

PATHWAYS FOR EMERGING BIODIVERSITY CHANGEMAKERS IN AFRICA (PEBCA)

CALL FOR MENTORS

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. 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 22
- 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 (JISC)
- 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 Program 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*
- *Leveraging Digital Technologies*
- *One Health Approach*

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- *Indigenous and Local Knowledge*
- *Conservation of Geo-heritage and Cultural Landscapes*
- *Policy Frameworks in Heritage Management*

Eligibility criteria

The PEBCA Research Mentorship Program is open to academic university staff, PhD Candidates, Postdoctoral researchers, and industry leaders across Africa and beyond. The mentorship program will involve working with selected students to build their research leadership through both multi-layered learning and knowledge exchange opportunities.

Eligible applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrate an interdisciplinary expertise in at least one of the program sub-themes
- Be able to share knowledge and experience with the mentees
- Dedication to join mentor-mentee sessions and any other relevant PEBCA activity
- Deep understanding of Africa's biodiversity, climate, and societal contexts, with a focus on open science and co-creation of transdisciplinary solutions.

Proposed mentorship areas:

Proposal writing; Research methodology, Data Collection and Analysis, Project Logical Framework Approach, Project Cycles and Management; Project Budget Development; Financial Management & Reporting, Field Excursion and Technology Uptake, Ethics in Research; Scientific Writing and Communication; Essentials of Undertaking a successful research project, Grantsmanship and Research Funding; Partnerships and Collaboration; Focusing on Career Advancement while balancing social responsibilities

Program Duration: 12 months

Mentors will be required to participate in monthly mentor-mentee check-in sessions (1–2 hours each) and ad-hoc consultations by their mentees (via email or virtual calls). The program will be largely virtual with selected in-person sessions scheduled to take place in May and June 2026. The mentors will get the opportunity to accompany their mentees to present their case study research at the Second Joint NMK- AKE International Scientific Conference from 8 - 12 June 2026, in Nairobi, Kenya.

Why volunteer as a mentor with PEBCA

- Mentor and inspire the next generation of biodiversity leaders, fostering a legacy of inter- generational capacity transfer in Africa
- Position yourself as research thought leader in open science and research leadership development.
- Engage with a diverse network of scientists, industry leaders, policy-makers, and future research leaders across Africa and beyond, fostering partnerships that enhance your work.
- Empower African institutions by guiding capacity-building initiatives that strengthen conservation leadership and knowledge sharing.
- A sense of purpose by aligning your expertise with the capacity requirements of the next generation of research in Africa

Application process

Applicants are invited to submit their CVs and cover letters to scienceconference@museums.or.ke and yvonne@africaresearchhub.com with a copy to y.githiora@gmail.com. All applications must be received by 15th January 2025.

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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.