

Higher education cooperation for sustainable development between

Kenya

and Flanders (Belgium)

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Kenya is an important partner country of VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2021 VLIR-UOS spent over € 31,7 million in cooperation with Kenya, including a long-term Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) Programme with the University of Nairobi and Moi University (MU-K, Eldoret). The IUC partnership with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) which started in 2017 is the cornerstone of the cooperation with Kenya. In 2021, a new IUC partnership with Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) is being phased in in view of full funding as of 2022.

Higher education as a driving force for sustainable development

VLIR-UOS has a **longstanding history of cooperation** with higher education institutions in Kenya.

VLIR-UOS revised its country approach towards an 'Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development' centred approach. Moreover, VLIR-UOS wants to facilitate connections between different actors and projects present in a given country. With these objectives in mind, the Country Reference Framework (CRF) for Kenya supports teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in Kenya, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors active in Kenya, their ongoing projects and partners, in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity.

VLIR-UOS cooperation in Kenya has been aligned with the Kenya Vision 2030 through the role put forward for universities of developing the necessary human resource base for achieving its goals. It considers the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to be nationally relevant and capable of having a transformative impact on the quality of life of all Kenyans. This is in line with the objectives of VLIR-UOS on working towards Agenda 2030.

Institutional Partnerships

IUC with the University of Nairobi (UoN)

The IUC with the University of Nairobi (UoN), which started in 1998, worked in the field of marine sciences, reproductive health and computer sciences. As stated by the final evaluation in 2009, the programme contributed to **capacity building and institutional development** of UoN through academic human resource development, training of support staff, improvement of research and teaching infrastructure, introduction of distance learning courses, stimulation of joint research and installation of ICT infrastructure.

IUC with Moi University (MU-K)

The IUC programme with Moi University (MU-K) started in 2007 and is now finalised. The mid and end term reviews (2018-2019) already identified the major role of the IUC programme in **enhancing the teaching and research capacity** of MU-K. Existing programmes were revised and new ones developed and a better learning environment was created. The research activities have considerably contributed to the knowledge base of the institution and it is likely to inform national policy in a number of areas.

IUC with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)

In 2016, a new IUC programme was elaborated with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). This programme aims at establishing an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary Legume **Centre of Excellence** for Food and Nutrition Security. The programme focuses on different stages along the **value chain** of legumes, from **agricultural production** over postharvest **storage** and **food processing** to human **consumption** and its impact on **human health**. This will strengthen the role of JKUAT in agricultural development and strengthen its linkage with **target stakeholders** from government, community and industry.

IUC with Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST)

In 2022, the new IUC **"Strengthening Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology Capacity in Natural Resource Management, Food Security and Health"** will start. The project will strengthen and transform the University's structures, systems and processes through creation of synergies in transformative knowledge, technologies and innovations in collaboration with stakeholders.



Gender as a transversal theme

Gender mainstreaming has been a particular success of the IUC Programme with MU-K. They established an institutional policy on gender and integrated gender modules into programmes across the university. They worked on increasing women's participation and leadership in university management structures. As a result, departments had new female members hired and the number of female heads of departments increased.



VLIR-UOS partnerships

The IUC project with JKUAT is based on a partnership between the partner university and two Flemish universities. The goal of these partnerships is capacity building based on long term investments in human capital and building up networks.



Agents of change

Three former VLIR-UOS scholars from Kenya organised a role modelling event on bee keeping and honey for 34 women, after following a short training at a Flemish university on this topic. They have become agents of change by implementing the newly acquired knowledge and skills in the professional context of their country of origin.



Focus on sustainable development priorities

TEAM projects and Short Initiative (SI) projects aim to strengthen the research and education capacity, exploring and building capacity in view of creating sustainable solutions to local and global development challenges.

Environment

An SI project that started in 2020 aims at **reducing waste and environmental pollution** in Mombasa region. The project activities are the first of a long term capacity enhancement in **sustainable renewable energy technologies**, initiated by TUM and UHasselt, which will be disseminated to the secondary schools and local communities including neighbouring counties in the region. The project involves the creation of a pilot Solar/Biogas digester at TUM's kitchen for cooking and heating using solar energy and bio-waste, as well as for training, research and dissemination purposes.

Food security

A JOINT project wants to work towards meeting an increasing food demand through **improving poultry** livestock. They want to build capacity in the field of advanced statistical and bioinformatics analysis, in order to apply the results of DNA sequencing techniques to the improvement of agricultural productivity. The project will create a **joint centre of excellence** in bioinformatics and chicken genomics established by JKUAT and ILRI. The long-term focus is the development of an **innovative directed breeding program**.

Health

An ongoing TEAM project of VLIR-UOS wants to support **policy and management** of dominant **public health challenges** in Kenya (HIV, malaria, cancer) by increasing the teaching and research capacity & quality in **biostatistics**. The central approach is scientific **innovation, collaboration** and **hands-on application** of statistical methodology through real-life datasets. The project will create a **network** between 9 Kenyan and 3 Flemish universities and 1 Kenyan research institute.

Scholarships

Scholarships are powerful tools. It allows Kenyan students to broaden their horizon, learn to look at problems from the perspective of multiple disciplines and to grow into a skilful researcher. It also allows Flemish students to spend time in a Kenyan institution and create close ties.

About the Country Reference Frameworks

VLIR-UOS **Country Reference Frameworks** (CRF) support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in a given country, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors, their ongoing projects and partners in that country in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity within the Joint Strategic Framework of Belgian NonGovernmental Actors active in Kenya. On the other hand Belgian HE and Science actors joined in a thematic Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) on HES4SD.

The country reference frameworks consist of three components: (i) overview of VLIR-UOS projects in the country; (ii) context analysis focused on the Agenda 2030 framework and the higher education sector; (iii) overview of Belgian development actors (ANGCs involved in thematic or geographic JSFs & Enabel), their local partners and their regional/thematic focus.

More information:
vliruos.be/kenya

Total budget Kenya 2003-2021 (in €)	
Projects	€ 18.326.533
Individual scholars	€ 13.405.873
Total	€ 31.732.406

Scholars from Kenya in the context of VLIR-UOS cooperation (2003-2020)	
PhD*	19
Short Term*	189
Study/Master*	270
Total	478

* Only scholarships outside projects and programmes are shown; a lot of scholarships are included in projects or programmes.

In addition to Kenyan scholars coming to Belgium, 281 Belgian scholars were granted a travel grant (short term) to Kenya and another 8 were granted a sandwich Ph.D. scholarship. More information on the scholarships of VLIR-UOS: www.vliruos.be/scholarships.

About VLIR-UOS

VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between universities and university colleges in Flanders (Belgium) and partner countries looking for innovative responses to global and local sustainable development challenges.

VLIR-UOS is part of the Flemish Interuniversity Council and receives funding from the Belgian Development Cooperation. www.vliruos.be

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