



CHAIN PROJECT
COOPERATION FOR HOLISTIC AGRICULTURE
INNOVATION NESTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
ERASMUS+ CBHE PROJECT CHAIN – 101082963



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CHAIN NEWSLETTER

Cooperation for Holistic Agriculture Innovation Nests in Sub-Saharan Africa
GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER 101082963



Background

The Cooperation for Holistic Agriculture Innovation Nests in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHAIN) project is a strategic initiative designed to bridge the gap between academic institutions and the agricultural sector by fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the development of practical innovations. Beyond curriculum enhancement, the project emphasizes building capacity among teaching staff, students, and farmers, thereby contributing to sustainable agricultural development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

OBJECTIVES

- * Develop Master's programs in Food Value Chain at selected partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);
- * Build the capacity of teaching staff at partner HEIs to adopt teaching methodologies that encourage entrepreneurial thinking and innovation, with a strong emphasis on e-learning and digital tools;
- * Collaborate with the private sector to establish Holistic Agriculture (HA) Innovation Nests at partner HEIs and support innovation initiatives led by students, farmers, and entrepreneurs.



Training for academic staff on Food Value Chains

As part of the CHAIN project activities, a training seminar for academic staff was conducted during the annual staff meeting, held in May 2025 in Romania. This year's meeting was hosted by the University of Life Sciences in Iași, and brought together academic representatives from partner institutions across Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe. The training program focused on the development and implementation of Food Value Chain (FVC) concepts in higher education. It was complemented by an educational excursion to successful farms and agri-food enterprises in the region. These visits provided participants with practical insights into well-developed value chains operating within farms and associated companies.

Beyond the training sessions, the program featured interactive workshops on communication with food value chain actors, entrepreneurship, financing, and team management, delivered by experts from Romania, Poland, and Germany. Participants also enjoyed guided visits to AGROILMAR Farm, JITAR Family Winery, and AGRALMIXT, where they explored wheat processing, local winemaking traditions, and modern mechanization and livestock practices. The excursion was complemented by cultural highlights such as a tour of the IULS Winery and the Iași Botanical Garden, making the event both academically rigorous and practically inspiring.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased student engagement in the agri-food business ecosystem.
- Improved communication skills (presentation, active listening, feedback).
- Strengthened intercultural competencies for international cooperation.
- Practical ability to manage conflict and negotiate win-win outcomes.
- Formation of a cross-institutional, cross-sectoral support network.





University of Lome

Crash Course 1 (CC1) : Being agri-entrepreneur training

In the frame work of the CHAIN-Project, an intensive seminar combined with a workshop in the form of a Crash Course took place at the University of Lomé from 17 to 18 April, 2025 in the large room of the West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL) at the University of Lome.

A total of 113 participants attended the workshop, distributed as follows: (i) 95 participants, including 31 women and 64 men, composed of entrepreneurs, producers, innovators, and students; (ii) 7 administrative and technical staff members and (iii) 11 members of the CHAIN project staff, including the three trainers from Poland.



HACKATON: Training and Workshop

In the frame work of the CHAIN-Project, an intensive training combined with a workshop took place at the University of Lomé from 12 to 13 August, 2025 in a seminar room of the West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL) at the University of Lome.

A total of 60 student participants, 09 teacher staff, and 09 administrative staff attended the workshop, 05 media personal for reporting were invited for seminar workshop reporting.



Each group were invited to i) Develop a topic related to the thematic, ii) specify the problem related to the thematic, iii) choose a product to improve, vi) Find the problems to solve, v) Bring up the innovative solutions. During presentation participant were evaluated based on pitch, methodology, creativity, pertinence and relevance, professionalism.



Finally, 5 groups of 12 people were formed, each with a thematic (T), in order to implement the concepts acquired during the Hackathon, thereby developing innovative ideas on the following thematic:
Team 1 : Value Chain Team 2 : Waste recovery Team 3 : Promoting local food Team 4 : Improving food safety and Team 5 : Post-Harvest Losses



University of Kara

Crash Course 1 (CC1) : Being agri-entrepreneur training

An intensive seminar combined with a workshop in the form of a Crash Course was held at the University of Kara on 14-15.04.2025, led by representatives of the Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences in Wrocław (UPWR, Poland, Wrocław)

The CC1 is one of the tasks of CHAIN project carried out under the ERASMUS+ programme and co-financed by the European Union. The name of the task T4.8 is "Innovation crash-courses for students, farmers and businesses which is a part of Work Package 4 entitled "Creation of Collaborative Holistic Agriculture Innovation Nests" of the CHAIN project.



HACKATON: Training and Workshop

As part of the CHAIN project, a hackathon training session was held on July 22 and 23, 2025, at the University of Kara. The main objective of this training was to introduce participants to the key concepts, essential steps, and practical tools related to organizing a hackathon, with a specific focus on its relevance in the agricultural sector.

Ideation tools were also introduced to support these different phases. Participants were divided into groups to identify real-world problems. Each group was given 45 minutes to conduct research, generate ideas, and prioritize the problems identified.



This training allowed participants to gain both theoretical and hands-on knowledge of the hackathon concept. It strengthened their ability to organize and facilitate collaborative innovation processes that can be applied in various fields, especially agriculture

After the training, an evaluation was conducted. The results show that 25% of the women and 75% of the men who participated were evaluated. This distribution reflects a strong male participation in the evaluation, while also highlighting the active involvement of women, despite being fewer in number





Federal University of Technology, Minna

Crash Course 1 (CC1) : Being agri-entrepreneur training

The Crash Courses on Food Value Chains were designed to build capacity among youth, students, and entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector. This initiative aimed to strengthen skills in entrepreneurship, business modelling, marketing, and team management which are all critical components for driving innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability in value chain development.

A call was put out from 20th July - 4th August, 2025. A google link was created and shared among student groups and entrepreneurs. Participants registered for participation online. A total of 62 participants attended the boot-camp.



HACKATON: Training and Workshop

The programme commenced at about 9:00 am with an opening remark from the Director of the Entrepreneurship Centre, Prof. Caroline Alenoghena, who introduced the programme and spoke briefly about the activities carried out in the centre.

design thinking using the SCAMPER model was facilitated. after which Business Model Canvas (BMC) was facilitated to enhance the participants' knowledge on how to determine the feasibility of a business idea on one page. The participants were also grouped to develop a BMC for each value chain and presented their work to the facilitators.



On the fourth day, participants presented their pitch decks, which included value propositions, market survey statistics, forecasted revenue streams, and financial projections. Facilitators provided corrections and suggestions, and a tea break was observed.

The participants' capacities were evaluated based on invention (novelty of the idea), relevance of the business idea to the value chain, market survey with statistics, business viability, and participation.



South Eastern Kenya University

Crash Course 1 (CC1) : Being agri-entrepreneur training

An intensive seminar combined with a workshop in the form of a Crash Course took place at South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) on September 04-05, 2025. During the training sessions, the facilitators delivered essential theoretical content related to CCI topics.

Throughout the workshop, participants applied theoretical knowledge in practice, allowing them to reinforce their understanding and develop new skills relevant to the FVC sector. The course was highly intensive, well-attended, and marked by strong participant engagement.



HACKATON: Training and Workshop

An intensive hackathon training took place at South Eastern Kenya University on 2-3 September 2025, organized under the Erasmus+ CBHE Project CHAIN. The event was facilitated by representatives from the Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences (UPWr, Poland).

The hackathon combined theoretical input with hands-on innovation sessions. On the first day, facilitators delivered key theoretical insights on food waste reduction strategies, encouraging participants to engage in discussions.



The hackathon culminated in final presentations before a jury, where teams showcased their innovative solutions for minimizing food waste in the value chain. The jury evaluated the projects based on creativity, feasibility, and impact.

The hackathon demonstrated strong participant engagement, practical innovation, and cross-institutional collaboration. Beyond the group sessions, attendees also benefited from opportunities for one-on-one consultations with trainers, enabling deeper insights and guidance.



School of Business and Economics International Conference

In September 2025, South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) hosted its 1st School of Business and Economics International Conference under the theme Harnessing Research and Innovation for Resilience and Sustainability. Held in Kitui and online, the three-day event brought together over 200 participants from academia, government, and industry.

Sessions featured research on climate-smart agriculture, resilient business models, health systems, data science, and biodiversity conservation. The conference provided a vibrant platform for knowledge exchange, showcasing SEKU's strong engagement in advancing innovation and sustainability, while reinforcing its role within the CHAIN consortium.





Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology

Crash Course 1 (CC1) : Being agri-entrepreneur training

JOOUST hosted a two-day Crash Course on the 8th and 9th September 2025 at the EACII, Main Campus. The course was facilitated by Resource Persons from Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences (UPWR), Poland, who are CHAIN Project partners. The event brought together 40 students from different schools of JOOUST, representing a wide range of academic programs.

During the group presentations, students demonstrated a strong grasp of aligning value propositions with customer needs. For example, one group proposed a vegetable subscription box targeting urban households, emphasizing freshness and convenience as their unique value. Another designed a honey-processing enterprise aimed at eco-conscious consumers, highlighting sustainable practices as a selling point.



HACKATON: Training and Workshop

The Hackathon was held from 10th to 11th September 2025 at the EACII, Main Campus, JOOUST. Its purpose was to provide a platform for students to practically apply the knowledge gained in entrepreneurship, marketing, team management, and business modeling by developing solutions to real-world challenges.

Participants were introduced to the Hackathon challenges by facilitators from Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences. Teams were then formed, with each group focusing on a specific area of food waste. The day was devoted to brainstorming, ideation, and the development of initial concepts and prototypes.



Groups refined their solutions, prepared pitch presentations, and delivered them to a panel of judges. The Jury evaluated the solutions based on innovation, feasibility, scalability, user impact, and overall presentation. The event concluded with the announcement of winning teams and recognition of all participants.



The Hackathon was successful. It provided students with the opportunity to apply knowledge from the Crash Course into real-world innovation.



ALEX EKWUEME FEDERAL UNIVERSITY, NDUFU-ALIKE

HACKATON: Training and Workshop

A hackathon is an intensive, time-bound event where individuals – usually students, innovators, or professionals collaborate in teams to solve real-world problems through creative ideas, technology, and practical solutions. Traditionally associated with software and app development, hackathons have evolved to include fields such as agriculture, healthcare, business, and education.

Following the formation of the hackathon team, members immediately got to work, engaging in a series of strategic meetings, both virtual and physical – to discuss, plan, and refine ideas. By May 2025, the official call for entries into the hackathon contest was released.



The CHAIN project, AE-FUNAI chapter organized a two-day landmark hackathon contest, the first of its kind from 10th to 11th June, 2025. The occasion marked a significant milestone in the university's journey towards promoting innovation, creativity, and practical solutions in agricultural development through student-led initiatives.

The hackathon is one of the flagship activities of the CHAIN Project and brought together a group of selected, bright, and innovative students who showcased their creative solutions and groundbreaking ideas within the food value chain sector.



The participants were organized into four (4) thematic groups based on the core focus and alignment of their submitted ideas. Each group was assigned a dedicated mentor or advisor to guide their activities.

The hackathon not only enhanced the visibility of AE-FUNAI as a forward-thinking academic institution but also demonstrated the power of student-led innovation in addressing real-world agricultural and food system challenges.

