



# Pro-RUWA NEWS

The West African-German network „Promoting Academic Capacities for Sustainable Agricultural Resources Use in West Africa" - Pro-RUWA (Ruwa means „water" in Hausa language) 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 partner universities in West Africa that have recently decided to overcome the language barriers and internationalize their graduate education.



## Pro-RUWA 2.0 Kick-off in Mali

Pro-RUWA successfully launched its second funding phase with a kick-off workshop in Bamako, Mali, and Pro-RUWA's new partner institution Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Appliquée (IPR/IFRA) in Katibougou.

The event brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from academia, government, and international partners. High-level participation included the Malian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research as well as the German Ambassador to Mali. With the integration of IPR/IFRA, Pro-RUWA 2.0 strengthens its regional network and expands its activities in sustainable land management, agriculture, and natural resource governance.





Pro-RUWA 2.0 Kick-off Workshop in Bamako

## Pro-RUWA 2.0 Graduate School

**PhD Academy:** from our multiple applications, four new PhD candidates have been already selected and will be soon publicly announced. The fourth cohort of Pro-RUWA PhD scholars will start their graduate program with an intensive training now in spring.

**Call for MSc. Scholarships:** a new call for eight fully funded Master program scholarships will be open for application by May or June. Within Pro-RUWA 2.0 both study years M1 and M2 will be funded for the successful applicants.

## Pro-RUWA Activities and Course Updates

### E-learning and Training Activities

There continues to be strong engagement in Pro-RUWA's training portfolio across all partner institutions.

A wide range of courses and trainings are currently being implemented and offered worldwide, including:

- Excel, Word, Zotero
- GIS (online and in presence)
- Data collection using KoboCollect
- Data management and research organization
- Meta-analysis and qualitative data analysis (e.g., NVivo)



Participants in Pro-RUWA training activities across partner institutions

In addition, specialized and practice-oriented trainings include for our internal team:

- Use of drones and UAVs in agricultural research
- Experimental design for lecturers and PhD students
- Presentation tools such as PowerPoint and Canva
- English language training for students and staff
- Ethics in science and research integrity
- Data analysis and scientific writing (including hybrid formats)

We thank all participants for their active engagement and contributions across these diverse learning formats. Our Spring courses will be announced on the DIGIFACE platform soon. Stay updated!

## Pro-RUWA Call for Applications – Spring Courses

Applications are now open for the upcoming Pro-RUWA online training courses designed to strengthen your skills in data analysis, research design, and spatial methods.

We invite MSc and PhD students to apply for the following courses:

- GIS for Beginners – introduction to GIS and remote sensing, including map creation, georeferencing, and spatial data analysis for agricultural sciences
- R-Statistics – fundamentals of R programming and statistical analysis for data-driven research
- Statistical Design and Modelling – covering experimental design, avoiding bias, hypothesis testing, and modelling techniques

Apply by **13 April 2026**. Selected participants will be notified shortly after, and courses will begin immediately online.

We look forward to receiving your applications. If a course is fully booked, additional e-learning opportunities may be offered later in 2026.

## On-site and Institutional Activities

Across partner universities (UAC, UAM, UDOC, and IPR/IFRA), numerous on-site activities are ongoing, including:

- Strengthening research infrastructure and procurement of equipment
- Development of multifunctional learning spaces
- Improvement of farm units for practical training
- Master's and PhD cohort selections
- Institutional capacity building for teaching and administration

These activities contribute to creating enabling environments for high-quality teaching, research, and innovation.



Scientific Week at FSA/UAC focusing on research ethics, scientific quality, and intellectual property

## Mobility and Exchange

A major highlight of this phase is the continued emphasis on academic mobility and exchange. Cohort visits and research stays are being implemented to strengthen collaboration between partner institutions

Visiting scholar programs continue to support knowledge exchange between West Africa and Germany

International exposure is fostering long-term research partnerships and joint publications

If you have any questions, send us a request!

## Interview: Alumni Perspective – Dr. Moussa Soulé

As part of this edition, we highlight the experience of Dr. Soulé, a former Pro-RUWA visiting researcher.

Dr. Soulé first engaged with Pro-RUWA through a GIS training, where he supported as a facilitator and later became actively involved in academic and research activities within the network.



During his academic journey, he contributed to workshops on:

- International funding opportunities
- Scientific communication and presentation
- Urban forestry

His research stay in Germany significantly expanded his professional network and enabled him to develop a scientific publication. He emphasizes that the experience:

- Strengthened his international collaborations
- Provided valuable exposure to interdisciplinary research environments
- Enhanced his scientific writing and publication skills

His recommendation to future scholars:

*"Take full advantage of the research environment, come prepared with your data, and use the opportunity to focus on scientific writing and collaboration".*

## Tropentag 2026 in Göttingen, Germany

Also this year, Tropentag, an annual interdisciplinary conference on research in tropical and subtropical agriculture, natural resource management and rural development, welcomes abstracts by **April 27, 2026**. Make use of this young scientist-supporting venue and get in contact with peers from across the globe. [Details](#)

## Looking Ahead

With Pro-RUWA 2.0 now fully underway, upcoming activities will continue to focus on:

- Expanding training programs and e-learning opportunities
- Strengthening institutional collaboration across all partners
- Supporting new Master's and PhD cohorts
- Enhancing research outputs and scientific publications

The integration of new partners and the expansion of activities mark an important step toward building a sustainable and impactful academic network in West Africa.

We particularly warmly welcome our four new scholars who will be our 4. PhD cohort to be part of Pro-RUWA community! They will soon be visible on our Pro-RUWA website.

## Stay Updated

For updates on upcoming courses, events, and collaborations, visit our website:

[www.uni-kassel.de/pro-ruwa](http://www.uni-kassel.de/pro-ruwa)

Or follow us on DIGI-FACE: [www.digiface.org](http://www.digiface.org)

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