

PRESS

Joint Press Release
For Immediate Release

By PrAEctiCe Consortium

PrAEctiCe: Adaptive Integrated Aqua-Agriculture Research Tackles Food and Nutrition Security in East Africa.

International research consortium PrAEctiCe, a Horizon Europe project, has been granted EUR 7 million by the European Commission over 3.5 years to guide East African smallholder farmers in their agro-ecological transition.

Eastern Africa - home to over 473 million people, faces significant challenges accessing adequate, safe, and nutritious food – it has an incredibly fragile food chain. Climate change and extreme weather threaten farmers across Eastern Africa, who rely on their crops to feed themselves, their families, their community, and their country.

The recently launched “Potentials of Agro-ecological practices in East Africa with a focus on Circular water-energy-nutrient systems”, PrAEctiCe for short, will help tackle the issue of food security through a concept into action approach in the area of farming sustainability. The project was started on the 1st of November, and then actioned on the 10th of November 2022 through an online kick-off meeting between a 16-member consortium and Adelma Di Biaso, the European Commission Project Officer. The project brings together 6 European and 10 African institutions, coordinated by Prof. Jan Hoinkis from Die HKA. The multi-stakeholder approach will gain new insight into existing successful agro-ecological practices in East Africa and their barriers and drivers for smallholder farmers. Together the partners will form a novel agro-ecology (AE) indicator set for East Africa based on the insights gained. The investigation of the potential of such agro-ecological practices is a key element in the success of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include the “Farm to Fork” strategy, central to the European Green Deal. The project coordinator, Prof. Jan Hoinkis, is confident in the investment outcome: “Integrated aqua agriculture has the potential to develop into a key technology that can transform agriculture and improve food security in the wake of climate change.”

With a focus on circular water-energy-nutrient systems of integrated aqua-agriculture, a decision support tool developed by PrAEctiCe will assist farmers in mitigating and adapting the impacts, in the local context, of farming practices on climate change and the financial viability thereof.

Three living labs have been designated in East Africa to facilitate the project’s data validation. These action-based projects optimize water, energy, and nutrient use in 3 different integrated aqua-agriculture systems:

- Demonstration site VicInAqua for aquaculture and intercropping in Kenya
- A Hydro-aquaponics facility in Uganda
- A fish-poultry integrated system lab in Tanzania

Enhancing the food system's resilience through sustainable agricultural productivity creates real opportunities for employment and trade for the younger generation in East Africa by combining traditional agricultural knowledge with modern digital tools. To bring the vision to fruition, knowledge-sharing activities through training, student exchanges and events are being orchestrated. A cascade training mechanism with train-the-trainer courses will help agro-ecology advisors to train farming representatives, ensuring practitioners at all levels are reached.

Local Maltese partner AquaBioTech Group (ABT) are furthering their collaborations in East Africa through this project as this is the third African based Horizon funded project, they have been involved in. The first being VicInAqua which closed in 2019 and currently the ongoing FOODLAND project. ABT's role in the PrAectiCe project is to assist and support in the development of the three integrated aqua-agriculture living labs in Kenya, Uganda (Aquaponics) and Tanzania, participate in stakeholder mapping and co-creation activities, lead the mapping of integrated aqua-agriculture in East Africa, and head the installation and operation of smart sensors for integrated aquaculture/aquaponics management. ABT is looking forward to this opportunity to build on the knowledge gained in their other projects and further develop their skills and partnerships in East Africa.

The project's partners:

This press release and a press picture are available **to view and download**.

For more information, view the **PrAectiCe Concept** and the **PrAectiCe Co-Creation Activities**.

For more information on the PrAectiCe project, please see **www.praectice.eu**

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