

## Partnerships to strengthen university food and nutrition sciences training and research in Eastern and Southern Africa (PASUFONS)

High postharvest losses, low produce quality, and dismal value addition limit the benefits derived from food production in Africa. Malnutrition is also wide spread on the continent and this is attributable, among others to inadequate food availability, insufficient levels of some essential nutrients in staples and inadequate nutrition knowledge among the populations. In spite of current food and nutrition research and training efforts at universities on the continent, these problems persist. PASUFONS project seeks to enhance capacity of participating universities to contribute to amelioration of these problems through promoting interaction between training institutions and the food and nutrition sectors in Eastern and Southern Africa. The project will also facilitate sharing of training and research resources. PASUFONS commenced in November 2013, with financial support from ACP-EU Co-operation Programme in Higher Edulink II under contract DCI-AFS/2013/331-203.

**Contract**  
DCI-AFS/  
2013/331-203

### Co-ordinator

School of Food  
Technology, Nutrition  
and Bio-Engineering,  
Makerere University

### Partners

Stellenbosch University  
Department of Food  
Science  
Jomo Kenyatta University of  
Agriculture and Technology

### Project duration

42 months

### EU grant

EUR 496,207.30

### ACP regions and countries involved

Eastern Africa:  
Uganda,  
Kenya

Southern Africa:  
South Africa

### Technical Assistance Unit

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### Challenge

Food production is a major economic activity in Uganda, Kenya and South Africa. However, the food production sector is faced with the challenge of high post-harvest losses, poor quality of food supply, limited value addition, limited product diversity and low farm gate prices. The agricultural communities need interventions that promote value addition. They also require advisory services to guide them on proper post-harvest handling of food. Another problem faced by the communities is the high levels of malnutrition.

Universities can address the above challenges through manpower development, relevant research and knowledge transfer partnerships. However, the potential of universities to address the numerous food and nutrition challenges faced by communities in Eastern and Southern African countries has not been adequately exploited. There are indications that university graduates have inadequacies in skills required to address the many challenges and much of the food science and nutrition research conducted in universities does not find application. Strengthening interaction between universities and industry and other food and nutrition organisations is required to focus both training and research in food and nutrition sciences at universities in Eastern and Southern Africa to improve graduate employability and enhance universities' capacity to contribute to food and nutrition security.

### Focus

The project is aimed at strengthening the contribution of university food and nutrition science departments to address current human resource and research

needs of the food, nutrition and agriculture sectors. It will address the discrepancy between job market needs and university training activities. The overall objective is to enhance the contribution of universities to food and nutrition security of communities in Eastern & Southern Africa. Universities have potential to provide human resources and research solutions to the many food and nutrition security problems in Eastern and Southern Africa. The specific objective of the action is to strengthen the capacity of universities in Eastern and Southern Africa to provide practical training and research solutions in food and nutrition sciences. The action aims at strengthening the capacity of the 3 participating institutions to produce graduates with research and practical skills required by the job market and for solving sector problems. The expected project outcome is higher graduate employability and a better performing food and nutrition sector.



Participants of the EU- EDULINK launch and inception workshop



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The PASUFONS team representatives



PASUFONS team leader (Prof. John Muyonga) explaining the project to the Hon. Matia Kasaija, Uganda's Minister responsible for national planning



PASUFONS representatives revising the Log frame

### Programme theme(s)

Agriculture and food security

### Sector

Educational research

### Keywords

Food and nutrition sciences, practical training and research, Higher Education Institutions

### Contact the project

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### Project website

[www.pasufons.org](http://www.pasufons.org)

### Rationale

Africa's economy is predominantly agro-based. In spite of this, food insecurity and malnutrition are prevalent on the continent. Through providing demanded food and nutrition research and graduates with relevant skills universities can contribute to the alleviation of food insecurity. However, acting in isolation, universities on the continent may lack the critical research and training human and infrastructural capacity. PASUFONS project seeks to promote collaboration among participating institutions and to strengthen the linkage of these institutions with the relevant private and public institutions to foster exchange of information and sharing of training and research resources. This will ensure responsiveness of training and research to stakeholder needs and promote synergies among participating institutions. The project also seeks to address graduate unemployment which is a significant continent wide development problem.

### Method

The project implementation methodology will be based on wide consultations, including face-to-face meetings among the partners and interviews with stakeholders. The action is informed by the desire, among partners, to improve service delivery.

The main activities to be undertaken include:

- Review and update of existing food and nutrition sciences academic programmes in participating HEIs;
- Development of course materials
- Determination of sector research and training needs;
- Short term courses for technical and academic staff - at least 7 academic and 6 technical staff trained;
- Establishment of framework for dealing with sector players;
- Development of platform for collaborative academic activities;
- Joint teaching through use of virtual teaching and learning facilities;
- Joint research activities among partners;
- Dissemination of project outputs through diverse media.

### Results

The project has 5 work packages, with the following main results:

1. Project management and coordination structure established;
2. Academic programs reviewed and tailored to produce highly skilled food and nutrition science graduates;
3. Institutional framework for identifying and responding to stakeholders' research and training needs established;
4. Training and research capacity in food and nutrition sciences at participating universities improved;
5. Platform for research and training collaboration for HEIs in Eastern and Southern Africa established and operationalised.