

20.03.2024

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF TWO SLOTS FOR STUDENT STUDY EXCHANGE
PROGRAMME AT UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA, ITALY**

Agreement Overview

An inter-institutional cooperation agreement was signed between the [University of Padova](#), Italy and the [Makerere University](#), Uganda, under the umbrella of the [Erasmus+ mobility program](#). This agreement includes a bi-lateral exchange of teaching staff and students aimed at sharing knowledge and technologies, to explore the degree to which invasive alien plants are modifying the ecosystem services provided by complex agricultural and forest landscapes, using invasive trees as model species. Researchers at the [University of Padova](#) have explored the biodiversity of several ecosystem components, and related functions of woodlands composed of important alien trees (the black locust tree – [Robinia pseudoacacia](#)) in several biomes of Europe. This tree is spreading due to historical plantation and recent land use changes. The impacts brought by this tree are contrasting and not straightforward, particularly when analyzed from different perspectives. We expect that similar patterns could exist, currently or in the near future, in several regions of Uganda. The research will also investigate how changing landscapes and related ecological processes, as a result of plant invasion, affect the ecotourism opportunities and the aesthetics of tourism destinations with specific focus on Ruboni Community Camp and Rwenzori Mountains National Park. We believe that this cooperation could help in the understanding of this phenomenon and explain how different stakeholders perceive the novel values that come with invasive alien trees.

Student study exchange opportunity in Italy

The ERASMUS + International Credit Mobility Programme (KA171) will support two students for year 2024 for study exchange programme in Italy at the University of Padova, Department of Department of Land, Environment, Agriculture and Forestry. The exchange programme targets Masters or PhD students in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at Makerere University who have finished their first year of study for Masters or fully Registered for PhD. Prospective students must be ready to do research on topics related to the major focus of the agreement i.e. *Forestry (forest soils)* and *Ecosystem services (agroecosystems, landscapes and tourism)*. They should have skills in processing of data on soil and social data analysis. Masters Students should have normal progress in their coursework. Together with University of Padova team supervised by Professor Tommaso Sitzia, successful applicants will attend term courses, attend field excursions with other

students and get involved in analysis of soil samples and social data collected from Ruboni Community at the foothills of Rwenzori Mountains. The travel and stay in Italy will take a period of about 4 months.

Benefits

The exchange programme will cover travel expenses to and from Italy, living costs and accommodation while in Italy.

Expected deliverables from the student

Upon securing this opportunity, the students will be required to;

- (i) Analysis of soil samples and social data (agroforestry tourism)
- (ii) Analysis of data collected from tourists on agroforestry landscapes in Mubuku Valley and drafting of manuscript (to be collected between May and August, 2024)
- (iii) Participate in term courses and excursions with Forestry Science students
- (iv) Attend workshops and make presentations on their research activities
- (v) Any other study activities related to the research topics of the study group

Criteria

Interested candidates should submit their application to the Departmental Flow Co-ordinator, Makerere University. Include a detailed CV, testimonial showing current progress, copy of admission letter, a letter of motivation, a recommendation letter, copies of the academic documents. Applications must be submitted by 22, April, 2024 to: kamunyu.muhwezi@gmail.com, copied to deus.muhwezi@mak.ac.ug. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply. Only applications that include ALL the required documentation (highlighted above) will be considered. Successful applicants will be called for oral interviews. Successful applicants will be nominated to the exchange programme by the Departmental Flow Co-ordinator at Makerere University by 30th April, 2024. The final decision on admission and subsequently acquiring the study exchange opportunity will depend on fulfilment of the requirements for admission for exchange at University of Padova.

Contact details for further information

Dr. Deus Kamunyu Muhwezi

Department of Forestry, Biodiversity and Tourism,

Makerere University

kamunyu.muhwezi@gmail.com

Project partners



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY