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Abstract

The Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies is a product arising from a partnership between the University of Nairobi, Kenya and Colorado State University, Colorado, USA for transforming higher education in the drylands of Kenya. This project is one of 11 collaborative partnership projects between…. African and American institutions of higher Education that are receiving a two-year competitive grant from the Africa -USAID/Higher Education for Development Initiative. The purposes of our partnership are to enhance the capacity of the University of Nairobi (UON) to produce high-performing graduates to engage in demand-driven research that contributes to sustainable and productive dryland ecosystems and societies, and to build the higher education capacities of dryland communities in Kenya and beyond. The Center will collaborate with other institutions/organizations such as KARI, RUFORUM, Dryland Management Program at the University of Nairobi, ILRI, IUCN, and NGO/CBOs (e.g. Reto-o-Reto Foundation), and the Ministry of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands institutions. The Center will have an Advisory Board composed of representatives from our development partners in Drylands, will be managed by a Management Team and will have a secretariat of four employees led by the Center Coordinator. Some of the Center activities include mainstreaming dryland issues in academic curricula review, producing short courses for skill-building in dryland development, and recruiting Center interns, among others affiliates. The Center will also award competitive fellowships and grants for faculty, students, and interns to work on dryland needs-driven research-for-development issues. The long-term vision of the Center is to provide a learning platform for knowledge exchange, resulting in better coordination and greater impacts of higher education, research and outreach for dryland ecosystems and societies in Kenya, with a view to expanding to other African drylands in the future.