

ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS THROUGH
STRENGTHENING TRANSDISCIPLINARY SKILLS AND COOPERATION IN EAST AFRICAN
DOCTORAL EDUCATION

Facts and figures

2024 - 2026

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FOUR ADVANCED PHD MODULES

4
MODULES

21
SUB-TOPICS

240 h
TEACHING DESIGN

Module 1 – Essential Skills in Scientific Research

Module 2 – Transdisciplinary Research

Module 3 – Sustainable Rangeland Management

Module 4 – Sustainable Agricultural Value Chain Development

OFFERED BY 4 EAST AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Uganda:

- Makerere University Kampala
- Uganda Christian University

Kenya:

- University of Nairobi
- Pwani University Kilifi

INTERNATIONAL PILOT PHASE

42
ONLINE EVENTS
(22 PUBLIC)

3
STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

1561
ONLINE ATTENDANCES

163
STAFF & STUDENTS

96 % Overall satisfaction of participants in pilot trainings

OTHER INTERNAL AND PUBLIC EVENTS

4
STUDY TRIPS

81
PARTICIPANTS

- **Tropentag:** 9 presentations and 4 conference contributions
- **Pwani University:** 1 transdisciplinary conference + student experience sharing (34 students, 8 staff, 3 external)

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT: BRIDGING ACADEMIA, AGRICULTURAL MARKET AND RESEARCH GAPS

Partner universities are leveraging External Advisory Boards (EABs) and alumni networks to institutionalize dialogue with key employers across Uganda and Kenya, including ministries, NGOs, and UN agencies. By co-aligning doctoral training with actual labor market needs, ADVALUE ensures long-term curriculum relevance, enhances PhD employability, and elevates the international profile of East African higher education.

KEY CHALLENGE	ADVALUE SOLUTION
Communication & Skills Gap PhDs offer strong theoretical specialization, but lack entrepreneurial skills and public communication.	Problem-Solving Focus Shift PhD training toward applied, entrepreneurial skills and societal relevance.
Academic-Industry Disconnect Outdated university structures prioritize academic metrics over real-world agricultural innovation.	Flexible Topics & Agility Allow industry-driven, flexible PhD topics grounded in socio-economic realities.
Conflicting Supervision Students get caught between theoretical university expectations and practical enterprise needs.	Joint Supervision Institutionalize joint academic-enterprise supervision to align expectations and mentor support.
Financial & Timeline Strains Limited funding forces students to pause studies for work, prolonging degree completion.	Funded Placements Provide paid enterprise internships and affiliations so students sustain momentum without financial breaks.
Lack of Practical Exposure Minimal field experience, limited access to resources, and limited stakeholder engagement.	Institutionalized MoUs Formalize long-term MoUs or other co-operation agreements with External Stakeholders or Advisory Boards for sustained collaboration.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING HIGH QUALITY PROGRAMMES

16 stakeholder discussions

22 external stakeholders during pilot week discussions

Uganda:

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives

Alliance Bioversity International - CIAT

Bugema University

USAID

University Regional Center for Crop Improvement (MaRCCI)

Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF)

National Semi-Arid Resources Research Institute (SERERE)

Wildlife Conservation Society

Kyambogo University

National Forestry Resources Research

FAO

Dairy Development Authority

National Livestock Resources Research Institute (NALIRRI)

Kenya:

Ministry of Education

Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA)

Moi University

Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Institute

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)

Egerton University

International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)

Chuka University

Centre of Excellence for Livestock, Innovation and Business (CoELIB)

Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate

International Livestock Research Institute

National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)

International Center for Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe)

Plant Village

State Department of Higher Education Research

Syngenta East Africa Ltd

ADVALUE TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- March 2024** kick-off + 1st SteCom, Nuertingen, Germany
- Sep. 2024** 2nd Steering Committee Meeting, online
- Sep.-Oct. 2024** staff EU visits / mod 1 to SLU, Sweden
- Oct. 2024** staff EU visits / mod 4 to CZU, Czechia
- Oct. 2024** Joint EU meeting of SLU & CZU staff, Prague, Czechia
- March 2025** Midterm conf, 3rd SteCom, quality workshop, Uganda
- ~ yearly** local WP2 meetings in Kampala, Mukono, Nairobi, Kilifi
- Aug. 2025** pilot online events (mod 1) & block seminar, Kampala
- Aug.-Dec. 2025** pilot online events for module 3
- Sep. 2025** staff & student EU visits (mod 2 & 3), Nuertingen & Witzenhausen, Germany
- Sep. 2025** Joint EU meeting 2 + Tropentag, Germany & 4th SteCom
- Oct. 25 - Feb. 26** pilot online events for module 2
- Dec. 2025** pilot block seminar (mod 2) & workshop, Kilifi
- Jan. 2026** pilot block seminar (mod 3) & MWG, Nairobi
- Feb. 2026** pilot block seminar (mod 4) & workshop, Mukono
- March 2026** 5th Steering Committee Meeting, online
- March-Apr. 2026** pilot online events for module 4
- Apr.-May 2026** student EU visits to CZU (mod 1) & SLU (mod 4)
- Sep. 2026** Project final conference, SteCom & quality workshop, Nairobi

GENDER AND INCLUSION

ADVALUE is committed to embedding Gender Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (GEID) into every stage of its project cycle management, research design, and doctoral teaching across. Recognizing that agricultural value-chain transformation requires diverse perspectives, the project actively addresses structural inequalities, gender biases, and inclusion barriers within higher education across Kenya and Uganda.

- Gender-Balanced Leadership:** 52.9% female representation in team & SteCom.
- Institutional Capacity Building:** Gender Officer & cross-institutional Gender Working Group (GWW) lead webinars and on-site training.
- Gender-Responsive Curriculum:** Intersectional perspectives and gender-sensitive methodologies in all 4 PhD modules.

GEID Framework: Aligned with UN SDG 5 on Gender Equality, CEDAW, and European Union non-discrimination principles & national gender policy frameworks in Uganda and Kenya.

RAISING STANDARDS

Evidence-based quality framework addressing doctoral education bottlenecks (low on-time completion rates 4%-25%, overburdened supervisors). Adheres strictly to regulatory standards by **NCHE (Uganda)** and **CUE (Kenya)**:

- Workload & Credit Structure:** 60 contact hours (4 Credit Units).
- Core Competencies:** Measurable research & value-chain outcomes.
- Stakeholder Co-Creation:** Driven by External Advisory Boards feedback.

IMPACT & OUTREACH

Transforming East African doctoral education by bridging academic research and agricultural market needs.

Target Courses Impacted:

20

PHD
PROGRAM

24

MSC
COURSES

11

SHORT
COURSES

Communication & Reach:

- 8 newsletters published
- 51 total public events
- 760 unique website visitors

ADVALUE - THE MAKING-OF

- > **50 staff** actively involved
- > **7 work packages** | 11 working groups
- > **80 MWG meetings**, mostly online
- > **25 online jour fixe** consortium sessions
- 232 travels funded** (55% male / 45% female) despite +16.6% cost
- 25 deliverable reports** (15 completed by the time of the final conference)
- 178 responses** from 18 questionnaires
- 6 Steering Committee** meetings

Milestones (Checked):

- MS1:** Guidelines & contacts
- MS2:** Int. exchange & capacity
- MS3:** Draft Syllabi (4 modules)
- MS4:** Pilot trainings done
- MS6:** Quality assurance plan
- MS7:** External quality control

Upcoming Milestones:

- MS5:** Final module descriptions
- MS8:** Final evaluation report

