

PATHWAYS FOR EMERGING BIODIVERSITY CHANGEMAKERS IN AFRICA (PEBCA)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Guided by the lessons learned and opportunities missed from the 1st Joint International Scientific Conference and post-conference training workshops held at the National Museums of Kenya in June 2024, the secretariat for the Second Joint NMK-AKE International Scientific Conference (JISC) have planned for another training session to coincide with the conference to be held in June 2026. The training aims at ensuring sustainable capacity building/mentorship program in Africa. The Courses are designed with a focus on creating 'Pathways for Emerging Biodiversity Changemakers in Africa (PEBCA)'. PEBCA is a phased program that is designed in three yet connected phases:

- I. Pre-Conference Capacity building Online sessions – January to May 2026
- II. Pre-Conference physical training workshops at NMK, Nairobi – 3rd to 7th June 2026
- III. Post-conference Capacity Building/Mentorship – June 2026 – December 2026

The one-year program shall consider supporting impact case studies from African countries that will be profiled at the second JISC in June 2026, Nairobi. It is designed to transition selected students and early career researchers into the next layer of scientific impact, where they will be involved in building local capacity as Emerging Biodiversity Changemakers in Africa.

Program Objectives

The program seeks to:

- Strengthen the research capacity of Emerging Biodiversity Scientists (EBS) through targeted training on research methods, open science tools, and science communication, among others.
- Support locally-relevant biodiversity and heritage projects to promote practical learning and visibility ahead of the Second Joint NMK- AKE International Scientific Conference.
- Engage master's students in the co-production of biodiversity knowledge products such as scientific publications, policy briefs, and other knowledge resources that inform biodiversity management policy and practice.
- Build and sustain a network of emerging scientists to engage and share knowledge, experiences, and tools for research in areas related to biodiversity and people.
- Promote mentorship and institutional partnerships to embed long-term support for emerging biodiversity scientists working across the science-policy-practice interface.

To support capacity-building and research collaboration, the project is launching a Research Mentorship Programme for future research leaders (Master's students) under the Second Joint NMK- AKE International Scientific Conference theme: '**Harnessing Biodiversity for Economic Transformation and Heritage Conservation**' focusing on the following diverse sub-themes:

- *Biosystematics, Ecology, Evolution, and Biogeography*
- *Climate Change Adaptation Strategies*
- *Biodiversity-Friendly and Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices*
- *Livelihood Strategies in Biodiversity-Based Enterprises*
- *Managing Invasive and Alien Species*

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- *Leveraging Digital Technologies*
- *One Health Approach*
- *Indigenous and Local Knowledge*
- *Conservation of Geo-heritage and Cultural Landscapes*
- *Policy Frameworks in Heritage Management*

Through the Fellowship, selected individuals will conduct research or policy-oriented case projects, actively participate in the Fellowship activities, and contribute to knowledge co-creation with peers and mentors. Up to **15 field case studies** drawn from across Africa will be supported with small grants of \$ 800 - 1,000. Selected case studies will be presented at the **Second Joint NMK-AKE International Scientific Conference from 8 - 12 June 2026, in Nairobi, Kenya.**

Eligibility criteria

PEBCA program is open to master's students from Universities in Africa. The program will involve working with selected students to advance their field research studies through small grants, structured mentorship, and knowledge exchange opportunities.

Additionally, the program will develop the research capacity of up to 100 postgraduate students in the areas of science communication (writing for academia, policy, and society), securing research funding, networking opportunities, and professional branding, among others.

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- A registered Master's student at a university in Africa.
- Completed coursework as at 31st January 2026.
- Demonstrate a strong interdisciplinary background that spans biodiversity and its contribution to people, environment and climate change, agro-biodiversity, artificial intelligence and biodiversity conservation, wildlife economy enterprises, and one health, among others.
- Possesses basic analytical, writing, and communication skills.
- Be able to contribute to transdisciplinary knowledge co-creation and policy dialogues through the co-development of knowledge products.

Program Duration: 12 months

Expected outputs and spin outs

- Peer-reviewed scientific publications
- Policy briefs
- Blog posts that synthesise the case study impact for a non-academic audience
- Presentations of preliminary findings at the Second Joint International Scientific Conference
- Emerging Scientists Forum for knowledge and opportunities sharing
- Short documentaries of participants' experiences in the program

Application process

- Applicants are invited to submit the following documents:
- A cover letter
- A one-page concept note describing the proposed research and its relevance to the PEBCA thematic areas
- CV (maximum 3 pages)
- Proof of admission to graduate school

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- Letter of support from university academic supervisor
- Transcripts

Submit your application to scienceconference@museums.or.ke and yvonne@aficaresearchhub.com with a copy to y.githiora@gmail.com. All submissions must be received by 15th January 2026.

PROJECT PARTNERS

The **National Museums of Kenya (NMK)** is a state corporation established under the National Museums and Heritage Act, 2006 of the laws of Kenya. NMK is the national repository for Kenya's cultural and natural heritage and a multidisciplinary research institution mandated to collect, preserve, study, document, and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage.

The **Association of Kenyan Entomologists (AKE)** is a professional society registered in the Republic of Kenya under The Societies Rules, 1968, rule no. 4. It was registered in February 2024 following the dormancy of the Entomological Society of Kenya registered in 1993. The Society has a current membership of 193 members, with about 50% holding PhDs, including many eminent entomologists in Kenya. Membership also includes senior entomologists actively working in the country. The Society has the following objectives: 1) To improve entomological science and its diffusion 2) To provide a forum for discussion and a medium for dissemination of knowledge among members and the public 3) To disseminate knowledge and publish research through society publications & 4) To provide expert advisory services wherever needed.

The **Africa Research Hub** is dedicated to empowering master's and PhD students across the continent with unparalleled resources and support for their research endeavors. Through the African Postgraduate Research Support Hub, ARH seeks to develop the research capacity of master's and PhD students across Africa by providing training on cutting-edge research tools, research communication, financing mechanisms, and opportunities for linking their research with society.