

ADVALUE

Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education

NEWSLETTER

Advancing Sustainable Agricultural Value Chains through Strengthening Transdisciplinary Skills and Cooperation in East African Doctoral Education

On 25 June 2024 a stakeholder workshop was conducted online with about 40 participants, including potential employers and national institutions engaged in research and higher education in Kenya and Uganda. Read more about this activity and the respective Work Package 2 (WP2) of the ADVALUE project.

Work Package 2 Stakeholder Dialoge and Innovation

Responsible ADVALUE partners: Uganda Christian University (UCU) and German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL)

WP2 targets the collaboration between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and working live partners to improve demand orientation and innovation, thereby increasing postgraduate employability and meeting the needs of agricultural value chain beneficiaries. To prepare the first stakeholder dialogue, the project partners conducted a stakeholder mapping and an online survey. All East African (EA) HEIs (Pwani University (PU), University of Nairobi (UoN), Makerere University (MAK) and Uganda Christian University (UCU)) mobilized participants from the local and regional environment to join the workshop.

Purpose

- Aims to establish the exchange with and the involvement of stakeholders are:
- to better define the current gaps in the PhD training in EA,
 - to collect views on what content/skills are needed by PhD students to be relevant in the current industry to make the programmes more robust,
 - to enhance the design of PhD training modules and enrich the quality of the programmes offered,
 - foster the contact with stakeholders e.g. for quality control and research assignments,
 - and all in all to enhance employability of PhD graduates after programme completion.

Addressed Stakeholders

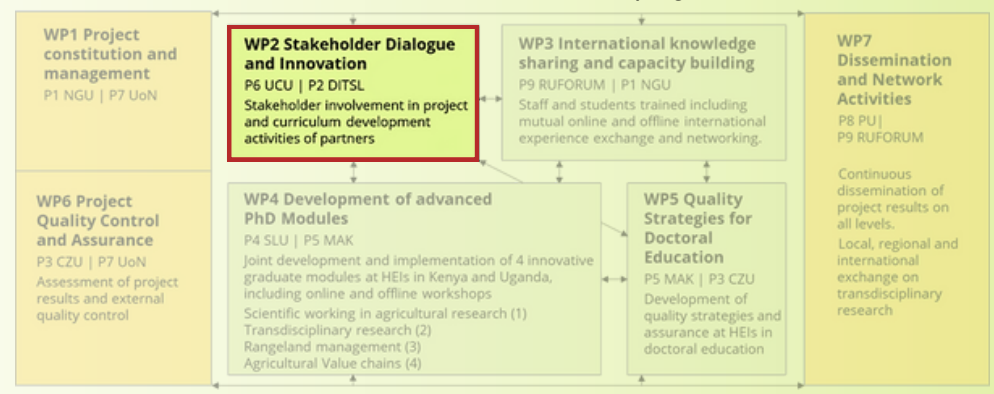
- Government ministries, departments and agencies,
- national and international research institutions,
- private sector actors,
- NGOs and
- international development agencies

in Uganda and Kenya that typically hire PhD graduates or collaborate with universities on PhD trainings in agriculture related fields.

External Advisory Board

The EAB should serve as an 'advisory body' to the participating EA universities to review progress and seek wider input into the various PhD programmes that already exist or are being developed, through regular joint meetings held once a year.

Participants in this first workshop (see page 2) will be invited to take on this consultative role and to contribute to the design of innovative and high quality doctoral programmes.



WP2, although smaller in terms of needed resources, belongs to the core of the project, that are the four Work Packages of the category "Development".



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First Stakeholder Dialoge Online Workshop - June 25th 2024

Attendants

42 participants took part in the workshop;
21 stakeholders including

- 7 from Ministries of Government and their Agencies,
- 6 from research institutions,
- 4 from Academia,
- 3 from CGIAR centers and
- 1 from private sector.

By nationality 65% were from Uganda while 35% from Kenya. Additionally, 21 ADVALUE members attended the workshop.

Break Out Sessions

Group 1: Qualification requirements of post-graduate fellows

- What qualifications and capacities do you expect from post-graduates? Specifically, what shortcomings or gaps do you observe?
- What additional skills or attributes would you like graduate fellows to have?

Group 2: Post-graduate education at East African Universities

- Do you have any suggestions for improving the education and training of agricultural post-graduate students from the EA region?
- Are there areas where your organization would like to work with universities to train/improve the skills of graduate students?

Group 3: Importance of agricultural PhD Education and research work

- Which challenges and demands do you see in the agricultural related working fields?
- How should doctoral education at the EA universities react to this?



Session Outcomes:

Important qualification:

Statistical methods and ICT, scientific writing, gender-responsive research, ability to communicate results to policy makers and communities, soft skills (e.g. leadership and interpersonal skills)

Suggestions:

Cross-learning between institutions (e.g. short courses), practical training (e.g. internships), addressing cross-cutting issues, improving research funding, strengthening scientific communication channels and ICT skills, improving mentoring and guidance by supervisors and promoting student-led support groups

Relevance:

Agricultural research is undervalued and currently the issues are strongly linked to economic development, promoting the practical application of research results is recommended, as well as being at the forefront of technological advancement to produce globally competitive research

Areas, where organizations would cooperate with universities to support post-graduate student skills:

Internships, project work, identification of research areas, supporting students on data management (collection, analysis, communication and storage), supporting student mentorship