

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

Work package 3 encompasses capacity building, including international study trips for PhD students from East Africa. Competencies are gained in innovative research, transdisciplinary approaches and agricultural value chain management. The (international) exchange supports the built-up of capacities in curriculum development and communication.

### Student Study Trips to CZU and SLU 2026

#### Study Trip to CZU, Prague, Czechia 13-24 April

In April 2026, three students from the East African ADVALUE partner universities (UCU, UoN, PU) participated in a two-week study trip in Prague focused on international knowledge exchange and capacity building in agricultural value chains. The programme combined academic activities with field-based learning through visits to CZU facilities, including the FTZ - Faculty of Tropical AgriSciences Botanical Garden and the Food Pavilion, as well as excursions to agri-food production and research sites. A dedicated value chain management excursion included a visit to the agri-industrial facility Lihovar, where sustainability, efficiency, and market integration were discussed. The programme also featured expert lectures, research presentations, workshops, and discussions on topics such as market access, innovation, sustainability, gender equality, and artificial intelligence in agriculture. Additional activities included research panels and meetings with ADVALUE project evaluators and international partners. By combining academic training, practical experience, and intercultural exchange, the study trip strengthened research capacities, supported PhD students, and fostered long-term cooperation between European and African partner universities.

*"The activities strengthened my understanding of agricultural value chains, market dynamics, and research methodologies, while improving my presentation, analytical, and peer-learning skills. Going forward, the training will enhance the quality of my PhD research, inform evidence-based program design, and improve my engagement with private sector and value chain actors." - PhD student of UCU*

*"The study trip enhanced my understanding of sustainable agricultural value chains, climate-smart technologies seen from what other nations are doing, and innovative approaches to dryland resource management and utilization of resources across the value chain. I gained practical and theoretical knowledge that will support my PhD research, particularly in improving agricultural productivity and my research in semi-arid regions." - PhD student of UoN*

*"The training enhanced my knowledge of sustainable agriculture, value addition and postharvest handling. It also provided new perspectives on how scholars from different backgrounds develop and present research proposals and theses. Interaction with participants from diverse countries and cultures broadened my understanding of global agricultural practices and knowledge systems. I also improved my skills in research interpretation and communication." - PhD student of PU*



Photos: Petra Chaloupková



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### Study Trip to SLU, Alnarp/Ultuna, Sweden 4-15 May

In May 2026, four students from the East African ADVALUE partner universities (MAK, UCU, UoN, and PU) participated in a two-week study trip in Sweden focused on essential skills in scientific research. The study trip was divided in two parts, one at the campus in Alnarp and one at the campus in Ultuna.

Besides lectures on e.g. principles of time management and work structure or the use of AI in data analytics, the programme included entrepreneurship, patenting lectures hosted by SLU Holding, a networking event together with PhD students and postdocs from SLU campus in Alnarp, library work, a study visit of the biotron climate chambers, the SLU Global event in Ultuna as another networking opportunity and meetings with different SLU members (e.g. vice dean for education). Additionally, each student developed a poster on a selected scientific method and presented it during a hybrid session. The event included a short pitch and presentation, with supervisors joining online to provide feedback and contribute to the discussion.

*"The study trip improved my skills tremendously in literature search evidence, synthesis, scientific writing, research communication and responsible use of AI. The knowledge gained will strengthen my PhD research, improve the quality of manuscripts and support better communication of research findings." - PhD student of MAK*

*"The visit enhanced my understanding of modern research and academic practices. The training on literature search using AI-assisted tools improved my ability to efficiently identify, analyse, and synthesise scholarly information which will ease and improve my research work. In addition, the sessions on data management provided practical knowledge on organising, storing and handling research data in a systematic and ethical manner. My other take away was that soft skills are a major complement to ." - PhD student of UCU*

*"Through the workshops and seminars, I gained practical skills in academic writing, science communication, research visibility, data management, open-access publishing, and the use of AI in research and analytics. The networking sessions and interactions with researchers, PhD students, and professionals from different disciplines opened my professional lens through understanding the interdisciplinary and international collaboration in agricultural research." - PhD student of UoN*

*"Strengthened competencies in scientific communication, research data management, open science, AI applications in research, academic writing, entrepreneurship and interdisciplinary research engagement. The training will enhance my future PhD research, scientific dissemination, teaching and collaborative research activities in Pwani University and beyond." - PhD student of PU*



Photos: Anna Maňourová

