivate a dynamic entrepreneur community.

Beginning of July 2022, we had a productive meeting with Dr. Augustin Aoudji – Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of UAC – to discuss further ideas for our envisaged incubator. From here, we designed a call for application to develop an incubator concept, which we can use to decide on the many formats and strategies of such an endeavor. We have now received promising applications of candidates for this external service. We will keep you up to date in our next newsletter edition.

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### In other news

Congratulations to Pro RUWA's PI in Burkina Faso **Prof. Dr. Jean Pascal Désiré Lompo** on being appointed Vice President of Research and International Cooperation!

“The president of the University of Dédougou, Pr Alou Keita, officially installed on Friday, July 22, 2022 in the meeting room, the vice-president in charge of Research and International Cooperation (VP-RCI), Dr. Jean Pascal Desiré Lompo replacing Dr. Kiessoun Konaté. The ceremony took place in the presence of other vice presidents, the regional director of higher education, teachers-researchers, directors of institutions, central directors, heads of departments and similar and several other guests.” [Read more here](#)

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## Calls for Application

### +++ Online courses via Digi Face +++

#### GIS advanced course 10-14 Oct 2022

Pro-RUWA offers an Advanced GIS and remote sensing application in agricultural sciences. This course aims to enhance basic knowledge and skills in GIS and remote sensing, such as land use classification, spatial analysis, watershed delineation, machine learning, and interpolation. [Apply here](#)

#### Scientific working and publishing 17-21 Oct 2022

Pro-RUWA offers a Scientific Working and Publishing course in natural/agricultural science. The course will give participants the chance to acquire and/or refine and practice their scientific working skills, to get insights into various software packages and online tools, as well as to learn useful tips and tricks while writing up theses and articles. Lastly, it enables the student to develop publication strategies by using journal metrics and being aware of publication options. The focus and context of the course will be in the field of life sciences. Please note: this offer is no scientific writing course. [Apply here](#)



## Selected Publications

*"Morphological characterization and habitat suitability modeling of the goat population of Benin under climate change scenarios"*

Co-authored by our PhD scholar Afatondji Cossi, Pro RUWA's IT administration in Germany Dr. Thanh Nguyen and PI in UAC Prof. Dr. Hippolyte Dossa. Read full publication [here](#)

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## Outlook

+++ Inauguration of IT-Hubs in October 2022 +++

+++ MSc Program Climate Sensitive Resources Management starting this year +++

Stay updated through [twitter](#) and on our [homepage](#).

The West African-German network „Promoting Academic Capacities for Sustainable Agricultural Resources Use in West Africa“ - **Pro-RUWA\*** aims to train a new generation of regionally and internationally educated young scientists, entrepreneurs, and administrators. Future decision makers in francophone West Africa will be capacitated to jointly overcome bottlenecks in resource overuse and food insecurity at the national and regional level by fostering university education, international relations, regional development, and operational links between the academic, public and private sector. Pro-RUWA builds on existing structures of three young universities in West Africa that have recently decided to overcome the language barriers and internationalize their graduate education.

(\*Ruwa means „water“ in Hausa language)



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