MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INSIDE MUST RI

Research • Innovation • Commercialization

AUGUST 2026 NEWS LETTER





FEATURED STORY

MUST LEADS THE 9TH AFREHEALTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) successfully hosted the 9th AFREhealth Annual Conference, held from 24–26 August 2026 at Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala. Building on the 8th annual gathering in Dakar, the conference convened researchers, health professionals, educators, innovators, policymakers and partners under the theme, “From Innovation to Impact: Strengthening Health Education, Research, and Service Delivery for a Resilient Africa.”

In her opening remarks, Vice Chancellor Prof. Pauline Byakika-Kibwika highlighted MUST’s research and innovation achievements despite limited government funding. She called for increased investment to expand high-impact research, translate innovations into scalable solutions, strengthen the next generation of scientists, and advance Uganda’s socioeconomic development. She also challenged African universities to develop locally relevant technologies rather than remain consumers of external innovations. MUST’s leadership of the conference demonstrated its capacity to advance health solutions and contribute to Uganda’s national transformation.



INSIDE MUST RI

BUILDING A

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION ECOSYSTEM FOR IMPACT.

EDITOR'S NOTE

August has been a month that demonstrates MUST's growing research, innovation, and impact footprint. From successfully hosting the 9th AFREhealth Annual Conference, which brought together researchers, health professionals, innovators, policymakers and partners from across Africa and beyond, to advancing research, commercialization, entrepreneurship, policy evidence and community engagement, reflecting an increased commitment to focusing on translating knowledge into solutions.

Across MUST RI, our Centres and Units are turning this ambition into action. TFCC is generating evidence to address conservation pressures around Bwindi; PHARMBIOTRAC is strengthening industry partnerships to move university innovations toward the market; MUST-PEDC is generating evidence to inform implementation of the Parish Development Model; the Entrepreneurship Centre is drawing on regional experience to strengthen its operational model; and MCRL is expanding its capabilities to support competitive biomedical and translational research.

As we build a coordinated research and innovation ecosystem through MUST RI, our challenge is not simply to do more research, but to ensure that it solves problems, informs policy, drives innovation and enterprise, develops talent, and improves lives.

Enjoy this August edition of Inside MUST RI.

Assoc. Professor. Angella Musiimenta
Chief Research Officer (CRO), MUST RI

STRENGTHENING MUST–U.S. EMBASSY COLLABORATION



On 2nd Sept.2026, MUST hosted a delegation from the U.S. Embassy in Uganda for strategic engagements aimed at strengthening the University's longstanding collaboration with the Embassy and U.S. institutions. The delegation included Ms. Lana Surface, Education and Cultural Attaché; Ms. Veronica Sempebwa, Public Engagement Specialist; and Ms. Lydia Nanteza, American Center Director.

Discussions explored opportunities to strengthen the American Corner at MUST as a platform for learning, information exchange and engagement, while expanding academic, cultural and research collaboration. Particular emphasis was placed on leveraging the Fulbright Programme to strengthen faculty and student exchanges, research partnerships, mentorship, professional development and institutional capacity. The engagement reaffirmed the importance of the MUST–U.S. Embassy partnership in connecting MUST researchers, innovators and students to U.S. institutions, expertise and networks, and creating opportunities for sustained international research and academic collaboration.





WHY MUST RI MATTERS



- Research has always been one of MUST's greatest strengths.
- MUST Research Institute (MUST RI) has been established to make that strength even greater.
- The question is not whether MUST has strong research—we clearly do.
- The question is: How do we build on this strength to become a globally competitive research and innovation university?
- The answer is the coordinated institutional framework provided by MUST RI.

MUST RI = Unifying Institutional Framework **for MUST Research, Commercialization and Innovation Ecosystem**

Without MUST RI	How MUST RI Responds
Research efforts are distributed across multiple centres and faculties.	Provides strategic coordination around national STI priorities.
Many innovations remain at the prototype or publication stage.	Accelerates translation, commercialization and technology transfer.
Limited multidisciplinary collaboration across research units.	Integrates expertise to solve complex national challenges.
Fragmented resource mobilization and research management.	Strengthens research governance, funding and partnerships.
Limited institutional visibility of research impact.	Positions MUST as a nationally and regionally competitive research and innovation hub.

MEET MUST RI



WHY MUST RI?

Strategic Rationale. MUST RI has been established to coordinate, strengthen and accelerate MUST's research and innovation ecosystem to deliver greater national socioeconomic impact.

Aspiration: To position MUST as a leading research, innovation and commercialization hub that transforms scientific discoveries into innovative technologies, commercially viable products, competitive enterprises, and evidence-informed policies that accelerate industrialization, improve lives, and drive sustainable socioeconomic transformation.

MUST RESEARCH INSTITUTE (MUST RI)

A multidisciplinary research, innovation and commercialization ecosystem driving knowledge, innovation, evidence and impact for societal transformation.

CENTRES AND UNITS

PHARMBIOTRAC
(Pharm-Biotechnology and Traditional Medicine Centre)
for pharmaceutical biotechnology and herbal-medicine science.

CITT
(Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer)
for technology transfer and commercialization.

TFCC
(Tropical Forest Conservation) Centre
for biodiversity research and eco-tourism.

MNCH
(Maternal, New born, and Child Health) centre
for new born, child and maternal health research.

MUST PEDC
(MUST Policy, Economic and Data Centre)
for AI-enabled policy briefs.

MUST LABORATORY SERVICES
for clinical, biomedical, and translational research.

ENTREP
(Entrepreneurship) Centre
for Business incubation and development

RESEARCH AFFILIATES
Faculty Research groups and Independent Researchers

MUST GRANTS OFFICE
Supporting Unit for All Centres and Units

- Provides pre- and post-award grant support
- Facilitates innovations management and commercialization
- Ensures compliance, reporting, and grant accountability

MISSION

To foster multidisciplinary research and innovation to generate solutions for sustainable development.

VISION

To be a center of excellence in science and technology research and innovation

FOLLOW US:
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CONTACT US:
mustri-centreleaders@must.ac.ug
chiefresearchofficer@must.ac.ug

AUGUST 2026 AT

MUST RI

CENTRE/UNIT SPOTLIGHT



MUST-PEDC TRAINS AND DEPLOYS DATA COLLECTORS FOR PDM STUDY



MUST Policy and Economic Data Centre (MUST-PEDC) conducted a two-day induction training for data collectors at Igongo Country Hotel, preparing them for fieldwork assessing the impact of the Parish Development Model (PDM) on households, enterprises, and livelihoods across selected districts.

Facilitated by Dr. Kule Baguma and Dr. Nicodemus Rudaheranwa, with support from Mr. Ronald Mutabaazi, the training covered research methods, data collection tools, research ethics, emotional intelligence, active listening, neutrality, data processing and cleaning, analysis, interpretation, and report writing. Participants were equipped to generate reliable data and identify trends that can inform evidence-based decisions across agriculture, industry, and services.

Following the training, the data collectors were deployed to the field and are actively collecting data, advancing MUST-PEDC's commitment to generating credible evidence for policy and development decision-making.

AUGUST 2026 AT
MUST RI
CENTRE/UNIT SPOTLIGHT

PHARMBIOTRAC

PHARMBIOTRAC AND NUTRIC PHARMA EXPLORE COMMERCIALIZATION PARTNERSHIP



On August 21, 2026, MUST's Pharm-Biotechnology and Traditional Medicine Centre (PHARMBIOTRAC) hosted Dr. Marsden Wagubi, Director of Nutric Pharma Ltd, to explore collaboration in marketing, distribution, and commercialization of PHARMBIOTRAC/MUST innovations. Discussions focused on leveraging Nutric Pharma's private-sector expertise, distribution networks, product positioning, and market access to bring university-developed health innovations closer to end users.

The engagement included a tour of PHARMBIOTRAC's Museum and Product Development Laboratory and discussions on translating research outputs into market-ready products. Particular attention was given to the PHARMBIOTRAC/MUST 3-in-1 Wound Spray, with both parties exploring opportunities for its marketing, distribution, and wider market access. The partnership strengthens academia–industry linkages and supports MUST's efforts to bridge the research-to-market gap, accelerate commercialization of locally developed innovations, promote enterprise development, and increase the societal and economic impact of university research and innovation.

AGUST 2026 AT MUST RI

CENTRE/UNIT SPOTLIGHT



THE MNCH CENTRE BRIDGES YOUTH ENGAGEMENT, LEARNING AND COMMUNITY HEALTH



The Maternal, Newborn Child Health Centre (MMCH) continued strengthening youth and community engagement through the Healthy Adolescent and Young People (HAY!) initiative and the Field School programme. Through HAY! Clubs, adolescents and young people access health information, discuss issues affecting their lives, build confidence, and participate in activities that promote health and well-being. The clubs provide important platforms for youth participation, peer support, learning and positive action, ensuring meaningful engagement of young people in matters affecting their health.

The Field School programme complemented these efforts by providing students and trainees with hands-on community experience in real-world maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health settings. The 2026 Field School activities concluded with a school celebration, marking a successful period of experiential learning, community engagement, and practical application of knowledge and skills beyond the classroom, while strengthening connections between academic training and community health needs.

AGUST 2026 AT

MUST RI

CENTRE/UNIT SPOTLIGHT



MUST ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE TAKES SHAPE THROUGH STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT AND BENCHMARKING



In August 2026, the MUST Research Institute engaged the MUST-IUC UCoBS Subproject 5 team to advance the operationalization of the MUST Entrepreneurship Centre, a university-wide platform for entrepreneurship training, enterprise development, research, incubation, and commercialization.

The Centre also conducted strategic benchmarking in Ghana and Kenya. At the University of Ghana's Department of Crop Science, discussions focused on multidisciplinary innovation and translating research into market-ready solutions and sustainable enterprises. The University of Ghana Business School Innovation Hub provided lessons on governance, management, entrepreneurship programming, and innovator support. At Strathmore University's @iLabAfrica Centre in Kenya, discussions covered entrepreneurship education, incubation and acceleration, innovation management, research commercialization, and university-industry engagement. At Riara University in Kenya, discussions focused on entrepreneurship activities, institutional structures, student entrepreneurial capacity, knowledge exchange, and collaboration. These engagements will inform the Centre's governance, operationalization, partnerships, and sustainability.

AUGUST 2026 AT

MUST RI

CENTRE/UNIT SPOTLIGHT

ASSESSING LAND-USE PRESSURES ON CONSERVATION IN BWINDI



In August, the Tropical Forest Conservation Centre (TFCC) conducted field research around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park to assess how surrounding land-use practices and the condition of key resources—soil, vegetation, livestock, and water—affect conservation within the park. Bwindi is an isolated forest surrounded by densely settled and intensively cultivated communities whose livelihoods depend heavily on natural resources, creating increasing pressure on the protected area.

The study examines how resource conditions and land-use practices contribute to unauthorised extraction of park resources, affect populations of large wild animals, and intensify human–wildlife conflict. Findings will strengthen understanding of the links between community land use, livelihoods, resource pressure, and wildlife conservation, providing evidence for practical interventions that reduce pressure on Bwindi's biodiversity and ecosystem services. The research is supported by Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust and implemented with Uganda Wildlife Authority and local farmers.

AGUST 2026 AT

MUST RI

CENTRE/UNIT SPOTLIGHT



BUILDING MCRL INTO A COMPETITIVE BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH HUB



In August 2026, the Chief Research Officer, Prof. Angella Musiimenta, held a strategic engagement with the MUST Clinical and Research Laboratory (MCRL), a research-support unit under MUST RI. Discussions reviewed its mandate, services, equipment, infrastructure and space, highlighting priorities including accreditation, adequate laboratory space, infrastructure and equipment, business model development, leadership, institutional financial support, staffing and technical capacity. The engagement explored positioning MCRL as a high-quality, accredited and competitive research-support platform for multidisciplinary research, training and strategic partnerships.

MCRL has now introduced Peripheral Blood Mononuclear Cell (PBMC) processing, expanding capacity for advanced biomedical, immunological, infectious disease and translational research. Standardized PBMC isolation, processing, cryopreservation and quality control will support clinical trials, biobanking and high-quality research. This capability will strengthen research national and international partnerships, staff expertise and competitiveness for research funding while generating evidence to advance disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

MUST RI/MGO AT A GLANCE

GRANT PROPOSALS SUBMITTED (July-Aug.2026) | 15

DISTRIBUTION BY FACULTY/UNIT	
College of Health Sciences (CoHS)	6
Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology (FAST)	1
Faculty of Computing and Informatics (FCI)	2
Faculty of Science (FoS)	1
Central Administration	2
Maternal, New born and Child Health Centre (MNCH)	1
MUST RI institutional grants	2

FUNDING AGREEMENTS SIGNED (New + Renewals) (July-Aug.2026) | 13

DISTRIBUTION BY FACULTY/UNIT	
College of Health Sciences (CoHS)	10
Faculty of Science (FoS)	1
Faculty of Applied Sciences and Technology (FAST)	1
Central Administration	1

GRANTS WON: (July-Aug.2026) **4**

FACULTY DISTRIBUTION	
College of Health Sciences (CoHS)	3
Faculty of Science (FoS)	2

GRANTS CLOSED (July-Aug.2026) | **2**

NEW PARTNERS ESTABLISHED (July-Aug.2026) | **4**

NO. OF SCHOLARSHIPS BENEFICIARIES ON ACTIVE PROJECTS | **61**

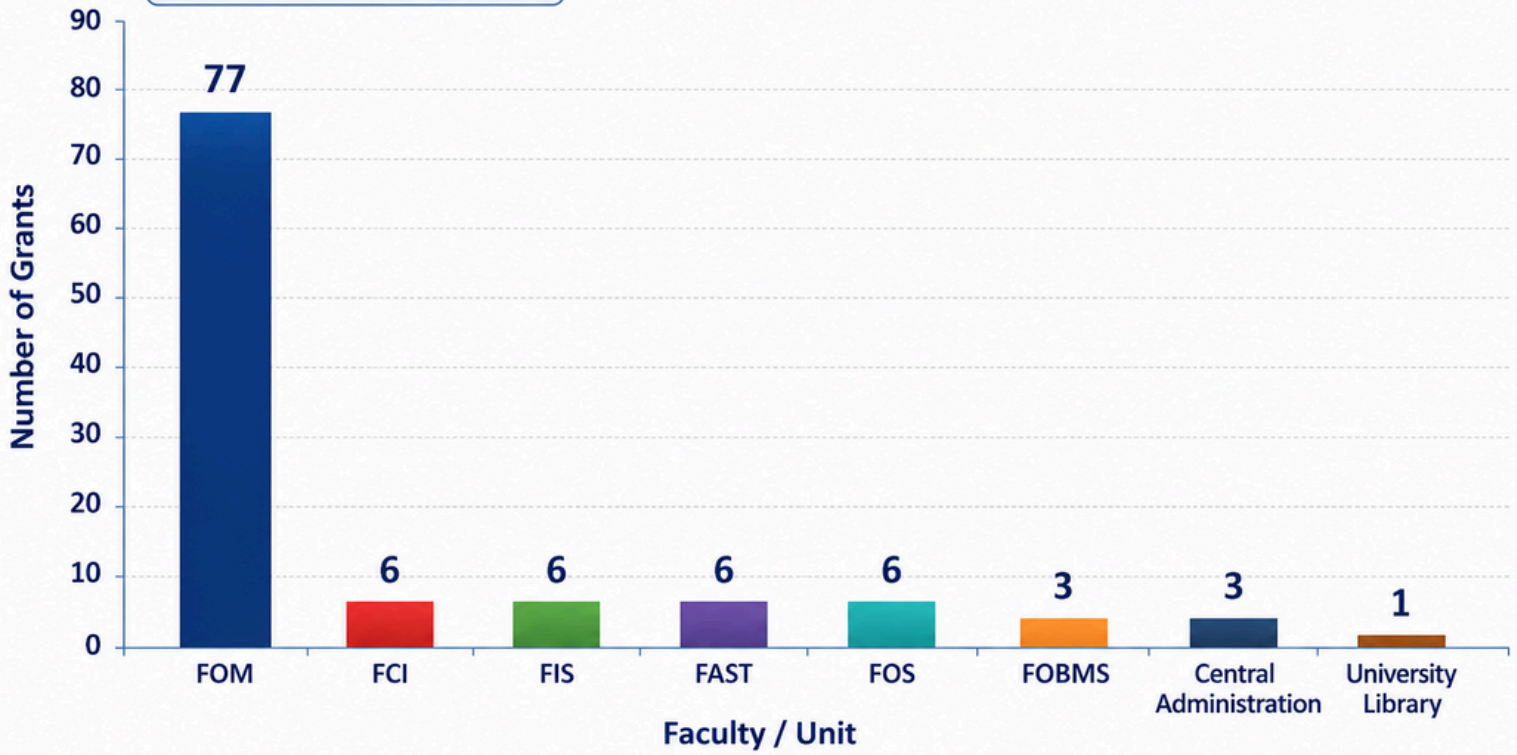
NO.OF SCOPUS- INDIXED MUST-AFFILIATED PUBLICATIONS (Since Jan.2026): **287**

MUST RI/MGO STAFF	MUST RI PROJECT STAFF	ACTIVE EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS
14	368	108

Strengthening the University's research and innovation enterprise through centralized grants management.

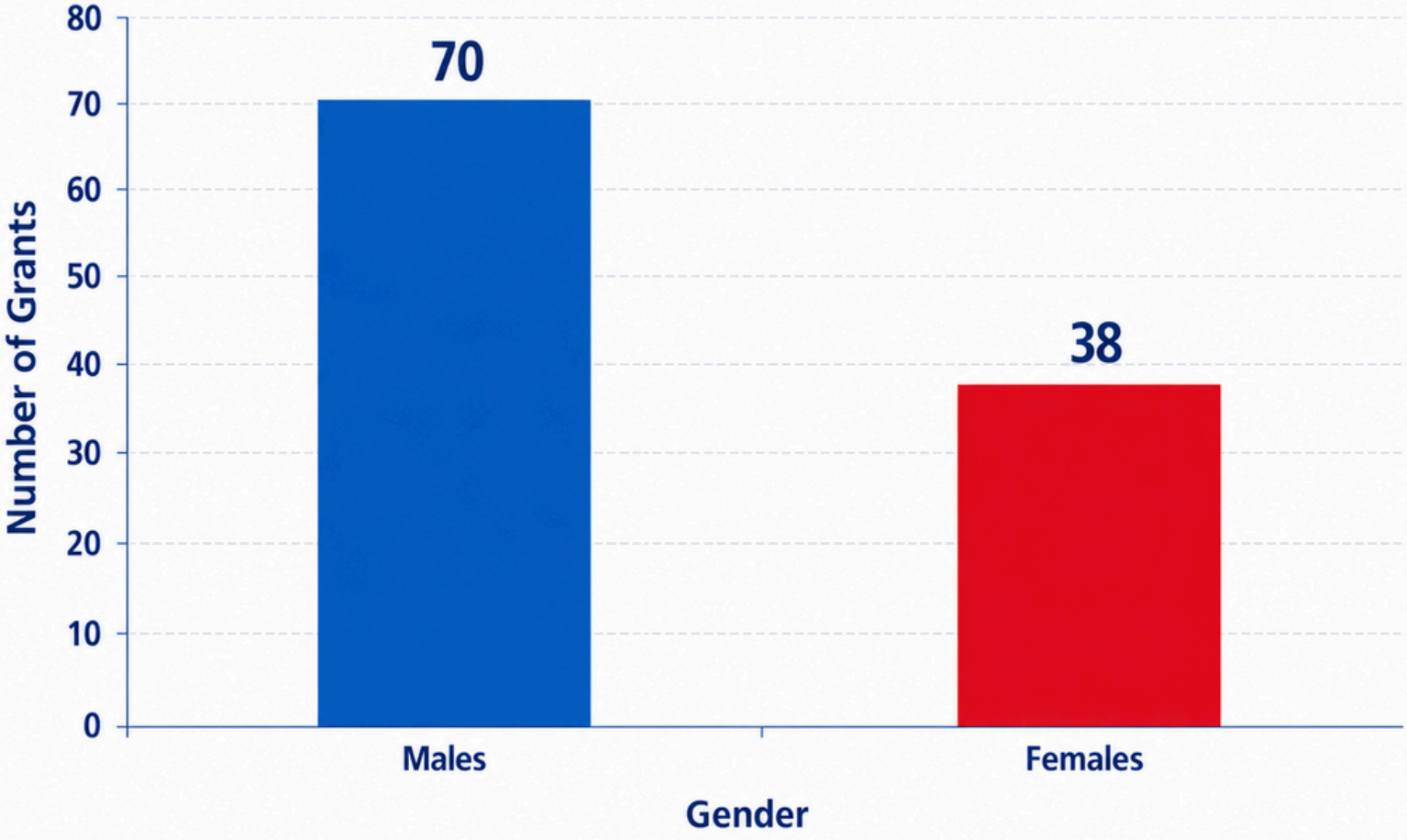
GRANT DISTRIBUTION BY FACULTY/UNIT

TOTAL GRANTS: 108



FOM accounts for **71.3% (77 out of 108)** of all grants, reflecting strong grant leadership and research competitiveness.

DISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVE GRANTS PI GENDER



TOTAL ACTIVE GRANTS: 108 | MALES: 70 (64.8%) | FEMALES: 38 (35.2%)

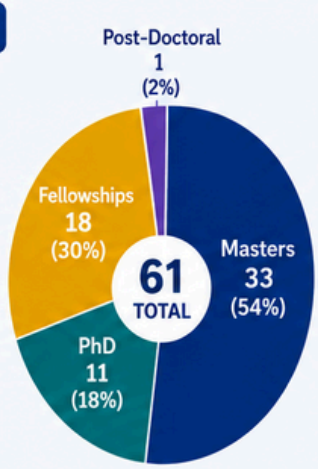
MUST RI ACTIVE PROJECT-SUPPORTED SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

13 PROJECTS OFFERING SCHOLARS/FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT

61 ACTIVE BENEFICIARIES

BENEFICIARY MIX

Beneficiary Category	Total
Masters	33
PhD	11
Fellowships	18
Post-Doctoral	1
TOTAL	61



SCHOLARSHIPS BY FACULTY / UNIT

Faculty of Health Sciences	33 beneficiaries
Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies	5 beneficiaries
Faculty of Computing & Informatics	4 beneficiaries
Faculty of Applied Sciences	1 beneficiary
Central Administration	20 beneficiaries

These scholarships and fellowships are supporting advanced learning, research excellence, and future leaders across MUST.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Succeed we Must

Wish to change the world through Research & Innovation?

The Vice Chancellor
Prof. Pauline Byakika-Kibwika
is asking you to

Save the DATE

18/11/2026
4th Mentors' Workshop

19/11/2026
11th PhD Symposium

20/11/2026
21st ARDC

Organised by the Faculty of Science



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