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STRCUU INCEPTION MEETING AND LAUNCH REPORT

20 November 2025

Co-Funded by the European Union under Grant No. 101237180
(ERASMUS -EDU-2025-CBHE-STRAND 1)

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Project Title: Strengthening Teaching and Research Capacities in Recently Established Uganda Universities to Deliver Climate Resilience and Green Energy Solutions to Farming Communities

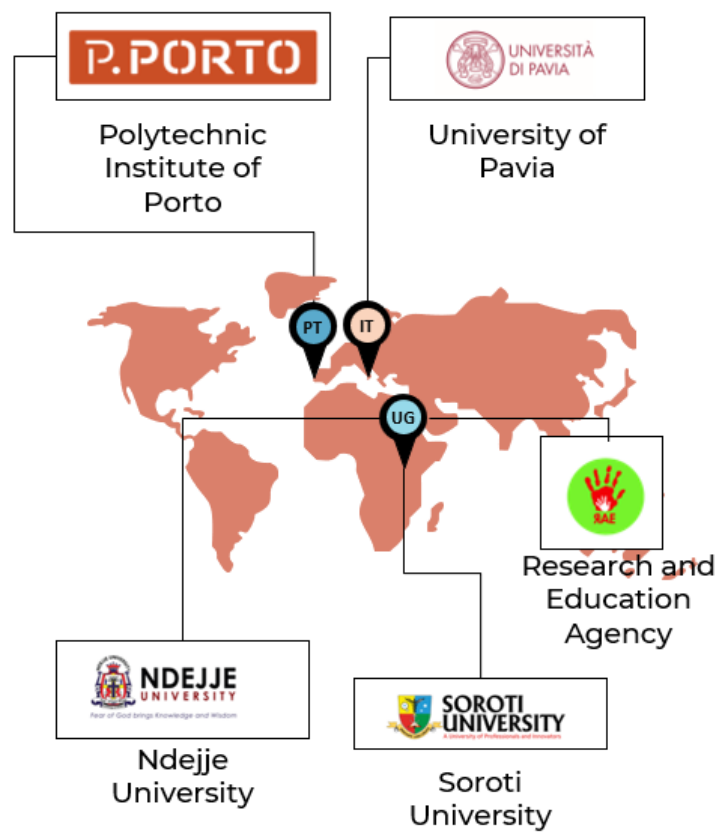
Acronym: STRCUU

Grant Call: ERASMUS -EDU-2025-CBHE-STRAND 1

Grant Number: 101237180

Lead Institution: Ndejje University, Uganda

Partner institutions



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DRAFT PROGRAM

Meeting link: <https://bit.ly/4qVVJ1i>



Meeting

- 09:00-09:45 Registration, Tea and Coffee
- 10:00-10:10 Opening Prayers by Ndejje University Chaplain, Rev Damalie Nalubwama
- 10:10-10:17 Welcome remarks by MC- Ndejje University Grants & Partnership Officer, Mr. Francis Musinghi Cajo
- 10:17-10:30 Introducing the STRCUU Project, Coordinator STRCUU Project-Dr. David Talengera
- 10:30-10:50 Welcome Remarks by the VC-NDU-Rev Canon Prof. Olivia Nassaka Banja
- 10:50-11:00 Remarks by VC-Soroti University, Prof. Robert Odongo Ikoja
- 11:00-11:20 Remarks by RAE Deputy Board Chair and NARO Principle Research Officer & Project Coordinator, Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project, Dr. Damalie Akwango
- 11:20-11:30 Remarks by STRCUU Coordinator-University of Pavia-Italy
- 11:30-11:40 Remarks by STRCUU Coordinator-Polytechnic Institute of Porto-Portugal
- 11:40-11:50 Remarks by STRCUU Steering Committee Chair and RUFORUM Grants and Research Manager. Prof Majaliwa Mwanjalolo
- 11:50-12:00 Remarks by Executive Director-National Council for Higher Education
- 12:00-12:10 Remarks by Permanent Secretary-Ministry of Education and Sports
- 12:10-12:20 Address by EU Representative to Uganda
- 12:20-12:25 Ndejje University VC introduces the Guest of Honour
- 12:25-12:45 Address by Guest of Honour-Hon Chrysostom Musingo, Uganda Minister of State for Higher Education

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12:45-12:55 Vote of Thanks to EU and Uganda Government, Ndejje University Deputy Vice
Chancellor, Dr. Christopher S. Mayanja

12:55-13:00 Closing Prayers and Departures

13:00-14:00 Lunch for the Invited Guests

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SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE STRCUU PROJECT INCEPTION AND LAUNCH MEETING

20th November 2025

Development Challenge

The effects of climate change and the crisis of sustainable energy are key contemporary global challenges hitting especially sub-Saharan Africa, which requires concerted and global interventions. The woodland coverage that would sequester the emission is threatened by the rampant deforestation across the country to meet fuel needs for 90% of the household (UBoS, 2024). Without concerted intervention, forest cover is predicted to go into extinction by the year 2040 (NEMA-Uganda, 2016). Sustainable approaches to climate change include use of climate resilient crops, agroforestry and related intercropping practices and proper land use management. Similarly, emerging use of solar power, particularly in the rural areas of Uganda requires technical support (Mirembe et al., 2024). Interventions in climate smart agriculture and renewable energy technologies demands strong institutional capabilities to foster the required innovations. This could align with EU priorities on climate action, green transition, sustainable food systems, and higher education capacity building, at the same time support Uganda's National Development Plan (NDP III), Climate Change Act (2021), and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). However, young universities in Uganda are characterized by low access to resources, understaffing, and limited global connectivity. Emerging Universities need capacity building to offer programs and community outreach activities to advance climate change mitigation and resilience, and green energy education, research, and policy advocacy.

Relevance of STRCUU Project

The project addresses priority needs identified at institutional and national levels by strengthening the capacity of recently established Ugandan universities to deliver relevant, high-quality, and inclusive higher education in the fields of climate change resilience and green energy.

The action responds directly to:

Uganda's national development and climate policies

SDG 17 on Partnerships to achieve goals

Erasmus+ CBHE priorities on modernization of HEIs, staff development, and societal relevance of curricula

EU priorities on climate action and the green transition

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Project Overall Objective

To strengthen the institutional capacity of Ugandan Higher Education institutions to contribute effectively to climate change resilience and sustainable development.

Specific Objectives

Adjust newly established HEIs academic programs to support training and research intended to address climate change impacts and the need for green energy transition.

Enhance delivery of training and research in climate change resilience and green energy solution to the farming and associated communities and industries.

Promote strong collaboration among newly established HEIs and other stakeholders (including policy makers and industry) so as to foster effective climate change management and green energy transitions.

Increase inclusivity in accessing academic programs in HEIs related to developing and delivering climate change resilience and green energy solutions.

Action Achievements at the Inception stage

During the inception period, the following key activities were undertaken: a) Establishment of project governance and management structures; b) review of relevant policies and design of necessary Project Implementation Plan and Operation Guidelines like Project Steering Committees, a Partnership Agreement signed, Monitoring Plan, Quality Assurance Plan, Training and Skilling Plan, Communication, Dissemination and Visibility Plan, a Partnership; Engagement Strategy, a Risk Management Strategy, and a Sustainability Plan Stakeholder mapping with universities, government agencies, farming communities, and private sector actors; c) refinement of the project work plan, logical framework, and indicators; d) Realignment of risks, assumptions, and mitigation measures.

Meeting Highlights and Emerging Issues

The Inception and Launch meeting was held on 20th November 2025 from 1000-1330 Easr at the Ndejje University Main Campus in Luwero, Uganda. It was a blended meeting involving physical and virtual attendance. Key Highlights include;

The Vice Chancellor of Ndejje University, the STRCUU Coordinating University pledged to adhere to the accountability procedures outlined in the Grant and Partnership Agreement and tasked the implementing teams to ensure strict compliance.

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Representatives of beneficiary institutions expounded on and pledged the value their institutions will add to the STRCUU project

The consortium was urged to leverage on existing programs to support curriculum development, training, research and community outreach by the universities

Ndejje University and Soroti University were tasked to deepen engagement for Internationalization of their universities by building networks within and outside Uganda and respond to upcoming Erasmus, Horizon and Intra-Africa Academic Calla, amongst others. This calls for strategic partnerships that would strengthen their universities research, training and outreach programs and in so doing promote sustainability of the STRCUU Action Results and trigger new initiatives

The Meeting well attended by all the STRCUU Partner Institutions representatives and others including the National Research Organisation, Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, local agencies, and media fraternity.

The meeting thanked EU for funding the STRCUU Project and many others across Africa

An exhibition was held to profile the STRCUU Project, and other initiatives on Climate Change resilience and Green Energy Solutions

The blended physical and e-signing of Partnership Agreement was halted after being informed that such would be void to the EU. Consequently, e-sign process was instituted.

Follow up Actions

Operationalize the Project sustainability plan by broadening networks to initiate new joint activities aligned to climate change resilience and Green Energy transitions

Intentionally publicize STRCUU activities for improved visibility

The Partners with support of the Research and Education Agency to develop new proposals to respond to the 2026 Erasmus CBHE and Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Calls

Ndejje University and Soroti university to initiate the process of curricula review and development of new graduate programs targeting climate resilience, green energy transition, digitization and strengthening agrifood system productivity and sustainability, amongst others

The Research and Education Agency to design online skill enhancement training courses and joint learning workshops to be implemented in 2026.

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The Partners to explore possibility of hosting an Africa-Europe Refection meetings on past joint activities linked to strengthen collaborative undertakings in the field of education and skill development and research for development initiatives

Ndejje University to consider utilizing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) already signed with NARO and Bethany Land Institute (BLI), a rural and adjacent NGO offering integrated education programs in regenerative agriculture and economic entrepreneurship.

Ndejje university and Soroti Universities to expand their pilot initiatives to enhance skills development in climate change resilience and Green Energy transitions for staff, students and communities.

Conclusion

The inception stage has successfully established the foundations for effective implementation of the STRCUU Action. The project design has been validated as feasible, pertinent, and coherent. It is well aligned with the Erasmus CBHE programme priorities and is structured to deliver sustainable institutional impact, strengthened Higher Education capacity, and noticeable benefits tor farming communities.

Report Prepared by Dr David Talengera, STRCUU Coordinator and Mr. Francis Musinghi Cajo, Ndejje University Partnership and Communication Officer

NDEJJE UNIVERSITY VICE CHANCELLOR'S BRIEF COMMUNICATION TO THE INCEPTION AND LAUNCH OF *PARTNERSHIP FOR STRENGTHENING THE TEACHING AND RESEARCH CAPACITIES IN RECENTLY ESTABLISHED UGANDAN UNIVERSITIES TO DELIVER CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE AND GREEN ENERGY SOLUTIONS TO FARMING COMMUNITIES*- 20TH NOVEMBER 2025

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The Permanent Secretary Uganda Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) ,- Dr. Kedrace Turyagyend

Representative of the European Union (EU) Ambassador to Uganda, HE Jan Sadek

RUFORUM Grants and Research Manager. Prof Majaliwa Mwanjalolo

Executive Director Research and Education Agency, Prof Adipala Ekwamu

The Vice Chancellor Soroti University, Prof. Robert Ikoja Odongo

Prof Maria Sassi from the University of Pavia, Italy

Prof Nuno Escudeiro from the Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal

Ndejje University staff and other guests present,

All those online

Ladies and Gentlemen

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SALUTATIONS

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to Ndejje University for this important occasion. We are honoured to host our distinguished partners, guests, staff, and students as we gather to launch a project that speaks directly to our mission, our priorities, and our commitment to sustainable development. Your presence here affirms the value of collaboration and the shared vision that binds us together.

2.0. INTRODUCTION

Ndejje University is a rural-based institution whose establishment was intended to contribute meaningfully to rural development. Located in Luweero District—a peri-urban area that has for years supplied nearby cities with forest-based fuels and building materials—the region has consequently suffered acute deforestation.

2.1. Context and Environmental Setting

The University sits at the transition between the wetter and drier parts of the country, commonly referred to as the cattle corridor. In addition, we manage farmland across two Agro-ecological regions. This unique land distribution calls for deliberate interventions by the University and serves as an invaluable training ground for our students, equipping them with practical skills to address contemporary environmental and agricultural challenges.

2.2. The Energy Research and Development Centre and Project Relevance

Ndejje University established an Energy Research and Development Centre to train students in sustainable energy technologies, including converting agricultural residues into briquettes. The project we are launching today will support the upscaling and broader dissemination of this technology, enhancing both innovation and community impact.

We have designated the Faculty of Environment and Agricultural Sciences to spearhead the project. We are confident that its activities will reinforce the University's strategic goal of fostering interdisciplinary action.

3.0. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PARTNERS

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We express our sincere appreciation to the Research and Education Agency (RAE) for supporting this collaboration. We equally thank our Global North partners—the University of Pavia (Italy) and Polytechnic institute of Porto (Portugal)—for their commitment to working alongside us.

We recognize that limited partnerships remain a significant gap in resource mobilization, and we greatly value their willingness to collaborate.

3.1. Impact of the Grant

As a private University dependent on tuition, this grant will substantially strengthen our mandate by building the capacity of both staff and students. It will increase the University's visibility and open avenues for additional collaborative engagements.

We especially extend our gratitude to the European Union (EU) for co-funding this important project.

Commitment to Accountability

On behalf of Ndejje University, I pledge that we shall fully adhere to the accountability procedures outlined in the grant and partnership agreement.

I task the Accounts Department and the Project Coordination Unit to ensure strict compliance with all requirements and alignment with the University's core values.

Thank you

“Fear of God brings Knowledge and Wisdom” (Prov.9:10)

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INTRODUCING STRCUU AND PROGRESS TO-DATE

DR. DAVID TALENGERA, COORDINATOR STRCUU PROJECT

DATE: 20TH NOVEMBER 2025

1. Salutations

Our distinguished guests present and those on-line, protocol observed, good morning and welcome to Ndejje University. As per the programme, I have the pleasure to walk you through the European funded project under the Erasmus Strand 1 category and whose inception we are holding now.

2. The Project

This is a 3 year project funded with €399,999. The main goal of this project is to support young Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) grow, enhance their visibility and internationalization as well as to their graduates, drawing support from experienced partners. Thus, Ndejje University partnered with Soroti University, both being relatively new in the academic arena. The two universities leverage the experience from Research and Academic Agency (RAE) and two European University of Pavia in Italy and the Polytechnic Institution of Porto in Portugal. Hence the project name “Strengthening Teaching and Research Capacities in recently established Ugandan Universities to deliver climate change resilience and green energy solutions to the farming communities (STRCUU)”.

Background of the Project

This project is drawn from the facts that Climate change challenges include extreme weather (floods and droughts), impact on agriculture production, infrastructure, health, etc. The woodland coverage that would sequester the offending emissions such as CO₂ is threatened by the rampant deforestation across the country to meet fuel needs for 90% of the household. And it is predicted that without concerted intervention, forest cover is predicted to go into extinction by the year 2040. Sustainable approaches to climate change include use of climate resilient crops, agroforestry and related intercropping practices and proper land use management. Similarly, emerging use of solar power, particularly in the rural areas of Uganda requires technical support as the technology reduces the total reliance on wood fuel, whose

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production is leading cause of deforestation. We all know that the interventions in climate smart agriculture and renewable energy technologies demands for a strong institutional capability to foster the required innovations for mitigation and resilience, as well as green energy education, research, and policy advocacy. Research and training capacities are limited by the lack of access to resources, understaffing, and limited global connectedness. This deficiency impacts more the science programs, and mainly private universities that are at their infant stage, and require significant investments. Thus, the need for internal and external collaboration is required to strengthen the relevance and visibility, new science programmes, build staff competency, improve curriculum development and delivery, research capacities and supporting technologies. Strengthened capacity will enable the HEIs contribute to the Global Gateway priority areas of climate resilient, agrifood system, green energy transition & access higher education programs, one of the EU core values.

Therefore the project has four objectives:

- 1) Adjust newly established HEIs academic programs to the climate change management and green energy sector.
- 2) Enhance delivery of training and research in climate change resilience and green energy solutions.
- 3) Promote a strong collaboration among newly established HEIs and policy makers to improve climate change management and green energy solutions.
- 4) Increase gender in accessing climate change resilience and green energy solutions in HEIs.

We plan to achieve these objectives under thematic areas activities or work packages (WPs).

WP1. Establishment of Project Management and Implementation Structures. This will involve establishing collaboration among the recently established HEIs through establishing

A Consortium Agreements

A Project Steering Committees (Project and Institutional)

A project implementation plan, and

A Procurement of plan.

WP2. Capacity building of recently established HEIs. This will involve:

- i) Realigning MSc. curricula to address climate resilience and renewable energy transition.

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ii) Improving the delivery of the research & training programs in climate resilient crop value chains. These will be affected by:

Reviewing at least two (2) MSc. Programmes with relevant components of climate resilience and green energy innovations.

Developing five (5) new graduate programs that specifically address climate resilience and green energy transition and innovations.

Harmonizing the curricula to facilitate delivery and joint alignment to the regulatory and standard agencies (NCHE) as well as facilitating credits transfers

Developing skills enhancement modules for staff and graduate students (Grant sourcing, research management, scientific data management, publication, gender mainstreaming, establishment of living labs for technology testing and dissemination on topical areas, digitalization, and competence based teaching of climate resilience and green energy innovations, etc.

WP3. Dissemination and sustainability, partnerships engagements for resources mobilization. The efforts under this work package are important for the sustainability of STRCUU because it will visibly show diverse stakeholders about the STRCUU project and its results. Therefore, consideration will be placed on

i) Supporting the project visibility, communication and dissemination of results to the local communities.

ii) Ensuring the results, and especially capacity building activities and the project scheme, are sustainable and maximized beyond the end of the project duration. We will strive to have in place:

A sustainability plan for key sustainability goals, including financial feasibility, institutional ownership, capacity building and environmental responsibility.

Dissemination, documentation of project progress, achievements, challenges, & lessons learned.

Reports on visibility activities.

A Project website (www.STRCUU.org)

A National and Regional Policy briefings summarise the desired strategic legislative interventions needed for climate change mitigation and green energy transitions from the academia point of view

Documentation of field sites that are set up to demonstrate climate change mitigation and green energy transition best practices in the community.

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Publications for the action activities to share experience and knowledge generated

3. Project implementation progress

I am glad to inform you that the project started on 1st November 2025, the day all partners signed the Grant Agreement and held a Pre-Inception meeting on 07th November to jumpstart the implementation process. We have already drafted the Project strategic documents designed to guide the implementation of the project and these include:

Governance Structure and rules

Monitoring Plan

Quality Assurance Plan

Training Plan

Partnership Engagement Plan

Communication, Dissemination & Visibility Plan

Risk Mitigation Plan

Sustainability Plan.

4. Project time lines

This three (3) year duration has strict deliverables and time lines to guide us as shown blow:

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S/n	Deliverables	WP	Lead	Due dates
1	Consortium Agreement signed by consortium members	WP1	NDU	30 Nov 2025
2	Inception meeting & management set up	WP1	NDU	31 Dec 2025
3	Approved Project implementation strategy	WP1	NDU	31 Dec 2025
4	Project Steering committee constituted	WP1	UNIPV	31 Dec 2025
5	Procurement plans	WP1	NDU	28 Feb 2026
6	Purchases made	WP1	NDU	31 Oct 2027
7	MEL quarterly report	WP1	RAE	31 Oct 2028
8	Running Curricula reviewed	WP2	NDU	28 Feb 2027
9	New curricula developed	WP2	SU	30 Apr 2028
10	Harmonization of curricula	WP2	IPP	30 Jun 2027
11	Skills enhancement for staff & students	WP2	RAE	30 Apr 2028
12	Approval of dissemination plans	WP3	IPP	28 Feb 2026
13	Dissemination events conducted	WP3	RAE	31 Oct 2028
14	National/ Regional policy engagements	WP3	RAE	31 Oct 2027

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15	Community of practice conducted	WP3	NDU	31 Aug 2028
16	Publications/ dissemination of outputs	WP3	RAE	31 Aug 2028

5. Acknowledgement

The consortium partners worked collaboratively to have the proposal submitted on time. The Administration of the respective institutions have been responsive to the required documentations and appending of their signatures. We thank the EU Project Administrator Prof. Enmaculada Rodriguez for her guidance. And lastly, the European Union is appreciated for offering us the opportunity to access their funds. For the young HEIs we promise that we are ready to learn, implement, grow and progress. We also commit to engage in and leverage support from other Partners Agencies and to work collectively to mobilise resources for scaling up STRCUU activities.

Thank you for your attention

Fear of God bring Knowledge and Wisdom

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SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR SOROTI UNIVERSITY PROF. ROBERT IKOJA ODONGO, AT THE LAUNCH OF THE PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE AND GREEN ENERGY SOLUTIONS TO FARMING COMMUNITIES.

A very good morning to everyone. It is an honor for me to be with you today to launch this Partnership for Strengthening Teaching and Research capacities in recently established Ugandan Universities to deliver climate change resilience and Green Energy solutions to farming communities. This is a subject that is not only critical for our Country's future but is also being actively shaped by its most dynamic force: our universities.

In the world, where we are experiencing the most rapid climate shifts in history, threatening livelihoods, economies, and ecosystems, our higher education institutions need to rise to the challenge, and transform ourselves from being mere centers of learning into powerhouses for climate solutions and green innovation. We in universities, should not wait for solutions to be delivered but should create them. Our institutions with partnership with institutions in Europe should establish ourselves as leaders in climate-resilient agriculture, renewable energy, and water management. We should do research not only confined to labs but that should directly influence national policies and local resilience strategies.

Our curricula should be reshaped to embed climate science and sustainability across disciplines, from agriculture to engineering. We should equally be an example by Greening our campuses: Through "campus greening." We can lead by example in many areas by implementing projects such as solar power, water recycling, and waste reduction right on campus. The impact of this project therefore should extend far beyond university gates to empowering Youth and Communities.

Importantly, the lecture halls, laboratories, and campuses of our universities should in future be at the front lines of our Country's response to climate change. Let's us incubate ideas, create technologies, and most importantly, train leaders who will secure a sustainable and resilient future for all Ugandans.

The question is no longer whether we in universities have a role to play, but how we can all support them in the vital work they are already doing.

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Soroti University will use the opportunity through this Project to conduct wide ranging review of its curricula to integrate climate science and green energy thrusts in training and research, and develop programs in other related areas such as harnessing digital technologies and data science, integrating agroecology approaches for sustainable natural resource management, amongst others. We will continue to strengthen the partnerships established through these approaches and expand our community engagement activities.

Thank you, Ndejje University, our two University Partners from Europe, RAE and above all, EU for the funding the Project and providing other support to the Higher Education Sector across Africa. I also thank the Uganda Government for the enabling environment.

Thank you.

REMARKS BY RAE DEPUTY BOARD CHAIR AND NARO REPRESENTATIVE AND PROJECT COORDINATOR, UGANDA CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

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DR. DAMALIE AKWANGO-ALIAU

I thank Ndejje University and STUUC Project leadership for giving me the opportunity to speak on this occasion as we launch the project on; Strengthening Teaching and Research Capacities in recently established Ugandan Universities to deliver climate change resilience and green energy solutions to farming communities (STRCUC project).

As the Deputy Board Chair person for Research and Education Agency (RAE) and Project Coordinator for the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project Under NARO Component, I thank the team that participated in the development of the STRCUU project. The overall objective of the Project is to establish a robust academic system in emerging HEIs in Uganda for effective delivery of sustainable climate change and adaptive green energy solutions through training and capacity building of Researchers.

RAE, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is a key partner in the development and implementation of the STRCUU project. RAE facilitates access to Education for minority and vulnerable groups and joint efforts to foster agricultural transformation in Africa. Research and Education Agency (RAE) has been involved in local and international collaborations in aspects of basic and Higher Education, and building Africa's human and science capacity.

RAE's Ambition is: Transforming Lives through Inclusive Education and Skill Development for Job Creation

Vision: Vibrant inclusive rural communities that have improved access to good quality information and are employed in generating sustainable livelihoods from agriculture

Mission: To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and job opportunities for underserved, marginalized and vulnerable communities especially in rural Uganda and other parts of Africa, as enablers of human development.

RAE as an NGO focuses on facilitating collaborative undertakings to increase access to education and fostering agricultural transformation through adoption of improved technologies and sustainable environment management practices.

RAE through the proposed project will support in the scaling of climate resilience and green energy innovative technologies developed by the Higher Education Institutions and other research bodies to intended stakeholders. The project will also leverage other on-going initiatives that are working on the Global Gateway priorities for Uganda, and from other established institutions such as Makerere University, the two European Partner universities, University of Pavia in Italy and the Polytechnic Institute of Porto in Portugal, National Agricultural Research Organization, amongst others.

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This proposed Action, aims to contribute to establishing a robust academic system in emerging Higher Education Institutions in Uganda, more specifically Ndejje University and Soroti University for delivery of a sustainable climate change management and adaptive green energy solutions. RAE and NARO endorse this collaboration amongst Uganda and European Universities and greatly thank the European Union for funding the Project

RAE will support the Project Training, Monitoring, Communication and Dissemination of the Project Results and lessons and importantly, design and implementation of Sustainability measures. Accordingly, RAE and NARO call for integration of STRCUU activities into the University Programs and for support from Uganda government and other agencies for Scaling up STRCUU activities more widely in the Uganda Higher Education Sector. RAE pledges to support the team to implement the project in time and ensure that there will be impact in the society and country at large.

RAE LINKAGES WITH NARO

The National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) is one of the implementers of the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project.

NARO is mandated to coordinate and oversee all aspects of public-funded agricultural research in Uganda. Established as a body corporate by the National Agricultural Research Act of 2005, NARO comprises a Governing Council, a Secretariat and 16 Public Agricultural Research Institutes (PARIs) spread across the country.

NARO undertakes research in all aspects of agriculture including crops, livestock, fisheries, forestry, agro-machinery, natural resources and socio-economic. The mission of NARO is to innovate for sustainable agricultural transformation.

Climate change is a rapidly emerging constraint to agricultural production and productivity. NARO developed and disseminated 192 gender-responsive, climate resilient technologies covering crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry. These technologies include drought-tolerant, early-maturing and pest-resistant crop varieties, aimed to enhance production across agro-ecological zones.

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To support climate change adaptation, NARO established 16 climate information platforms, including a digital platform to engage farmers, extension workers and other stakeholders. NARO also set up nine (09) climate-smart centers at its institutes (PARIs), and installed 16 Remote Telemetry Units across agro-ecological zones. These units generate real-time climate data on temperature, rainfall, wind speed and evaporation that provide critical information for agricultural mitigation and adaptation efforts.

The Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP) is implemented in 69 districts in Uganda, with the objective of increasing productivity, market access and resilience of select value chains in the project area and to respond promptly and effectively to an eligible crisis or emergency. The project is implemented by the Uganda Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as the Lead in collaboration with NARO, NAGRIC and the Department of Meteorology. The project is implemented under five components;

1. Promoting Adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture Technologies and Practices

Market Development and Linkages for Selected Value Chains

2. Contingency Emergency Response

3. Project Coordination, Management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Under component one on Strengthening Climate-Smart Agricultural Research, Seed, and Agro-Climatic Information Systems that NARO is implementing; This component supports the development, validation, packaging, and dissemination of context-specific Climate Smart Agriculture technologies, Innovations and Management Practices (TIMPs) to target beneficiaries

1.1 Supporting Climate Smart Agricultural Research and Innovations: 70 Competitive research grants to be administered by NARO (for adaptive and applied research activities); Support to MSc students (40) and 20 PhDs candidates.

1.2 Building Competitive and Sustainable Seed Systems:

1.3. Strengthening Agro-Climatic Monitoring and Information Systems: installation of weather stations;

The other components are implemented by the partners- MAAIF, NAGRIC and Department of Meteorology, under Ministry of Water and Environment.

The project we are launching today will benefit more from collaboration and networks that are critical in areas of climate change, with NARO, MAAIF, RUFORUM and local communities with indigenous adaptive and mitigation practices.

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To achieve this fully, the project Implementers of STRCUU should ensure to carry out proper and timely planning, identify the actual capacity gaps, maintain close linkages with other partner agencies, define the collaborative areas especially engagement of the community, identify areas of comparative advantage, sustain the networks that will have been initiated. Please ensure that you embrace the success factors for managing projects that include; transparency and accountability, honesty and equity among others.

Finally, I propose that RAE and the STRCUU Partners consider organising an African-European Institutions Reflection meeting to reflect on some of the joint activities they have undertaken, lessons learnt and to explore how best to strengthen collaborative undertakings. NARO would be glad to participate in such an event, which possibly should be a virtual event to allow for wider participation.

Thank you for Listening to Me.

For God and my Country.

REMARKS BY THE COORDINATOR OF THE STRCUU PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PAVIA, ITALY

PROF. MARIA SASSI

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Distinguished Vice Chancellors, representatives of the European Union, officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports, colleagues from Ndejje University, Soroti University, the Research and Education Agency, the University of Porto/Polytechnic Institute of Porto, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a profound privilege to speak on behalf of the University of Pavia as we gather to formally launch the STRCUU Project. Today marks the beginning of an important journey—one that connects our institutions not only through academic collaboration, but through a shared responsibility to confront the intertwined challenges of climate change, energy insecurity, and sustainable development.

Allow me to express our sincere appreciation to Ndejje University for its leadership in conceptualising and coordinating this initiative. Bringing together institutions across continents, disciplines, and mandates is not a simple task, and Ndejje University has done so with clarity, commitment, and a sense of purpose that inspires confidence.

I also extend deep gratitude to Soroti University, the Research and Education Agency, and our colleagues from the Polytechnic Institute of Porto, whose expertise and long-standing dedication to innovation, education, and community transformation greatly enrich the STRCUU consortium.

Why STRCUU Matters Now

Across the world, the impacts of climate change are accelerating with unprecedented speed. Scientific evidence continues to warn us that rising temperatures, disrupted rainfall patterns, land degradation, and the depletion of energy resources are not distant threats—they are current realities reshaping the lives of millions.

For Uganda, these challenges intersect directly with the agricultural sector, where the majority of communities depend on rain-fed farming and natural resource-based livelihoods. These pressures have implications for food security, public health, economic stability, migration, and even social cohesion.

The STRCUU project arrives at a moment when universities must transform the way they contribute to national resilience. Institutions of higher learning are no longer passive observers of environmental and energy crises—they are expected to provide the scientific knowledge, technological innovation, skilled professionals, and evidence-based strategies required to address them.

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At the University of Pavia—an institution with more than 660 years of academic tradition—we have witnessed how universities can become engines of renewal.

They shape future leaders, inspire societal transformation, and build bridges between scientific discovery and community impact.

STRCUU is built on this vision, positioning universities as key actors in the climate and energy transition of Uganda.

The University of Pavia's Commitment

Our contribution to this consortium is guided by three interlinked priorities that reflect our strengths and our long-standing experience in international academic cooperation.

1. Strengthening Research Ecosystems and Academic Structures

Robust research systems are the foundation of strong universities. Access to laboratories or equipment alone does not build research cultures—what matters is the presence of mentorship structures, clear governance, methodological rigour, and academic integrity.

Pavia's contribution will include:

- developing sustainable postgraduate supervision frameworks;
- strengthening methodological training in experimental and applied research;
- supporting data analysis, interpretation, and responsible data management;
- and helping create internal mechanisms—ethics committees, research offices, review boards—that uphold standards of academic excellence.

Our objective is to help establish research environments that continue to grow and produce knowledge long after the project concludes.

2. Co-developing Curricula That Reflect Global Scientific Agendas

Curricula define the competencies, values, and scientific thinking of future professionals. They must evolve with emerging knowledge and societal needs.

Together with Ndejje and Soroti Universities, we will:

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- align academic programmes with global priorities in climate resilience, renewable energy, and sustainable food systems;
- introduce interdisciplinary approaches that enable students to engage with complex problems holistically;
- strengthen quality assurance processes to support continuous improvement; and
- ensure that academic offerings remain accessible, relevant, and scientifically grounded.

This aspect of our work is not simply about designing courses—it is about strengthening the intellectual identity and long-term relevance of the universities we partner with.

3. Enhancing Scientific Visibility and International Collaboration

For research to create impact, it must be visible, shared, debated, and refined through international engagement.

The University of Pavia will support partners to:

- publish research in reputable scientific journals;
- join global research networks addressing climate science, energy systems, and sustainability;
- build scientific mobility programmes for students and staff; and
- participate in international conferences and collaborative projects.

We aim to amplify the voices and innovations of Ugandan researchers, ensuring that their contributions are recognised on continental and global platforms.

4. A Partnership of Equity, Complementarity, and Shared Learning

One of the most encouraging aspects of STRCUU is its balanced and complementary partnership structure.

- Ugandan universities bring invaluable contextual knowledge, proximity to farming communities, and innovation shaped by local needs and constraints.
- The Research and Education Agency contributes practical experience in rural outreach, youth development, and community mobilisation.

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- The Polytechnic Institute of Porto offers advanced expertise in digital pedagogy, academic innovation, data-driven learning, and modern teaching strategies—skills that enhance the digital and methodological capabilities of the consortium.

- The University of Pavia contributes its long history of academic excellence, research capacity building, and international scientific collaboration.

Together, these strengths produce a consortium greater than the sum of its parts.

This is not a partnership defined by hierarchy, but by complementarity—each institution contributing with mutual respect and shared purpose.

5. The Vision Ahead

By the end of this project, we aspire to see:

- Ndejje University and Soroti University established as emerging centres of excellence in climate resilience, renewable energy, and sustainability research;

- new postgraduate cohorts trained in rigorous scientific methodologies and interdisciplinary approaches, ready to lead in academia, government, and industry;

- stronger linkages between universities, ministries, local governments, and farming communities, ensuring that scientific knowledge informs practice and policy;

- and a sustainable network of international partnerships that continues to support knowledge exchange, joint research, and academic mobility.

Most importantly, we hope that the universities engaged in STRCUU become powerful agents of societal transformation—institutions that produce graduates who can innovate, adapt, and lead Uganda's transition toward a more resilient and sustainable future.

6. In conclusion,

As the University of Pavia, we reiterate our full commitment to this partnership.

We stand ready to work closely with each of you—academics, administrators, community leaders, and policy makers—to ensure that STRCUU delivers results that are scientifically sound, institutionally sustainable, and socially meaningful.

We appreciate the European Union for its generous support and for believing in the transformative potential of academic cooperation.

And we thank all our partners for their dedication.

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REMARKS BY THE COORDINATOR OF THE STRCUU PROJECT AT THE POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE OF PORTO, PORTUGAL

PROF. NUNO ESCUDEIRO

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished partners, colleagues, and friends,

It is a great honour to speak today on behalf of the Polytechnic Institute of Porto as we join you in the STRCUU project: *Strengthening Teaching and Research Capacities in recently established Ugandan Universities to deliver climate change resilience and green energy solutions to farming communities.*

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Allow me first to congratulate the consortium, led by Ndejje University, for articulating and initiating such a timely and visionary action. Climate change is no longer a prediction; it is a lived reality. Across the world, communities are grappling with unpredictable weather patterns, declining agricultural productivity, energy poverty, and the profound social and economic vulnerabilities these generate. Addressing these challenges requires not only scientific solutions but also institutional capacity, skilled human resources, collaborative networks, and accessible education systems capable of responding to rapidly evolving realities.

This project speaks directly to these needs. It is ambitious, transformative, and deeply aligned with the Global Gateway priorities, the EU Green Deal, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Why IPP is deeply committed to STRCUU

As Portugal's largest and most dynamic polytechnic institution, IPP strongly identifies with STRCUU's vision: empowering higher education institutions to drive societal resilience, green innovation, and inclusive development. For us, this project is more than a cooperation initiative; it is an opportunity to invest in shared futures, where knowledge, technology, and innovation serve communities directly.

We bring to the consortium three core strengths:

A longstanding commitment to applied research and innovation in engineering and community-oriented problem solving.

Extensive experience in blended, virtual, and flexible learning approaches, which we believe are essential tools for expanding access to quality education.

Deep engagement in the internationalisation of higher education, building networks that prepare institutions and students for a globalised academic and professional environment.

These strengths position IPP not only as a technical contributor but as a strategic partner committed to institutional transformation and long-term capacity building.

Our contribution to Curriculum Reform and Academic Capacity

One of the core objectives of STRCUU is to adjust and strengthen academic programs in partner HEIs so that graduates are prepared to address the realities of climate change and energy transition.

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IPP will contribute by:

Supporting curriculum review and co-design in areas related to renewable energy technologies, climate-smart agriculture, sustainability engineering, and community-centred innovation.

Sharing our models for competence-based learning, problem-based teaching, and modular curriculum structures, approaches that allow universities to respond quickly to emerging challenges without abandoning academic rigour.

Co-developing training materials, virtual resources, and teaching modules that can be easily adapted to local contexts and integrated into blended learning environments.

Our aim is to work closely with Ugandan partners to ensure that academic programs are practical, relevant, future-oriented, and accessible to diverse groups of learners.

Enhancing delivery of training and research

STRCUU places strong emphasis on strengthening research capabilities and improving the practical delivery of knowledge to communities and industries.

IPP will contribute through:

Joint training workshops and staff capacity-building in applied research methods, machine learning, and data analysis.

Establishing digital research infrastructures and e-learning platforms that support remote supervision, collaborative research, and virtual mobility of academic staff and students.

Offering mentorship to early-career academics, particularly in scientific writing, grant proposal development, and the creation of international research networks.

We believe that research capacity grows through collaboration, and this project offers an excellent opportunity to strengthen our research ecosystems.

Promotion of collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement

The Polytechnic Institute of Porto has a strong tradition of cooperation with industry, municipalities, civil society, and innovation hubs. We fully support the project's objective to promote collaboration among HEIs, policy makers, and the private sector.

Our contribution will include:

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Facilitating dialogue between Ugandan partners and IPP's network of sustainability-oriented enterprises, start-ups, research labs, and policy actors.

Contributing expertise in building innovation ecosystems, structures that connect universities, communities, and industries in a mutually beneficial way.

Supporting joint development of community-oriented pilots or demonstration activities that showcase practical green energy and climate resilience solutions.

We are particularly excited about opportunities for cross-continental education, research, innovation and service to communities.

Expanding inclusion through virtual and blended education

One of IPP's strongest specialisations, and a key reason for our involvement in STRCUU, is our work in blended, digital, and international virtual learning activities and environments.

Given the challenges faced by emerging HEIs in Uganda, such as limited resources, understaffing, and constraints to access, digital learning ecosystems can make education more inclusive, flexible, and scalable.

Our contribution will include:

Co-creating digital content, MOOCs, micro-credentials, and online short courses addressing climate resilience and green energy.

Helping build institutional capacity for online teaching, learning design, and virtual assessment.

Piloting virtual exchanges and collaborative online international learning (COIL) initiatives between IPP and partner institutions.

Providing models for hybrid laboratories and remote experimentation platforms that allow students to engage in scientific practice even when physical resources are limited.

Our vision is that digital education becomes a bridge of opportunity, ensuring that students can participate fully in the programs strengthened by STRCUU regardless of their location or background.

Our long-term interest: a sustainable and equitable partnership

For IPP, participation in STRCUU is not a short-term engagement; it reflects our long-term commitment to sustainable and equitable cooperation with African higher education partners.

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We intend to:

Build lasting academic and research networks with Ndejje University, Soroti University, and the other Ugandan HEIs involved.

Encourage student and staff mobility, both virtual and physical, as part of future Erasmus+ actions.

Develop joint research proposals in climate resilience, green energy, agricultural innovation, and digital learning technologies.

Expand collaboration toward innovation hubs, entrepreneurship programmes, and multidisciplinary problem-solving teams.

We believe that true partnerships grow when knowledge flows in both directions, and when solutions are shaped by local realities and global insights working together.

In Conclusion,

Ladies and gentlemen, in joining STRCUU, the Polytechnic Institute of Porto affirms its belief in the transformative potential of higher education. We believe that building resilient societies begins with building resilient universities, institutions capable of generating knowledge, nurturing skilled professionals, and offering communities meaningful solutions to their most pressing challenges.

We are deeply honoured to work alongside our Ugandan and European partners in this journey. Together, we have the opportunity to reshape education, strengthen research, and empower farming communities with sustainable energy and climate-smart innovations.

On behalf of IPP, I express our gratitude, our commitment, and our enthusiasm for the work that lies ahead.

Thank you very much.

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VOTE OF THANKS BY THE NDEJJE UNIVERSITY DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR- ACADEMIC AFFAIRS DURING THE STRCUU INCEPTION AND LAUNCH MEETING HELD ON 20TH NOVEMBER 2025

The Guest of Honor

All Protocol observed

I wish to thank you all for honoring the invitation to this momentous occasion in university when launch this STRCUU project. I have listened with gladness and optimism to all the speeches and pledges to see the successful implementation of this project.

I want to thank in a special, Prof Adipala Ekwamu and the Research and Education Agency (RAE) for working so hard to bring the University of Pavia in Italy, Polytechnic Institute of Porto in Portugal, Soroti University and Ndejje University together. Collaboration is the way! Gone are the days when universities worked in silos! I noted that this joint wining proposal scored very highly at the technical evaluation level, and I commend the proposal development team.

I also thank our partners in the consortium for accepting to work with us, and I ask that you relay our appreciation to the respective stakeholders of your Institutions.

Furthermore, allow me to thank the media companies here that always and are going to inform the nation and globe of this Green Energy transition initiative through the print, electronic and social media channels.

To the Vice Chancellor and entire Ndejje university management, thank you for committing institutional support for the project, and the staff that put their brains and energies to actualize this launch, thank you too. I also acknowledge all of you who have physically attended this occasion, as well as our esteemed online participants. Thank you Dr Mary Shawa all the way from Malawi University for staying with us up to now! Thank you also NARO and RUFORUM for joining this event.

Lastly, we are greatly indebted to the European Commission for funding this project to the tune of Euros 359,999. This is a clear demonstration that you want a better world and believe in us to collaborate to mitigate the impact of climate change. In the same vein I applaud the implementing partners for contributing 10% funding towards the project total budget (Euro 400,000).

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Today, we launch STRCUU to a revived mother earth, and I wish you all safe journeys back home.

The Fear of God brings Knowledge and wisdom

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE RAE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,

PROF. ADIPALA EKWAMU.

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It is with great honour and pleasure for me to make the Concluding Remarks at this STRCUU Project Inception Meeting and Launch Ceremony. For the last 30 years I have been supporting African Institutions to source for competitive grants from various funding Institutions, key amongst which is the European Union Commission. Competition is very stiff with very low success rate. Success is depended on, amongst others, establishing a well constituted consortium that works closely together to respond to what the Funder wants. I therefore congratulate Ndejje University and the Partners for securing this Erasmus Capacity Building for Higher Education Grant. I am aware that it was very difficult to prepare and submit the proposal on time but thanks to the leadership of Ndejje University and the other four Partner Institutions, that is, Soroti University, University of Pavia in Italy, Polytechnic Institute of Porto in Portugal and the team at the Research and Education Agency, the proposal was developed, successfully submitted on time and funded. Congratulations to the Team, and especially Ndejje University and Soroti University for this milestone achievement.

I thank Ndejje University for hosting this meeting and for the personal participation of the Ndejje University Vice Chancellor and Soroti University Vice Chancellor during this Launch Ceremony and for the words of wisdom and commitment they have shared with us. I particularly note with appreciation the commitment made by the Ndejje University Vice Chancellor to ensure transparent and proper management of the Project Funds and to work closely and collaboratively with the Partners to implement STRCUU activities. Both Ndejje University and Soroti University have committed to develop and implement graduate programs to support communities address the challenges of natural resource degradation, climate change and greening the environment. Indeed, both Universities have already initiated activities for greening their campuses and initiated programs to work closely with the farming communities.

I thank the two European Partner Universities for their valuable input during the Proposal development process that greatly enriched the quality and competitiveness of the STRCUU proposal. The representatives of both Universities are present in this meeting and have articulated their envisaged role in implementation of the STRCUU project and their wish to strengthen and broaden the Partnership. We are most grateful for the support.

We thank the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) for participating in today's STRCUU Launch Ceremony and for the work they are doing to champion agricultural research for development in Uganda. We are pleased to learn and know about the NARO and Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries' work on climate change mitigation and adaptation and we seek to engage in the Project and in other joint activities with NARO and other Research and Innovation bodies including in Uganda focused EU Gateway Flagship initiatives.

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I thank Ndejje University and other STRCUU Partners for the work already done to initiate implementation of the STRCUU Project. I note with appreciation that we have already developed an Implementation Plan and Operation Guidelines including establishing a Project Steering Committee, a Consortium Agreement (MoU), Monitoring Plan, Quality Assurance Plan, Training and Skilling Plan, Communication, Dissemination and Visibility Plan, a Partnership Engagement Strategy, a Risk Management Strategy, and a Sustainability Plan. I urge that we now move to implementing the activities as outlined in the Monitoring Plan, especially initiating the curriculum reviews and development of new graduate programs as outlined in the STRCUU Project document. I further thank the five STRCUU Partner Institutions for agreeing to provide the 10 percent co-funding for the Project. Let us link some of the STRCUU activities to some of the related already ongoing activities in our Institutions. We have taken note and accepted the invitation by Soroti University Vice Chancellor to hold the next face to face and blended meeting in Soroti University. We have also taken note of the suggestion to convene possibly next year an African-European Joint Learning event to share lessons and experiences in implementation of capacity development and research initiatives, and to explore possibilities of further engagement. I request our two European Partner institutions to guide on possibility of holding such an event.

As part of Sustainability measures, we should immediately put up teams to respond to funding calls including the possible Intra Africa Academic Mobility, Erasmus and Horizon Africa calls. I humbly request the two European Universities to partner with us and the two Vice Chancellors to provide the necessary Institution support. RAE is available to support this and other initiatives for enhancing access to and improving quality of education, and supporting joint efforts to foster rural transformation in Africa.

Finally, I and all of us present express our profound gratitude to the European Union Commission for funding STRCCU Project and other development initiatives in Uganda and Africa at large. Please continue to extend a helping hand to us and to support joint Africa-EU initiatives.

Once more Congratulations to the STRCUU Partners for winning the Grant. As agreed today, lets proceed with implementation keeping in mind our thrusts of supporting farming communities, collaborative undertakings and ensuring quality, transparency and accountability to our institutions, stakeholders and our FUNDER-EU.

THANK YOU.

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LIST OF ATTENDEES TO THE INCEPTION MEETING

STRCUU INCEPTION MEETING AT NDEJJE UNIVERSITY, MAIN CAMPUS, HELD ON 20TH NOVEMBER, 2025

S/NO	NAME	POSITION AND ADDRESS	EMAIL CONTACT
1	Rev. Canon Latimar Mwanguzi	Dean of Students, Ndejje University	Imwanguzi@ndejeuniversity.ac.ug
2	Rev. Damalie Nalubwama	Chaplain, Ndejje University	Inalubwama@ndejeuniversity.ac.ug

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13	Agnes Amoit	RAE	agnesamoit2@gmail.com
14	Dr. Deborah Alio	RAE	deborah.alio@yahoo.com
15	Olivia Makumbi	FEAS, Ndejje University	
16	Dr. Ninsheka Leonard	FEAS, Ndejje University	
17	Namayana Lillian	FEAS, Ndejje University	
18	Prof. Adipala Ekwamu	Executive Director RAE	
19	Dr. Zadko Ekwamere	RAE	
20	Dr. Sarah Akello	Lecturer Makerere University	

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21	Dr. Damalie Alango	RAE Deputy Board Chair /NARO Senior Research Officer	
22	Dr. Bingil Berthaln	Consultant, Ndejje University	-
23	Aswa Stephen Thomas	Alumni Officer, Ndejje University	
24	Mugalula Charlen M.	PRO, Ndejje University	
25	Patrick Kazibwe	Legal Officer, Ndejje University	
26	Olive Kajumba K.	PA. Office of the Vice Chancellor, Ndejje University	
27	Dr. Christopher S. Mayanja	DVC – Academic Affairs, Ndejje University	
28	Prof. J.R. Ikoja Odongo	VC, Soroti University	
29	Okello James Gregory	Academic Registrar, Soroti University	
30	Dr. Robert Setekera	Dean, FOSSC, Ndejje University	
31	Dr. Charles Kahigiriza	University Secretary, Ndejje University	
32	Musinghi Cajo Francis	GPO, Ndejje University	
33	Dr. David Talengera	Dean – FEAS, Ndejje University	
34	Mourine Mugisa	Bursar, Ndejje University	
35	Bakawa Christopher	Assistant Lecturer, Ndejje University	

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36	Anthony Makhulo	Lecturer, Ndejje University	
37	Gitta Amos	Director, Quality Assurance, Ndejje University	
38	Ouma Jackson	RE Technician, Ndejje University	
39	Elisha Abel	Student, Ndejje University	
40	Nanyonjo Winiefred	Student, Ndejje University	
41	Mulumba Phillip	Student, Ndejje University	
42	Onencan Emmanuel Joshua	Student, Ndejje University	
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