

## First working meeting of the RAFU consortium

On October 4, an online meeting was held with the founders and numerous participants of the Russian-African Network University (RAFU) Consortium.

[It should be reminded that since July 2023 Polytechnic University has become a coordinating HEI](#) of activities of the Russian-African Network University consortium.

The meeting was attended by Sergey Terashkevich, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Arseniev, Vice-Rector for International Activities of SPbPU, Alla Mazina, Deputy Head of the International Education Department, and Maxim Zalyvsky, Head of the RAFU Consortium Project Office.

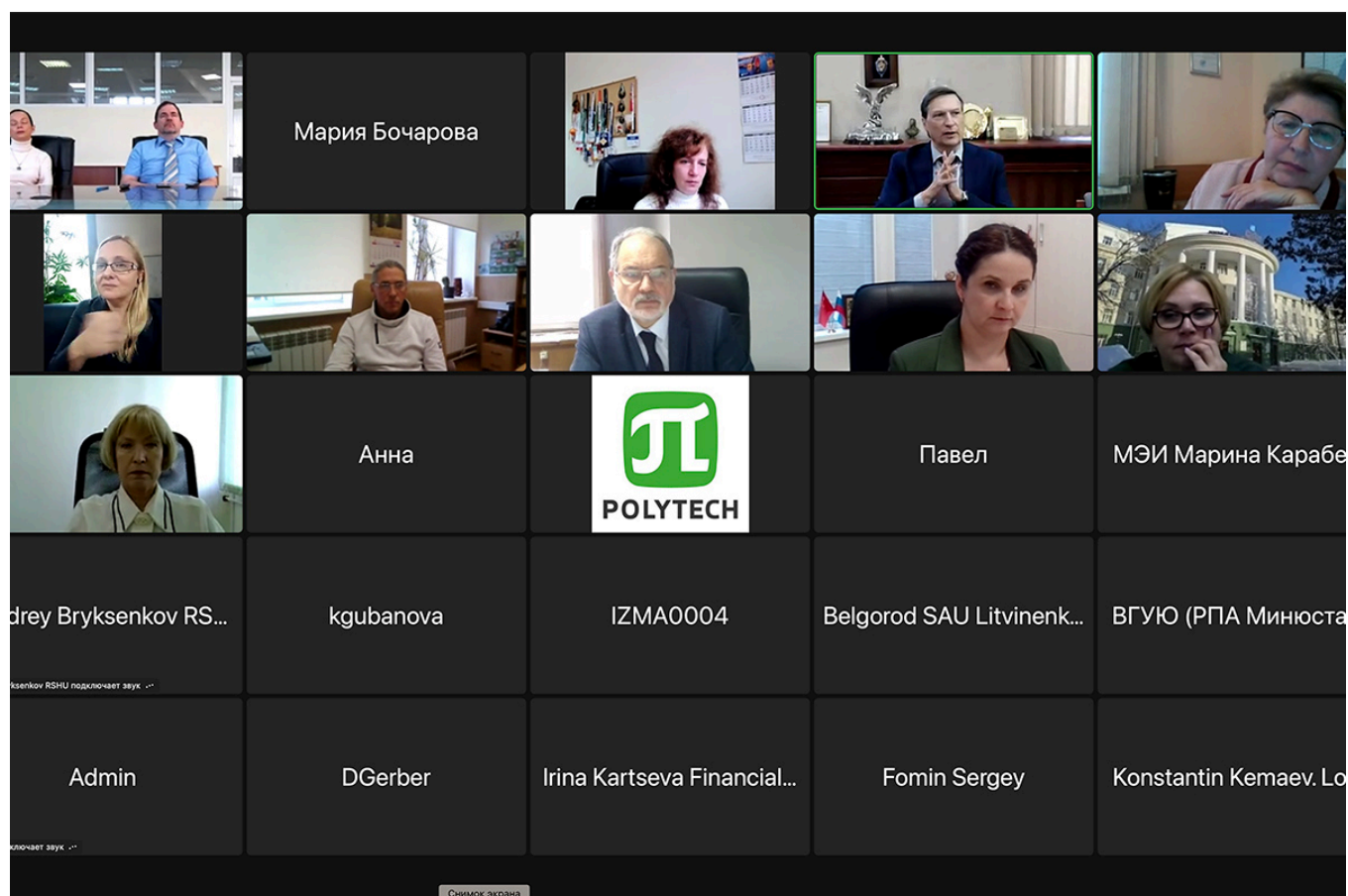


32 universities from Russia, members of the RAFU consortium, came to the call. Dmitry Arsenyev, Vice-Rector for International Activities of SPbPU, warmly welcomed all the participants and reminded them that the consortium already includes more than 50 Russian and 20 African universities. He also informed the participants of the meeting that in September 2023 the RAFU project office started its work on the basis of SPbPU.

D.G. Arsenyev expressed his hope that the number of participants will be significantly expanded, because following the results of the [Russia-Africa summit in St. Petersburg last summer](#), the leadership of our country has given a new, qualitative impetus to the active strengthening of Russian-African relations and the important role of RAFU in the sphere of development of the unified educational space was noted by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin during the plenary session of the Forum.

In conclusion, Dmitry Arsenyev noted: The Consortium is really an excellent platform for all educational institutions to exchange experience, to participate in new joint cooperation projects with Africa.

Sergey Terashkevich emphasized the importance of RAFU creation as a structure that allows to unite different approaches of Russian universities to the development of cooperation with African countries, to provide the most effective information exchange of leading practices of relationship building and project implementation.



The participants discussed the issues of RAFU organizational structure, possible changes in it, which are required to build a more effective work of the consortium, as the number of participants is growing. The importance of grouping RAFU participants according to the branch principle for more effective work on specific target projects was noted. An agreement was reached to prepare proposals on this

issue by December 2023. The plan of the main activities under the aegis of RAFU for 2023-2024, prepared by the RAFU Project Office on the basis of SPbPU, was also presented.

In conclusion, a free-form discussion was held, where the participants of the meeting made proposals on RAFU work, as well as shared the experience of their university in the implementation of joint projects with African countries.

Summarizing the results, all noted the real interest in the development of RAFU and the need for closer cooperation between universities. There was also interest in involving other organizations in RAFU, including large industrial and other companies conducting or developing their activities on the African continent.

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