



Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

**GLOBAL OPEN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
UNIVERSITY
(GO-FAU)**

BUSINESS PLAN

11 January 2006



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Global Open Food and Agriculture University: Business Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Background

The Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) is a strategic alliance of countries, international and regional organizations, and private foundations supporting 15 international agricultural Centers, which work with national agricultural research systems, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The alliance mobilizes agricultural science to reduce poverty, foster human well-being, promote agricultural growth, and protect the environment.

This business plan presents a program for strengthening postgraduate education in agriculture through distance education activities involving the CGIAR and partners institutions in the developing world aimed at capacity enhancement related to agriculture, food, and natural resources. This program has been entitled the Global Open Food and Agriculture University (GO-FAU), and it was launched in October 2004. The development and implementation of such a distance education program complements existing research and agricultural development initiatives of the CGIAR and its partners and would generate significantly greater returns from these initiatives, distributed across a wider and more diverse population of stakeholders. The returns from the relatively modest investments needed to facilitate and operate GO-FAU program, therefore, would be immense.

On the basis of a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis it is evident that there is considerable scope for the GO-FAU Program to have a significant impact on graduate-level education related to agriculture, food, and natural resources, predominantly in developing countries. Further, the foreseeable opportunities for non-traditional modes of delivery and increasing emphasis on capacity strengthening in developing country institutions present a favorable picture into the future. Like all initiatives of this type, however, internal weaknesses and external threats need to be acknowledged and addressed through the implementation and maintenance of appropriate management and operational procedures and structures.

B. Vision, Mission, and Objectives

The GO-FAU envisions the next generations of policymakers, university professors, agriculture, food and natural resource researchers and analysts, and civil society leaders with high quality postgraduate education and relevant skills for alleviating poverty and food insecurity through science and innovation.

The mission of GO-FAU is to jointly develop postgraduate level course content in food, agriculture, and natural resources through the collaboration of CGIAR Centers with regional and national institutions in developed and developing countries. It shall strengthen the capacity of partner universities to deliver high-quality education in agriculture, food, and natural resources with the aim of building sufficient developing country capacity for designing and implementing programs and policies that use natural resources in a sustainable manner for improving food and nutrition security.

In pursuit of this mission, the overall objective of GO-FAU is to strengthen regional and national institutions for designing and delivering high quality postgraduate education in food, agriculture, and natural resources that is accessible and affordable. Specific program objectives are:

- To work with partner higher education institutions to strengthen their capacity and enrich existing graduate-level degree programs (both traditional or distance education programs) and to develop new ones to be delivered by distance education.
- To provide wider access to, and allow wider reach, of the knowledge created in and the human resources available at CGIAR Centers thus harnessing their comparative advantage in and exposure to international agriculture.

C. Identifying and Assessing Progress

By the end of 2010, GO-FAU will have achieved the following:

- Jointly enhanced and/or developed five Master's programs related to agriculture, food, and natural resources with regional and national-level partners and will have supported the delivery of these programs by partners through distance education.
- Over 30 universities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America will be collaborating with GO-FAU in updating and enriching their existing Master's programs offered through traditional modes of delivery and, where appropriate, in offering the jointly-developed M.Sc. courses through distance education.
- Over 5,000 students (of which at least 30 percent will be women) will have been taught using the jointly-developed M.Sc. programs, courses, and course materials.
- Over 500 students will have conducted their postgraduate-level research studies with the assistance of CGIAR Center staff and facilities
- GO-FAU will have a full-time staff of five individuals engaged in developing partnerships; managing the activities of GO-FAU; providing administrative support; and coordinating the development of new course materials suitable for delivery by distance education, improvement of existing distance education modules, and conversion of existing course materials for distance education. These core staff will interact in virtual mode with course content providers, course quality reviewers, and partner universities around the world.

D. Activities in Support of GO-FAU’s Goals

GO-FAU will support, facilitate, stimulate, and strengthen the following target programs through various activities, as summarized in Figure I below:

1. Enrichment of existing Master’s programs.
2. New courses for existing Master’s programs.
3. New agricultural Master’s programs.

Figure I. GO-FAU Programs and Activities

TARGET PROGRAMS	Enrichment of existing Master’s programs: • Traditional programs • Distance education programs	New courses for existing Master’s programs • Traditional programs • Distance education programs	New Master’s programs: • Distance education programs
ACTIVITIES	Identification of knowledge gaps		Survey of best-practice curricula
	Development, review, and modification for distance mode of a collection of instructional materials	Development of key courses suitable for distance education that may become part of an existing degree program in a partner university, either as an elective or a replacement course	Development of the full set of courses and the required component instructional materials
	Capacity strengthening of Faculty in partnering institutions for course development and delivery		
	Facilitation of appointment of CGIAR staff as adjunct or affiliate faculty by the partner university as appropriate		
	Facilitation of thesis research embedded in CGIAR Centers programs (including, establishment of a Competitive Postgraduate Research Fellowship Program)		

These core activities will initially be pursued in two subject areas, namely Agroecology and Agricultural Economics/ Agribusiness. Three potential areas are Livestock Management and Animal Agriculture, Water Resource Management, and Agricultural Technology and Biotechnology Management.

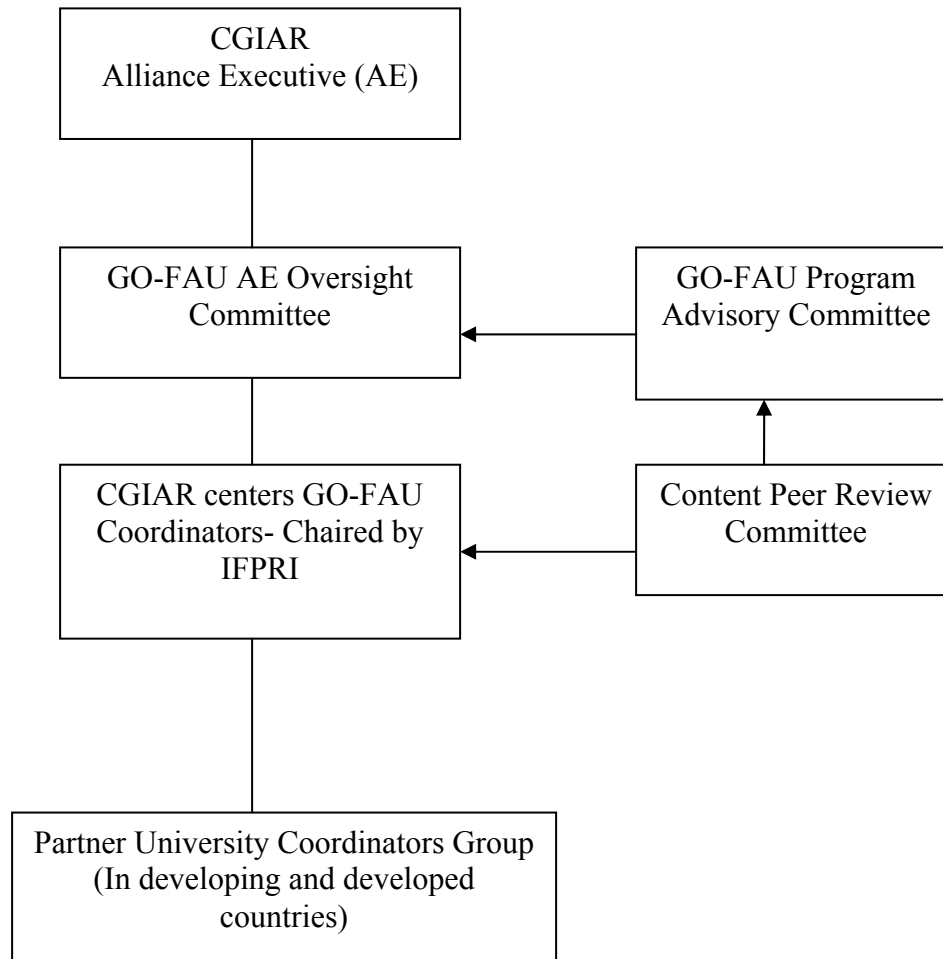
The following are important considerations in the development of GO-FAU’s activities:

- The core activities of the program is the development and delivery of graduate-level course content, materials and programs, building on the knowledge resources of the CGIAR Centers and the partner institutions, strengthening capacity of partner institutions in delivering and evaluating courses, and facilitating thesis research of participating students.
- This core activity works towards the delivery of graduate-level courses and degree programs by partner universities and, therefore, towards the achievement of a critical benchmark of the program's progress and success, which is the graduation of students in the graduate-level programs strengthened or developed through the help of GO-FAU.
- The offering of new graduate-level courses and programs using the course content and course materials developed by GO-FAU will be undertaken by the partner universities. However, inputs from the GO-FAU program through its quality control process must be considered and adhered to by the partner institutions. This makes the choice of, and the working relationship with, partner universities critical.

E. Governance Structure

Achieving the objectives of GO-FAU requires that a rigorous and effective governance structure is established to determine priorities, coordinate the development of teaching materials and programs, and guide the implementation of GO-FAU products by partners (Figure II).

Figure II. GO-FAU Governance Structure



The salient features of GO-FAU's governance structure (Figure II) are as follows:

- The 15 member **Alliance Executive** of the CGIAR will resolve conflict of interests amongst CGIAR Centers. The alliance consists of the Director General's of each CGIAR Center. The chair of the alliance is on a rotational basis.
- A five member **GO-FAU AE Oversight Committee/Support Group (AE-SG)**, has been established to provide overall governance of GO-FAU. It is chaired by the IFPRI Director General, with membership to include 4 other Center Directors (or their designated representative). It reports to AE on the progress and through AE chairperson to the CGIAR.
- The **GO-FAU Program Advisory Committee (PAC)**, a committee comprising of internationally recognized educators and university managers makes recommendations to

the GO-FAU AE-SG and the GO-FAU secretariat on the strategic steps that need to be undertaken to move the GO-FAU program forward. It provides advice on key policy decisions and strategic action. Additionally it provides guidance on the external review of the program. IFPRI director General is an ex-officio member of the PAC.

- For each of the five subject areas to be developed by GO-FAU a **Content Peer Review Committee (CPRC)** of three to five members is formed to provide technical advice on the subject area and to ensure that the quality and relevance of the instructional materials and curricula developed remains high. Each CPRC may consist of faculty from partner universities, CGIAR Center staff, and external experts, each of whom is a subject area experts, and has background in capacity strengthening activities, especially in developing countries.
- The original GO-FAU Task Force will be renamed as the **CGIAR Center Coordinators Group**. The CGIAR Center Coordinators will be the liaison officer between the GO-FAU Secretariat and the CGIAR Centers. Each Coordinator will recommend to the respective Center Director the nature and extent of involvement of the Center including the involvement of Center staff in the implementation of the GO-FAU program. A comparable Partner University Coordinators Group may be appointed with tasks parallel to that of the CGIAR Center Coordinators with respect to partner universities.
- On a day-to-day basis GO-FAU will be managed by a **Secretariat** hosted in the ISNAR Division of IFPRI. IFPRI serves as the host institution of GO-FAU. Its Board of Trustees has fiscal and administrative oversight on the Secretariat and will have overall responsibility for GO-FAU as a legal entity within the CGIAR. In addition, IFPRI provides administrative support to the GO-FAU program.

F. Partnerships

As a program and initiative of the CGIAR, GO-FAU is designed to be highly collaborative, involving universities and other partner academic institutions in both developed and developing countries. Three types of activities for partners are envisioned: (1) course module provision; (2) course module development; and (3) course delivery. Criteria for the selection of partners should be well defined with consideration of the following:

- Expertise in the subject area (primary criteria) as evidenced by recognition in academic circles and publications in reputable journals.
- Expertise in distance education (secondary criteria).
- Existence of a quality assurance system within the university.
- Sensitivity to development needs.
- Capacity for team approach.
- Complimentarity between partners (CGIAR and universities).
- Experience and partnerships with universities in the developing world.
- Low transaction cost (ease of negotiations and adaptations).

The GO-FAU program will be implemented through a consortium of partner institutions involved in content (course content provisions and development) and/or course delivery. Content partners will include universities, CGIAR centers and other experts, while both developed and developing country universities and capacity strengthening institutions will be

able to participate as course delivery partners. In the case of course delivery, it is envisaged that partners will be organized into six regions (see above), as follows:

- South Asia.
- Sub-Saharan Africa.
- North Africa and Central Asia.
- China.
- Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Southeast Asia

On behalf of GO-FAU, IFPRI and other CGIAR Centers at the advice of PAC will enter into legally-defined and prepared consortium agreements with partner universities and other academic institutions, with the aim of ensuring that partners work towards the declared mission, objectives, and goals of GO-FAU and contribute to the development and delivery of course materials in an appropriate and timely manner. Appropriate memoranda of understanding (MoUs), specifying roles and responsibilities, will be undertaken with the partner institutions. Such MoUs require approval by GO-FAU PAC and by IFPRI management. IFPRI will sign such MoUs.

G. Implementation Strategy

In pursuit of the core activities of GO-FAU, a clear framework of procedures and plans have been established for implementation. These encompass the initial development of priorities and course needs, collection and enhancement of existing course materials, development of new courses and programs, course and program delivery by partner universities, assessment and validation of courses, course and program marketing, and impact assessment.

H. Marketing of Courses and Programs

Marketing of courses will occur at the secretariat level and through the collaborating partners.

I. Impact Assessment Strategy

GO-FAU will monitor and evaluate its activities to determine the extent to which the program is reaching its mission, objectives, and goals; to identify specific areas in which positive impacts are being achieved; and to highlight issues that remain to be addressed.

J. Intellectual Property Rights

Policies related to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and dissemination of output is of great international interest and concern both to the partner universities and the CGIAR including IFPRI. GO-FAU will operate under general principles relating to IPR of an open access consortium. The curriculum developed through GO-FAU are considered as "International Public Goods" and as such the most appropriate mechanisms will be instituted to make the products of the program freely available.

K. Budget and Financing

Upon the finalization of the business plan, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat will approach a range of potential donors for funding. Funding for the entire program will be sought as one package, as well for individual components of the program in a piecemeal fashion, including in the various regions.

Donors will be encouraged to provide the least restrictive support possible to this program. However, the expectation of most donors on the sustainability of the program shall be borne in mind. Self-financing mechanisms for GO-FAU through tuition sharing by partner universities is envisioned in the medium run.

Table I, Consolidated Budget for the GO-FAU Program 2006-2010

Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Program Management	243,331	225,691	250,954	250,318	293,586	1,263,880
Agroecology	356,488	305,125	404,777	400,113	400,862	1,867,365
Agricultural Economics/ Agribusiness	287,181	264,184	400,445	350,492	360,890	1,663,192
Activity Total	887,000	795,000	1,056,176	1,000,923	1,055,338	4,794,437

Global Open Food and Agriculture University: Business Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

The Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) is a strategic alliance of countries, international and regional organizations, and private foundations supporting 15 international agricultural Centers, which work with national agricultural research systems, civil society organizations, and the private sector. The alliance mobilizes agricultural science to reduce poverty, foster human well-being, promote agricultural growth, and protect the environment. The CGIAR generates global public goods that are available to all.

Agriculture, including livestock, forestry and fisheries, continue to be the foundation for development, hunger eradication, and poverty reduction for much of the developing world. These agricultural sectors are increasingly knowledge-based and strengthening capacity for agricultural research and analysis is essential, focusing on improved technologies, policies, programs, and institutions that will enhance food and nutrition security, agricultural growth and sustainable natural resource management, as part of efforts to enhance access to food among the 800 million people who are currently food insecure. Without reinvigorating food and agricultural systems with well-trained professionals, the quality and quantity of research will diminish, as will returns to developing country investments in agriculture and implementation of innovative reform agendas.

The CGIAR system aims to be a knowledge creator. It currently has more than 1,000 researchers with solid knowledge and experience on how to develop solutions that increase agricultural productivity, reduce hunger, and improve sustainable management of the natural resource base. Over the past 35 years, the CGIAR has generated a large body of public goods and trained over 35,000 scientists. It is recognized, however, that the remaining capacity strengthening challenges are immense, especially in the face of rapid developments in the knowledge and analytical base of the natural and social sciences. At the same time, however, developments in information and communication technologies present new and more effective and cost-efficient ways in which the CGIAR can work with its partners, sharing knowledge and experiences to develop research and analytical capacity related to agriculture, food, and natural resources.

This business plan presents a program of distance education activities involving the CGIAR and partners institutions in the developed and developing world aimed at capacity enhancement related to agriculture, food, and natural resources. This program has been entitled the Global Open Food and Agriculture University (GO-FAU), and it was launched in October 2004. The development and implementation of such a distance education program complements existing research and agricultural development initiatives of the CGIAR and its partners and would generate significantly greater returns from these initiatives, distributed across a wider and more diverse population of stakeholders. The returns from the relatively modest investments needed to establish and operate GO-FAU, therefore, would be immense.

This business plan provides details for implementing GO-FAU over an initial five year period to 2010. It starts by laying out a clear vision for the program so that the reader has a clear understanding of the structure and activities of GO-FAU from the outset. The institutional setting of GO-FAU within the CGIAR, and the International Food Policy Research Institute

(IFPRI), that will take the lead in the development and implementation of GO-FAU, is then described, before proceeding to a more detailed description of the objectives and structure of the program. In this context, the business plan then sets out the structure of the program, the governance structure, and modes of operation.

Clearly, the business plan is a ‘living document’ and is subject to on-going change in the light of developments and experiences. Further information on GO-FAU can be obtained at the program website:

www.openaguniversity.cgiar.org

The broad vision of GO-FAU Program is given next. With this business plan, the CGIAR is reaching out to partnerships beyond its traditional domain to the university and donor community in financing education capacity strengthening. Therefore, a comprehensive introduction to CGIAR system activities is presented in section 3. [Note: Those who are familiar with the CGIAR system can move on to section 4].

2. VISION

The Global Open Food and Agriculture University (GO-FAU) is an initiative of the CGIAR Centers in partnership with universities in developing and developed countries, that aims to strengthen regional and national institutions in food, agriculture and natural resources through the development and provision of graduate-level courses and programs. In so doing, it aims to strengthen the capacity of universities to deliver high-quality graduate-level education in agriculture, food, and natural resources in order that sufficient developing country capacity is available for designing and implementing policies and programs that use natural resources in a sustainable manner and improve food and nutrition security.

On the one hand, GO-FAU aims to collate and distribute existing Master’s level course materials for incorporation into existing programs, predominantly taught in a traditional face-to-face mode of instruction. On the other, it aims to develop new and innovative Master’s programs that are designed to be delivered through distance education and that build on existing distance training materials. By bringing together the combined expertise of the CGIAR Centers and partner universities in developed and developing countries, GO-FAU aims to provide unique opportunities for the development and implementation of graduate education that builds on existing capacity and experiences to meet the expanding graduate education needs of developing countries in the areas of agriculture, food, and natural resources, and promote international alliances for the on-going development of graduate level education capabilities.

3. CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

3.1. Overview of CGIAR activities

The CGIAR grew out of the initial international response to widespread concern in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s that many developing countries would succumb to famine. Forrest Hill, a CGIAR pioneer, said that the impact of the CGIAR would be judged by the ability of the Centers it supports financially to increase the ‘pile of food’ in tropical countries that faced serious

scarcity. In that context, the CGIAR gave highest priority in its early years to research on cereals. Soon, however, the research portfolio was broadened to include cassava, chickpeas, sorghum, potatoes, millets, other food crops, and pastures. The emphasis on 'increasing the pile of food' brought great benefits to developing countries in terms of enhanced food security.

As the CGIAR evolved, so did its focus and objective. In the 1970s, the founding resolution of the CGIAR had declared that, in supporting agricultural research, "account will be taken not only of technical, but also of ecological, economic, and social factors." In the 1980s, the objective of the CGIAR Centers' research was redefined as increasing sustainable food production in the developing countries in such a way that the nutritional level and general economic well-being of the poor are improved. This approach called for a more direct focus on poverty, as well as greater emphasis on protecting biodiversity, land, and water. Centers were encouraged to use multidisciplinary approaches, increase inter-center cooperation, support national research systems, and collaborate with others in an emerging global agricultural research system. Thus, new activity areas were added to operate alongside existing activities.

The CGIAR was also founded with the expectation of eventually turning its activities over to national agricultural research systems (NARS). Consequently, capacity strengthening was an element of the Centers' work from the start, although this was more strongly emphasized during the 1990s. Since their inception, the CGIAR Centers have carried out capacity strengthening activities within the framework of the overall mission and goals of each Center. In the past 35 years, the CGIAR centers have trained over 35,000 scientists and researchers through learning workshops. Preliminary results of a study for the period 1993-2003, have shown that over 1,700 graduate students have received guidance from CGIAR researchers on their Doctoral or Master's theses. In addition to formal learning workshops and guidance on graduate research theses, the CGIAR Centers have been active in reviewing the curricula of university partners and developing training modules that reflect their Center's research.

The CGIAR is currently a strategic alliance of 62 Members (including 24 developing and 22 developed countries), four co-sponsors, 12 international organizations, 15 Future Harvest Centers, and many civil society organizations. The CGIAR alliance mobilizes cutting-edge agricultural science to create agricultural growth; improve food security, human nutrition, and health; and protect the environment. The knowledge generated by the CGIAR is made available to all.

3.2. Finance and Operations of the CGIAR

In 2003, 55 of the 62 CGIAR Members contributed \$354 million, with the remaining \$27 million coming from a broad range of sources including multi-donor projects and non-member foundations and developing countries. This compares with Member funding of \$332 million in 2002. Excluding multi-donor projects and non-member funding, the average Member funding was approximately \$6.4 million, slightly higher than the 2002 average of \$6 million. These financial data confirm that the CGIAR as a whole is in a strong financial position. Total net assets at the end of 2003 were \$209 million (compared to \$175 million in 2002). These assets were made up of \$127 million (\$96 million in 2002) in unrestricted net assets, capital invested in fixed assets of \$80 million (\$77 million in 2002) and \$3 million (\$2 million in 2002) in restricted net assets.

3.3. International Food Policy Research Institute

For 30 years, IFPRI has conducted research, capacity strengthening, and outreach activities on a broad range of food and nutrition security and poverty reduction issues throughout the developing world. While chartered as a 501c3 organization incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, United States, under Executive Order 12359, IFPRI is a recognized international organization and a CGIAR Center.

IFPRI's vision is a world free of hunger and malnutrition. This vision is based on the human right to adequate food and nutrition and recognition of the inherent dignity of all members of the human family. It is a world where every person has secure access to sufficient and safe food to sustain a healthy and productive life, and where decisions related to food are made transparently and with the participation of consumers and producers. In pursuit of this vision, IFPRI's mission is to provide policy solutions that reduce hunger and malnutrition. Two key premises underlie this mission. First, sound and appropriate local, national, and international public policies are essential to achieve sustainable food security and nutritional improvement. Second, research and the dissemination of results are critical inputs into the process of raising the quality of the debate and formulating sound and appropriate food policies.

IFPRI places a high priority on activities that benefit the greatest number of poor people in greatest need in the developing world. In carrying out its activities, IFPRI seeks to focus on vulnerable groups, as influenced by gender, ethnicity, class, and religion. The relevance and quality of IFPRI's research and outreach activities is assured through multiple arenas: 1) annual Science Council review of IFPRI's rolling medium-term plan; 2) annual and extensive Internal Program Review; 3) periodic center-commissioned reviews; 4) external program and management reviews conducted every five years under the Science Council's auspices; and 5) period assessments by donor clients.

Implementation of multi-disciplinary, multi-project research and capacity strengthening requires a strong management and administrative base. IFPRI is an institute of approximately 200 professionals and has approximately 90 doctoral-level researchers, mostly economists, conducting policy analysis and capacity strengthening in approximately 50 countries around the world. IFPRI researchers are supported by a team of highly-accomplished research and administrative support staff that manage multi-million dollar projects. IFPRI operates offices in Costa Rica, Ethiopia, India, China, and Senegal. Across all of its operations, IFPRI's administrative staff ensures fiscal compliance of the Institution and its partners to the Institute's financial supporters.

In 2004, the total funding of IFPRI was \$33.7 million. Total staff numbers in IFPRI was 193 in 2004.

The public outputs and services generated by IFPRI are drawn from the research, communications, and capacity strengthening activities of the Center as a whole. IFPRI has five research divisions and a communications division. Each division specializes in research related to agricultural policy, food security, nutrition, and poverty, and is involved in communicating their own research results and strengthening capacity. The research generated from these activities is the basis for the tangible outputs IFPRI produces; namely publications, seminars, web pages, and training modules and workshops.

In addition to the capacity strengthening activities undertaken by individual researchers within its divisions, IFPRI has a capacity strengthening program which is currently housed in the ISNAR Division. From 1998 to 2004, IFPRI offered 130 short-term training courses, trained over 2,025 people in 38 countries, guided 230 doctoral and masters theses, prepared 65 training modules, and developed 21 curricula. IFPRI has also been active in providing public access to its databases. Thirty-seven datasets are offered through IFPRI's website and, as of June 2004, there have been over 7,000 requests for IFPRI datasets.

4. GLOBAL OPEN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY

4.1. Background

The concept of GO-FAU has evolved over time through discussion undertaken in various fora. At the February 2003 meeting of the Center Directors Committee (CDC, recently renamed the Executive Alliance), IFPRI proposed the concept of an open university under the CGIAR system. The CDC asked IFPRI to produce a concept note and submit it to the CDC for comments. IFPRI subsequently produced and revised a concept note based on feedback, which was presented at the May 2003 CDC meeting in The Hague, Netherlands. At this meeting, the CDC suggested that a GO-FAU Task Force, involving all of the CGIAR Centers, be formed to develop the concept further and obtain another round of suggestions from Centers involved in distance learning activities. IFPRI was designated as the CGIAR Center for implementing this program.

Currently, there is a 22-member GO-FAU Task Force comprised of representatives of the CGIAR Centers and CGIAR secretariat participating in the development of GO-FAU. After comments and suggestions were received from CGIAR Centers, IFPRI organized a program development workshop in July 2003 with selected stakeholders, national partners, and CGIAR Centers. The CDC requested that IFPRI take responsibility for developing a program document. In October 2003, a draft program document was presented at the meeting of the CDC and the CGIAR Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Nairobi, Kenya and the Executive Committee meeting of the CGIAR in May 2004.

In early 2004, there were several consultative meetings with potential partners and distance education institutions. The GO-FAU Task Force also met on a virtual platform in May 2004 to further develop the concept and discuss the initial implementation plan. From March 2004 to August 2004, three preliminary technical needs assessments were undertaken, in Eastern and Southern Africa, South Asia, and South East Asia, on postgraduate agricultural, food, and natural resource education. The results of these assessments were presented at a dialogue with partners, held on August 26, 2004. A Task Force business meeting preceded this Dialogue. On October 28, 2004, this program was officially launched at the CGIAR Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Mexico City, Mexico.

Following the AGM in Mexico City, it was decided that GO-FAU would initially develop M.Sc. programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness. At the beginning of 2005, a review of the top 10 Master's programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at North American and European Universities was undertaken, as well as the cataloguing of CGIAR teaching and learning materials in these two subject areas. On March 7, 2005, the first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between IFPRI and a partner university, namely the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

In response to comments by External Program and Management Review panels for IFPRI and ICRISAT to look carefully into the respective comparative advantages of the Centers to engage in distance education a clear division of labor was decided in March 2005: the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) will lead the development of the M.Sc. Program in Agroecology. Development of the M.Sc. program in Agricultural Economics/Agribusiness is be led by IFPRI. Moreover, the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) resumed leadership in the Central Asia and North Africa region.

The Program Advisory Committee and the Content Peer Review Committees for Agricultural Economics and Agroecology were established in 2005. The staff also met with several universities in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa and with the University of London regarding partnership agreements.

A CD-ROM containing GO-FAU's curriculum in Agricultural Economics/ Agribusiness and content for this curriculum was produced and distributed at the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in Morocco and a similar CD-ROM is under production in Agroecology. On December 6th, a stakeholder's luncheon meeting was held in Morocco to brief stakeholders on the Program's progress and opportunities for postgraduate education.

4.2. SWOT Analysis

In order to understand better the positioning of GO-FAU and the contributions it might make in the context of existing education, training, and research programs at institutions in the developed and developing world, an analysis was undertake of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) potentially facing the program. This is summarized in Table 1.

Overall, the SWOT analysis illustrates the considerable strengths that GO-FAU possesses, predominantly in the rich knowledge resources that the CGIAR Centers can contribute to the program and in the context of the leadership role that the CGIAR Centers (and IFPRI in particular) are taking. The collaborative nature of the program and the engagement of key stakeholders from the early inception of the program are likely to maximize the likelihood that activities will be relevant to partner institutions in developed and developing countries, and will foster collaboration and participation. It is evident that GO-FAU will have access to all of the required skills and experience in developing and promoting relevant and high-quality programs and related materials that address the needs of developing and developed country partners.

Many of the weaknesses of GO-FAU relate to the fact that, as of itself, it only has the capacity to develop educational programs and related materials; it is reliant on partner institutions in developed and developing countries for the delivery of these programs. While this is totally appropriate – it would be unwise and detrimental if GO-FAU was to develop educational delivery capacity in competition with partner institutions in developed and developing countries. However, it does mean that the impact of the program is reliant on the development and maintenance of effective partnerships. Such partnerships have to be built on clearly understood relations and incentive structures that motivate participation on the part of key personnel at the institutional level; this latter issue is a potential threat to the successful implementation and maintenance of the GO-FAU program.

The wider economic, technological, and political environment, especially in many developing countries, provides significant opportunities for the continued relevance and impact of GO-FAU. In particular, a number of educational institutions are making efforts to enhance their capacity to deliver high-quality graduate programs, in both traditional and distance modes, while the information and communications capacity and acceptance of non-traditional modes of delivery are fostering a greater ability to mount programs through distance education. There is little or no indication that these trends will weaken in the near future although, at the same time, there will inevitably be some limits to the scope of distance programs, for example in view of existing levels of internet connectivity; traditional face-to-face programs are likely to remain the dominant mode of delivery for the foreseeable future.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of the Global Open Food and Agriculture University

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Global and collaborative nature of CGIAR and GO-FAU makes for easier and more effective coordination of activities among partner institutions	Limited infrastructure of GO-FAU itself for the development and delivery of distance education programs	Increasing distance education interests and approaches of developing country institutions to deliver enhanced programs of education related to agriculture, food and natural resources	Development of GO-FAU seen as threat to established universities and may cause resistance on the part of potential partners and collaborators
Established record and reputation of the CGIAR in the creation of global public goods in research and capacity strengthening	Limited presence, information and communication infrastructure of GO-FAU itself in countries where the courses will be offered	Increasing awareness and emphasis for enhanced priority of capacity strengthening in education and policy institutions in developing countries related to agriculture, food, and natural resources	Limited ability to identify and attract the necessary funding to develop and maintain GO-FAU's programs
Access to leading education and research experts and capacity strengthening programs on agricultural, food, and natural resource from both developed and developing countries	Limited practical experience in the delivery of Master's level programs by the CGIAR centers and staff in a university setting	Increasing penetration and use of information and communication technologies in developing countries likely to facilitate the easier and more effective delivery of distance education courses	Lack of clear and significant incentive structures for key personnel in developed and developing country universities to collaborate with GO-FAU

Table 1 cont,

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Consultative process with which GO-FAU has been developed likely to make potential partners in developed and developing countries amenable to participate and collaborate	Lack of control over delivery of materials by partners could weaken the credibility of GO-FAU	Increasing acceptance of non-traditional modes of educational program delivery among potential students/trainees and employers	Resistance of faculty members in partner institutions to adopt new and innovative distance modes of curriculum delivery
Wealth of research reports and case study materials based on research conducted at CGIAR centers for the past 30 years	Relevance of the material for the theoretical and foundation courses to be taught as part of the GO-FAU assisted programs	Research conducted in different parts of the developing world provides opportunity of contextualizing the research issues and solutions based on the knowledge gained through CGIAR research	Competition from the local institutions which may be using already contextualized teaching materials in their course that may be more relevant than GO-FAU material
Wide network of CGIAR Centers and their own partners in developing countries could be used as field sites for thesis postgraduate education and research; and experience with several thousand MSc and PhD students that have been affiliated with CGIAR Centers in thesis work over the past decades.	Engagement in formal education programs not a traditional mandate of CGIAR Centers	Thesis research conducted by students associated with GO-FAU's partner program provide opportunity to develop a new cadre of researchers trained in CGIAR Center methods and approaches	Developed and/or developing country institutions implement distance learning programs in competition with those of GO-FAU.

While there are clear opportunities for GO-FAU, there are not insignificant threats that could limit the acceptance of GO-FAU as a recognized institution for the development of graduate programs and materials in the area of agriculture, food, and natural resources. Yet, adequate thought and attention should be given to how the programs that are being planned by GO-FAU accord with the incentives structures for academics, especially in developing country institutions, such that levels of participation and enthusiasm could wane over time.

In summary, it is evident that there is considerable scope for GO-FAU to have a significant impact on graduate-level education related to agriculture, food, and natural resources, predominantly in developing countries. Further, the foreseeable opportunities for non-traditional modes of delivery and increasing emphasis on capacity strengthening in developing country institutions present a favorable picture into the future. Like all initiatives of this type, however, internal weaknesses and external threats need to be acknowledged and addressed through the implementation and maintenance of appropriate management, and operational procedures and structures.

4.3. Vision, Mission, and Objectives

The GO-FAU envisions the next generations of policymakers; university professors; agriculture, food, and natural resource researchers and analysts; and civil society leaders with high quality postgraduate education and relevant skills for alleviating poverty and food insecurity through sustainable use of natural resources .

Its mission is to jointly develop graduate level course content in food, agriculture, and natural resources through the collaboration of CGIAR Centers with regional and national institutions in developed and developing countries. It shall strengthen the capacity of partner universities to deliver high-quality postgraduate level education in agriculture, food, and natural resources with the aim of building sufficient developing country capacity for designing and implementing policies and programs that use natural resources in a sustainable manner and improve food and nutrition security.

In pursuit of this mission, the overall objective of GO-FAU is to strengthen regional and national institutions for designing and delivering high quality postgraduate education in food, agriculture, and natural resources that is accessible and affordable. Specific program objectives are:

- To work with partner higher education institutions to strengthen their capacity and enrich existing graduate-level degree programs (both traditional or distance education programs) and to develop new programs to be delivered through distance education.
- To provide wider access to, and allow wider reach, of the knowledge created in and the human resources available at CGIAR Centers, thus harnessing their comparative advantage in and exposure to international agriculture.

The focus of GO-FAU is the enhancement and enrichment of the course content and research base of graduate-level programs in agriculture, food, and natural resources. In so doing, the program will operate according to a number of principles that aim to maximize the potential positive impacts and exploit the identified strengths and opportunities, while managing and/or offsetting associated weaknesses and threats:

- Complement and not substitute for or compete with the graduate-level education programs in agriculture, food, and natural resources in developing and developed countries by addressing identified technical and theoretical knowledge gaps.
- Help regional-level organizations to determine capacity strengthening needs and implement graduate-level degree programs.

- Partner with traditional and open universities at the national and regional level in graduate-level program and instructional material development and delivery of courses.
- Support the offering of graduate-level courses by developing and developed country institutions in various languages using distance education technologies so that all developing countries might benefit.
- Not envision granting graduate-level degrees, but focus on strengthening existing open universities and other universities in the developing world.
- Foster the use of appropriate media and technology for the development and delivery of graduate-level instructional materials for maximum pedagogical effectiveness.
- Capitalize on, harmonize, and integrate the wide array of existing instructional materials and programs that many of the CGIAR Centers have been administering independently in the developing world and make them available to developing country educational institutions.
- Produce high quality courses and course materials utilizing CGIAR center staff and outside experts through a transparent quality review process and make these available as widely as possible through partner universities. The primary beneficiaries of the programs of GO-FAU will be the partner universities who will collaborate in developing high-quality graduate-level content for existing and/or new courses in their universities. In turn, secondary beneficiaries are the graduate students at the partner universities.
- Promote the participation of women in the delivery of graduate-level programs and as graduate students in collaboration with the partner universities.
- Expand the reach of high quality graduate-level programs, with GO-FAU structured as an enabling institution for the development and production of a “open access” environment
- Share teaching resources and course contents on an inclusive basis with any educational institution that establishes a partnership with GO-FAU.
- Establish a social and professional environment for collaboration that respects cultural diversity, is gender sensitive, fosters respect and courtesy, and bars harassment and discrimination.

4.4. Strategic Goals and Directions

The establishment of GO-FAU is based on an ambitious series of strategic goals over the period to 2010 that will drive the CGIAR Centers and partner universities towards the mission outlined above. These goals also take the form of quantitative benchmarks against which the progress of GO-FAU can be assessed, namely that by 2010:

- GO-FAU will have jointly enhanced and/or developed five Master’s programs related to agriculture, food, and natural resources with regional

and national-level partners and will have supported the delivery of these by partners through distance education.

- Over 30 universities in Asia, Africa and Latin America will be collaborating with GO-FAU in updating and enriching their existing Master's programs offered through traditional modes of delivery and, where appropriate, in offering the jointly-developed M.Sc. courses through distance education.
- Over 5,000 students (of which 30 percent will be women) will have been taught using the jointly-developed M.Sc. programs, courses, and course materials.
- Over 500 students will have conducted their graduate-level research studies with the assistance of CGIAR Center staff and facilities
- GO-FAU will have a full-time staff of five individuals engaged in developing partnerships; managing the activities of GO-FAU; providing administrative support; and coordinating the development and delivery of new course materials suitable for delivery by distance education, improvement of existing distance education modules, and conversion of existing course materials for distance education. These core staff will interact in virtual mode with course content providers, course quality reviewers, and partner universities around the world.

These program goals will be pursued through a strategic approach that focuses on graduate-level education related to agriculture, food, and natural resources in developing countries and on non-traditional modes of delivery, namely distance education. The rationale behind this is that distance education permits the participation of students that might normally be excluded from graduate-level education, either because of their limited economic means, social restrictions on geographical mobility, work commitments, etc. Further, the aim is to build on existing teaching materials and human resources within CGIAR Centers and partner universities in both developed and developing countries. In so doing, instructional human and material resources are harnessed on a global scale and used to maximum impact.

4.5. Activities

Building on the strategic direction outlined above and in pursuit of its defined mission, GO-FAU will support, facilitate, stimulate, and strengthen the following target programs through the various activities summarized in Figure 1:

- Enrichment of existing Master's programs.
- New courses for existing master's programs.
- New agricultural Master's programs.

Each is described in turn below.

Figure 1. GO-FAU Programs and Activities

TARGET PROGRAMS	Enrichment of existing Master’s programs: • Traditional programs • Distance education programs	New courses for existing Master’s programs • Traditional programs • Distance education programs	New Master’s programs: • Distance education programs
ACTIVITIES	Identification of knowledge gaps		Survey of best-practice curricula
	Development, review, and modification for distance mode of a collection of instructional materials	Development of key courses suitable for distance education that may become part of an existing degree program in a partner university, either as an elective or a replacement course	Development of the full set of courses and the required component instructional materials
	Capacity strengthening of Faculty in partnering institutions for course development and delivery		
	Facilitation of appointment of CGIAR staff as adjunct or affiliate faculty by the partner university as appropriate		
	Facilitation of thesis research embedded in CGIAR Centers programs (including, Establishment of a Competitive Postgraduate Research Fellowship Program)		

Enrichment of Existing Master’s Programs

Partner universities that are already offering Master’s programs in fields that have been determined as strategic for the purpose of achieving the mission of the GO-FAU program will be identified using a well-defined set of criteria, as discussed below in Section 5.2. Agroecology and Agriculture Economics/Agribusiness have been identified as the first two fields to be developed.

An initial list of African and Asian universities has been identified by the PAC as partners for these target programs. The suitability of each shall be examined using the criteria defined in Section 5.2.

The enrichment of these existing Master’s programs shall be in the form of the following:

- Development of a collection of instructional materials for the course identified under the M.Sc. programs. The form and source of these materials are expected to be varied. Thus:
 - These materials may include resources to enrich or update existing courses (for example video recordings of panel discussions among experts from several CGIAR Centers on a particular issue, collections of slides on specific topics, etc.).

- These materials may be based on existing teaching resources developed by CGIAR Center staff and/or staff of partner institutions.
 - New materials may be developed by CGIAR Center staff, faculty of partner universities, staff of other partner institutions, and/or by a team from the collaborating institutions.
 - These materials may utilize various media, alone or in combination
- Strengthening the capacity of partnering institutions' faculty in designing and delivering the courses identified under GO-FAU.
 - Appointment of CGIAR staff as adjunct or affiliate faculty of partner universities where they may serve as part of a team managing a course and/or as a co-advisor on a student's thesis research as appropriate.
 - Facilitation of thesis research with CGIAR Centers of students partaking of GO-FAU supported courses.
 - Establishment of a Competitive Postgraduate Research Fellowship Program that will provide opportunities for students from each Master's program to spend time at a CGIAR Center to conduct part of their research and/or to receive intensive and hands-on training in research methods appropriate to their Master's program.

Development of Courses for Existing Master's Programs

Key courses that could become part of an existing Master's program in a partner university will be identified together with partner universities. The full set of course materials suitable for distance education may be obtained in any of the following ways:

- Acquired from a partner or other university or individual who is already offering such course through traditional or distance education.
- Developed by CGIAR Center staff, or faculty and personnel from partner universities and/or commissioned experts from other institutions. The instructional systems design (ISD) approach will be used in the development of such courses for distance education, bringing together a team of subject, instructional design, and technical experts.

Development of New Master's Programs

An entirely new Master's program considered as critical to the realization of the vision of GO-FAU will be identified in consultation with partner institutions and CGIAR Centers. Suitable partner universities for program and course delivery will be determined using the criteria defined in Section 5.2.

The full set of courses and the required component instructional materials will be developed using the same strategy as in the development of individual courses for existing Master's programs outlined above.

In the case of these new Master's programs it will be possible to include the following activities which have been identified as means for the enrichment of existing Master's programs (see above):

- Strengthening the capacity of the faculty members who will be developing and delivering the courses under the new programs.
- Appointment of CGIAR Center staff as adjunct or affiliate faculty in the partner universities where they may serve as part of a team managing a course or courses and/ or as a co-advisor on a student's thesis research as appropriate.
- Facilitation of student thesis work.
- Establishment of the Competitive Postgraduate Research Fellowship Program.

At the current time, a number of these core activities are being pursued in two subject areas, namely Agroecology and Agricultural Economics/Agribusiness. As described above, the plan is to extend the activities of GO-FAU to three further areas over the period to 2010. Potential subject areas are Livestock Management and Animal Agriculture, Water Resource Management, and Agricultural Technology and Biotechnology Management.

GO-FAU itself will not engage in the delivery of M.Sc. programs or courses. Likewise, it will not undertake accreditation of graduate programs and courses and award M.Sc degrees; this will be undertaken within the existing administrative and governance structures and procedures of the partner universities. Partner institutions will, however, have the option of applying for recognition and endorsement of their M.Sc. programs, which are substantially based on the programs developed by GO-FAU or are substantially equivalent that use GO-FAU materials. After careful consideration, these new programs will be acknowledged as having benefited from the GO-FAU program. They will be promoted on the GO-FAU website.

Alongside the development of new Master's programs for delivery through distance modes and to support their implementation, GO-FAU will develop and deliver short training programs in partner universities in developing countries. It is envisaged that these will consist of hands-on, face-to-face, and on-line courses that will be held periodically at the regional level and accompanying with on-line support materials and assistance that can be accessed on an on-going basis by faculty at partner universities. The emphasis placed on such faculty-level training reflects the fact that distance modes of instruction are innovative to many institutions and require particular skill sets that may not have been developed through the provision of traditional face-to-face graduate programs. Through these training programs, such gaps in knowledge and experience will be addressed.

Clearly, the products developed by GO-FAU will need to be evaluated and updated on an on-going basis. Thus, procedures will be put in place to canvas the view of students and faculty that are exposed to materials, courses, or entire Master's programs based on the materials developed by GO-FAU. These will include, for example, student evaluations and on-line fora through which experiences across partner institutions and countries can be compared and contrasted in order to improve materials and processes and thus enhance the students' learning experience.

5. GOVERNANCE AND OPERATING FRAMEWORK

5.1. Governance Structure

Achieving the objectives of GO-FAU requires that effective partnerships and coalitions are established and maintained with global, regional, and national partners in developing and developed countries. The size of this network requires that a rigorous and effective governance structure is established to determine priorities, coordinate the development of teaching materials and programs, and guide the implementation of GO-FAU products by partners. At the same time, this governance structure needs to avoid undue complexity in order to manage the associated costs and enable on-going managerial and strategic decisions to be made in a timely and not overly administrative manner. An overarching requirement is that this structure makes decisions in a manner that is both transparent and accountable. The proposed governance structure of GO-FAU that has been developed in response to these multiple needs is detailed in Figure 2.

The 15 member Alliance Executive of the CGIAR will resolve conflict of interests amongst CGIAR Centers. The alliance consists of the Director General's of each CGIAR Center. The chair of the alliance is on a rotational basis.

A five member AE Oversight /Support Group (AE-SG), has been established to provide overall governance of GO-FAU. It is chaired by the IFPRI Director General, with membership to include other Center Directors (or their designated representative). This body will have the following responsibilities:

- Linking the GO-FAU program to the CGIAR through the AE and providing feedback on the Program's operations.
- Informing the CGIAR Science Council on GO-FAU matters.
- Appointing Program Advisory Committee members (see below).
- Promoting cooperation among institutions participating in the program.

An external Program Advisory Committee (PAC) has been organized, consisting of four individuals with widely-recognized expertise in education related to agriculture, food, and natural resources, and/or distance education. The membership of the PAC, which represents a balance of developing and developed country citizenship, is appointed by the GO-FAU CDC Oversight Committee. The PAC will not be organized as a legal entity, but rather will have delegated authority from the IFPRI Board of Trustee to undertake its mandate as an independent expert body.

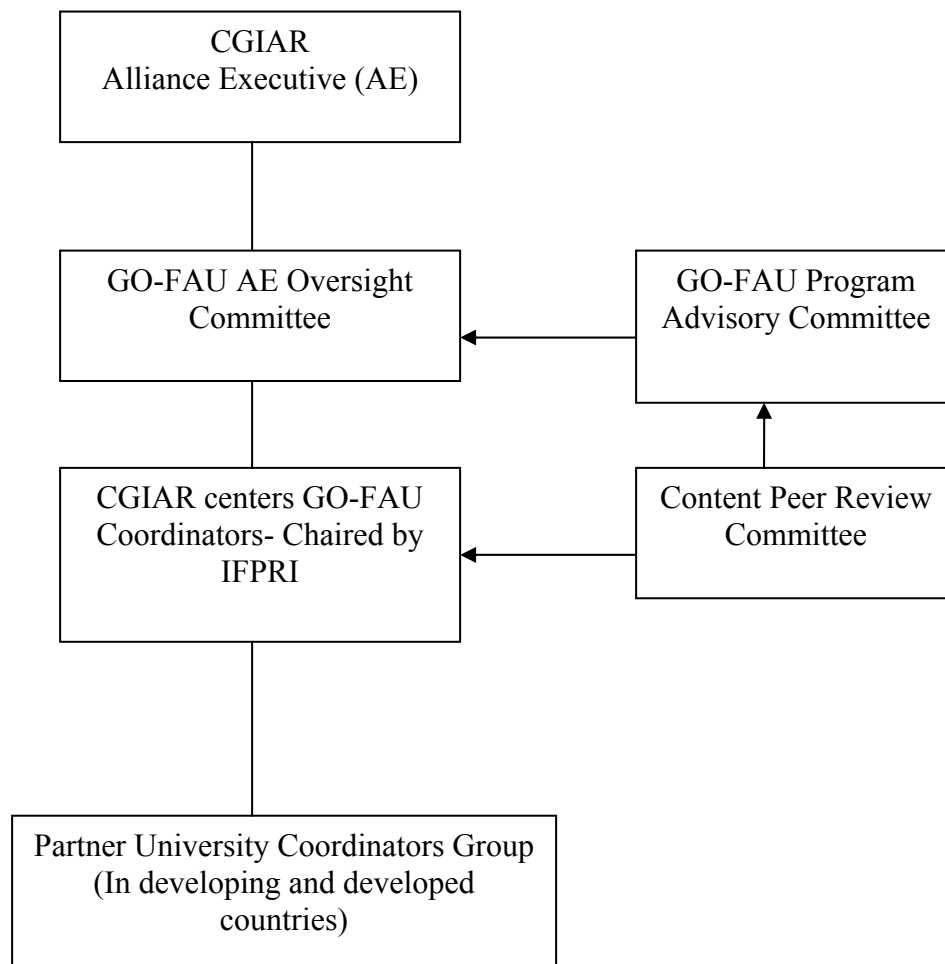
Membership of the PAC is for a three-year period, with the possibility of renewal. Members will be paid an honorarium (based on standard CGIAR rates) and receive reimbursement for direct expenses related to their participation. The PAC will meet at least twice annually, of which one meeting may be virtual rather than face-to-face.

As an expert body, the PAC will make recommendations to the GO-FAU AE Support Group on the strategic steps that need to be undertaken to move the GO-FAU program forward. It will

provide advice on key policy decisions and strategic action with respect to the Program’s operations and management. Additionally it will provide some guidance on the external review of the program.

A GO-FAU Task Force has been established at the request of the Alliance Executive to provide guidance to the development of the program. This Task Force consists of representatives from the CGIAR Centers, nominated primarily by the respective Center Director. In due course, the GO-FAU Task Force will be renamed the CGIAR Center Coordinators Group. Each Center Coordinator will connect the human, knowledge, and physical resources available in their respective CGIAR Center with the GO-FAU program. Thus, CGIAR Center Coordinators will be the point of liaison between the GO-FAU Secretariat and CGIAR Centers. Each Coordinator will recommend to their respective Center Director the nature and extent of involvement of the Center in the implementation of the GO-FAU program. The Center Coordinators will also identify Center staff that will form part of the Content Peer Review Committee (see below). The Coordinators Group as a whole will assist the Secretariat in undertaking the activities of coalition-building, content development, monitoring and evaluation, and impact assessment.

Figure II. GO-FAU Governance Structure



On a day-to-day basis GO-FAU is managed by a Secretariat housed in the ISNAR Division of IFPRI. The responsibilities of the Secretariat include:

- Developing partnerships with potential collaborators in developed and developing countries.
- Overseeing the operating budget of GO-FAU.
- Executing and/or coordinating the various GO-FAU activities, including establishment of coalitions with partners, development of program content, and assessing impacts
- Coordinating with the CGIAR Centers through the CGIAR Center Coordinators and with the partner universities through the Partner University Coordinators.
- Coordinating the work of the Content Peer Review Committees

The Secretariat will be headed by a Team Leader and consist of the following staff:

- research fellow (full-time).
- research analyst (part-time).
- 2 senior research assistant (full-time).
- program analyst (part-time)
- Two staff members (Full-time) with experience in distance education: one who understands the distance education system and one familiar with instructional design and educational technology.

IFPRI will serve as the host institution of GO-FAU. Its Board of Trustees will have fiscal and administrative oversight of the Secretariat and will have overall responsibility for GO-FAU as a legal entity within the CGIAR. In addition, IFPRI will provide administrative support to the program, such as in the hiring of the Secretariat personnel. GO-FAU may also develop an inter-divisional contract with some divisions of IFPRI for some staff work.

The Secretariat will submit quarterly reports and an annual report to the GO-FAU PAC. An abbreviated version of the annual report will be prepared for the AE and Science Council.

A Partner University Coordinators Group may be established with tasks parallel to that of the CGIAR Center Coordinators Group, in this case with respect to partner universities. Partner universities will choose their own Coordinator to serve on this committee.

For each of the five subject areas to be developed by GO-FAU, a Content Peer Review Committee (CPRC) of three to five members will be formed to provide technical advice on the respective subject area and to ensure that the quality and relevance of the instructional materials and curricula developed by GO-FAU in collaboration with its partners remains high. Each CPRC will consist of subject area experts who are considered to be leaders in their field and have a background in capacity strengthening activities and are cognizant of the needs of developing countries. The membership of each CPRC will consist of faculty from partner universities, CGIAR Center staff, and external experts. The membership of each CPRC will include a balance of citizens of both developing and developed countries. Each CPRC will identify ‘best

practice' curricula for its respective Master's program, and oversee the selection of course authors and peer reviewers and the development of course content. Each CPRC will also pre-screen applicants for the Competitive Postgraduate Research Program (see above), from which a final selection will be made by the CGIAR Center involved in research relevant to the respective MSc program.

5.2. Partnerships

As a program and initiative, GO-FAU is designed to be highly collaborative, involving universities and other partner academic institutions in both developed and developing countries. Three types of activities for partners are envisioned: (1) course module provision; (2) course module development; and (3) course delivery. A partner institution may be involved in one or more of these activities. However, it should not be discounted that an individual who is not part of a partner institution is commissioned to develop particular course content. Criteria for the selection of partners need to be well-defined, with consideration of the following:

- Expertise in the subject area (primary criterion) as evidenced by recognition in international academic circles and research publications in reputable journals.
- Expertise in distance education (secondary criteria).
- Existence of a quality assurance system within the university.
- A student body that includes the target clientele.
- Sensitivity to development needs.
- Capacity for team approach.
- Complimentarity between partners (CGIAR and universities).
- Experience and partnerships with universities in the developing world.
- Low transaction cost (ease of negotiations and adaptations).

The partnership structure of GO-FAU will be based on a consortium approach involving, content (course content provisions and development) and course delivery partners (Figure 3). Content partners will include universities, CGIAR centers, and other experts, while both developed and developing country universities will be able to participate as course delivery partners. In the case of course delivery, it is envisaged that partners will be organized into six regions (see above), as follows:

- South Asia.
- Sub-Saharan Africa.
- North Africa and Central Asia.
- China.
- Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Southeast Asia

The consortium approach envisages that partners may be involved in the provision of course content, the use of course content, or both the provision and use of course content (Figure 4). Further, some partners, in particular those who become engaged at an earlier stage, will be involved in the assessment and validation of course content.

Figure 3. Consortium Partnership Structure

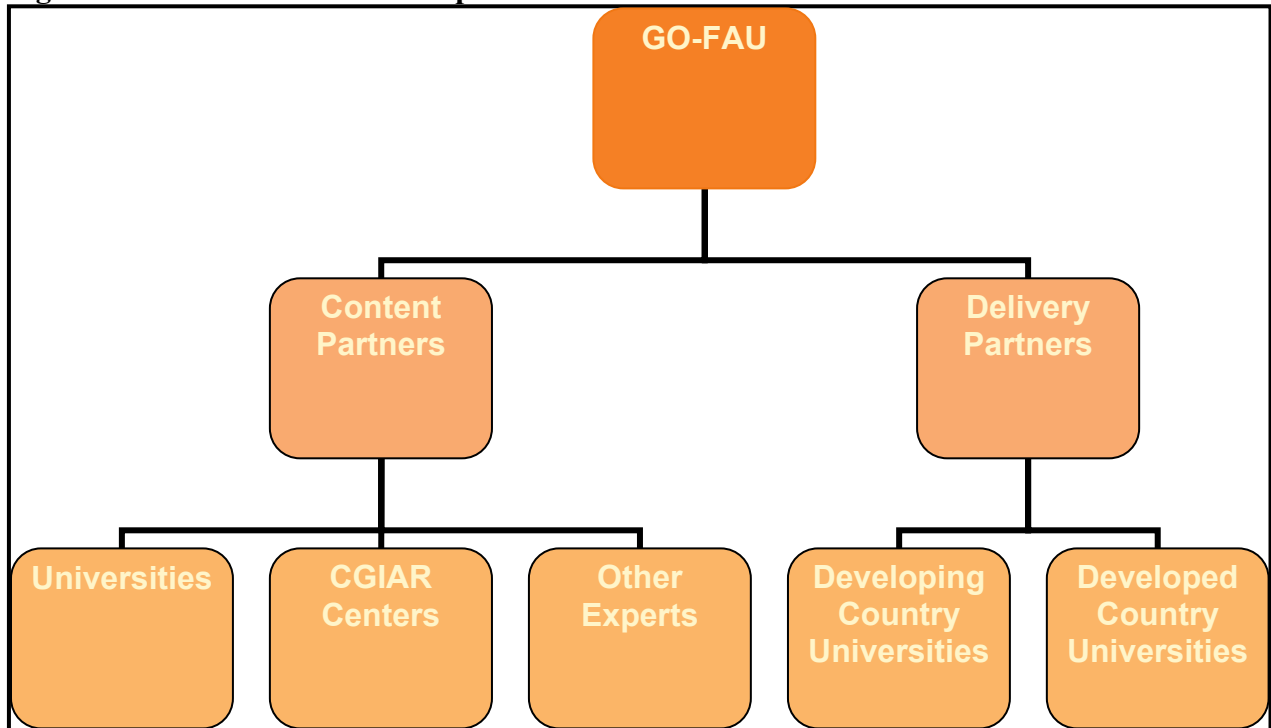
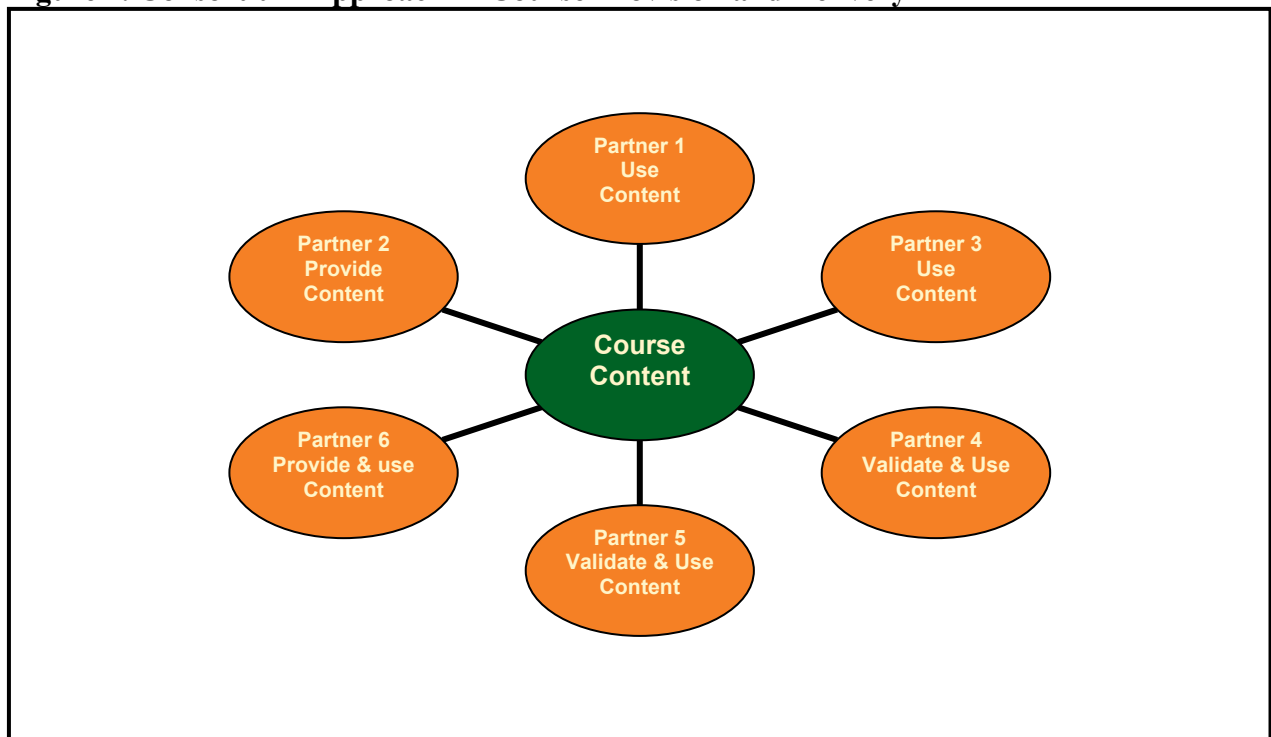


Figure 4. Consortium Approach in Course Provision and Delivery



IFPRI and other CGIAR Centers at the advice of PAC will enter into legally-defined and prepared consortium agreements with partner universities and other academic institutions on behalf of GO-FAU, with the aim of ensuring that partners work towards the declared mission,

objectives, and goals of GO-FAU and contribute to the development and delivery of course materials in an appropriate and timely manner. Appropriate memoranda of understanding (MoUs), specifying roles and responsibilities, will be undertaken with the partner institutions. Such MoUs require approval by GO-FAU PAC and by IFPRI management. IFPRI will sign such MoUs. Among the issues to be treated in this formal collaboration are the following:

- Clear definition of the collaborating organization's responsibilities for delivering specific outputs within a specific time frame.
- Agreed-upon budgets and rates of remuneration (in terms of cash, in-kind, and gifts) for collaborators and associated individuals, record-keeping, accounting and auditing responsibilities.
- Mechanisms for the coordination of fund-raising activities for program objectives with the broader fund-raising activities of GO-FAU.
- Adherence to program and GO-FAU's intellectual property rights policies.
- Adherence to agreed operating principles with respect to activities in which the collaborating institution is involved with GO-FAU.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

In pursuit of the core activities of GO-FAU, a clear framework of procedures and plans have been established for implementation. These encompass the initial development of priorities and course needs, collection and enhancement of existing course materials, development of new courses and programs, course and program delivery by partner universities, assessment and validation of courses, course and program marketing, and impact assessment. Each is described in turn below.

6.1. Identification of Priorities and Needs

Responsibility for the identification of priority subject areas, priority target programs (Figure 1) and core activities within each of these priority subject areas will lie with the GO-FAU PAC. The process to be undertaken will vary based on the target program to be pursued. For the strengthening of existing graduate programs, the partner universities will be responsible for identifying their knowledge gaps and communicating these to GO-FAU. Suggestions for further enrichment may come from the CPRCs. GO-FAU will coordinate the acquisition or development of the required course content or, as may be necessary, the full complement of instructional materials for a course.

The development of an entirely new Master's program is a more involved process. It is important to recognize that the approval of the offering of a new degree program and the courses contained thereof is rightfully the responsibility of each partner university. On the other hand, it is important that GO-FAU provides inputs to the development of the curriculum through the respective CPRC. Only upon approval of the offering of the new degree program through the administrative procedures of the partner university would GO-FAU, together with the partner university, proceed with the next steps to develop the full complement of courses and course

materials using existing GO-FAU reusable learning objects (RLO) and newly developed RLOs for this Program.

6.2. Course and Program Development

In the case of programs aimed at enriching and developing new courses for existing Master's programs, once the respective knowledge gaps are determined, the needed course content, instructional materials, and/or new courses will be identified. Likewise, for the development of new graduate-level programs, the courses required in the curriculum that need to be developed will be identified

The subject matter program lead institutions will use the CGIAR Online Learning Resources (OLR) database to identify 'knowledge objects' available at CGIAR Centers to fill these knowledge gaps. The CGIAR Center Coordinators will be consulted in this process.

GO-FAU will partner with individuals and universities in the collection and preparation of teaching materials where such materials are not available within CGIAR Centers. The program will begin with a targeted approach, identifying and linking with partners with the required expertise and experience and then, as the program evolves, through open requests for content providers and developers (for example through advertisements).

Universities in both developed and developing countries with existing high quality relevant agriculture, food, and natural resource graduate-level modules designed for distance or traditional modes of delivery will be approached with a view of sharing materials with GO-FAU and its partners. In such cases, a consortium agreement will be signed between the two parties.

Course materials identified by the CPRC as necessary, but that are not readily available, will be commissioned from individuals at partner or other institutions. A contract will be signed between the content provider and IFPRI on behalf of GO-FAU. The copyright to these modules will belong to IFPRI or held jointly between IFPRI and the original content provider.

It is envisaged that GO-FAU might provide incentives to content providers such as in-kind support to strengthen the parent institution of the individual contributing course modules. This might include access to the portfolio of course materials of GO-FAU. In some cases a cash fee may be payable, especially where new module development is required.

The personnel (including instructional designers, editors, media specialists and others) and facilities (including software and hardware) required for course development are too expensive for GO-FAU to acquire and maintain. These resources will be accessed through partner universities who are already engaged in distance education through the partnership arrangements between GO-FAU and collaborating universities and other institutions.

To facilitate the compatibility of course materials and easy conversion to electronic distance education and branding, templates will be designed for modules, presentations using PowerPoint, assignments, and examinations. These will be applied both to the adaptation of existing course materials and the design of new courses.

To ensure that electronic course material is compatible for all partners, technology needs for the secretariat and partner institutions will be assessed and a common platform and protocol agreed. Based on this technological assessment, information obtained from the distance education

courses and meetings with vendors, appropriate software will be purchased. Technological hardware will not be provided by the program; it is assumed that this is available at partner institutions.

The development of courses and course materials will include a process for peer review. This process will be coordinated in consultation with the relevant CPRC.

6.3. Course Delivery

Partner universities will offer the courses through their existing Master's programs or as part of a program newly instituted as a result of the partnership with GO-FAU. These partners will sign a MoU and consortium agreement with IFPRI on behalf of GO-FAU. Such formal agreements are necessary to avoid inappropriate use of modules, which might undermine GO-FAU's academic standing and reputation. Thus, the MoU or consortium agreement will specify:

- Good practices in course delivery.
- Restrictions on use of GO-FAU materials if not appropriately delivered.
- Requirements for recognition of original content provider.
- Requirements for the partner institution to provide matriculation information on participating students.
- Requirements for the partner institution to provide feedback from students and faculty.
- Conditions attached to the module's use.
- Conditions attached to adaptation of the module.

Academic credits and degrees will be awarded by partner universities that offer the courses or programs developed and/or made available by GO-FAU. If a partner university wishes to mention GO-FAU in the degree/certificate associated with a Master's program, the approval of GO-FAU will have to be requested. GO-FAU will define the criteria for approval to include the academic standing of the university, its faculty roster, and its assessment practices. GO-FAU will then play a monitoring role to ensure that the contract is observed and that the observed standards and procedures are maintained.

To encourage socialization among faculty members and students engaged in the delivery of GO-FAU courses and programs a remote discussion group will be established for each Master's program. Separate discussion groups will be maintained for faculty members and students, facilitating the sharing of experiences and joint problem-solving as and when issues arise.

6.4. Review and Approval of Courses and Programs

Universities have established systems for the institution and approval of courses and programs. However, to ensure that courses and programs developed through the GO-FAU program meet its goals and objectives, GO-FAU will institute its own formal process of review which should be compatible and (ideally) dovetail with the partner university's own review processes. For each Master's program, this process will be coordinated with the respective CPRC, making use of external reviewers as appropriate. The review process will take account of both the content and format of courses individually and in the context of entire programs. Relevant criteria to be considered in the process of review will include, among others:

- Current state of academic literature and discourse in the subject area.
- Academic standards appropriate for the Master's level.

- Coverage of relevant issues.
- Accordance with learning objects.
- Integration of transferable skills.
- Quality of teaching materials.

Following the review process, the relevant CPRC will make a recommendation, supported with documentary evidence, of the appropriateness of the course or program. As indicated earlier, this process should be coordinated with the partner university's own process of curriculum approval.

6.5. Marketing of Courses and Programs

Marketing of courses will occur at two levels. At the Secretariat level, courses will be marketed on the webpage of GO-FAU, announced in the IFPRI's Capacity Strengthening Program's monthly newsletter, and circulated among relevant networks. Media activity surrounding the events of this program will take place and staff will advertise the courses at relevant regional and international conferences. The courses will also be advertised in prominent relevant journals and magazines.

Collaborating partners will also be actively involved in promoting the courses and programs of GO-FAU, in particular those that they themselves offer. Local collaborators will include these courses in their university course program guides and calendars, inform relevant ministries and organizations about the courses and programs they offer and include details on their website.

The Secretariat will routinely collect information on marketing activities undertaken by CGIAR Center staff and collaborating universities and, on an annual basis, make a report to the PAC and CDC Oversight Committee/ Support Group. The PAC will be expected to make recommendations on how the marketing of GO-FAU courses and programs might be enhanced.

To facilitate marketing efforts and prevent abuse of the GO-FAU name and acronym, these will be trademarked in strategic developed and developing countries. In so doing, account will be taken of all regions where the courses and programs will be offered through its partners in the foreseeable future.

6.6. Impact Assessment Strategy

To determine the extent to which the program is achieving its mission, objectives, and goals; to identify specific areas in which positive impacts are being achieved; and to highlight issues that remain to be addressed, GO-FAU will monitor and evaluate its activities on an on-going basis. The impact assessment process will encompass, among others:

- Overall adequacy of M.Sc. courses in terms of academic level and subject coverage.
- Peer review processes for course materials and modules.
- Delivery of courses.
- Student performance.
- Faculty performance.

Any difficulties encountered in the program's operation will be addressed through adaptive management, coordinated by the PAC and respective CPRC.

Steps will also be taken to assess the broader impact and functioning of GO-FAU, including:

- Identifying and employing a set of indicators for monitoring the impact of the Program on the strengthening of regional and national institutions in graduate –level education related to food, agriculture, and natural resources.
- Obtaining baseline information on the professional position of individuals before they enroll in a graduate-level course or program developed by GO-FAU and making comparisons with the responsibilities of the student/trainee after they have completed that course or program.
- Related to the above, qualitative information will also be gathered from students and/or their workplace supervisors on whether and how the graduate-level course or program they have completed has enabled them to undertake more advanced work and/or achieve certain outcomes
- Evaluations of the graduate-level courses and programs of GO-FAU by faculty, students, and professionals in terms of their wider impact on capacity related to agriculture, food, and natural resources.
- Assessment of broader impacts through a formal expert review committee.
- Periodic process of independent external review.

6.7. Intellectual Property Rights

Policies related to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and dissemination of output is of great international interest and concern both to the partner universities and the CGIAR including IFPRI. GO-FAU will operate under general principles relating to IPRs of an open access consortium. The curriculum developed and the content directly funded through GO-FAU are considered as "International Public Goods" and as such the most appropriate mechanisms will be instituted to make the products of the program freely available. IFPRI on the behalf of GO-FAU will also seek permission to use and disseminate non-CGIAR publications to partners. To protect contributors, attribution and derivative rights will also recognized.

6.8. Milestones

Milestones have been specified for the progressive implementation of GO-FAU activities over the five years to 2010. These are outlined in Table 2 below, with target dates for completion in each case.

7. BUDGET AND FINANCING

The successful development of the GO-FAU program is clearly dependent on donor support. A budget has been drafted for the period to 2010, based on accomplishment of the milestones detailed in Table 2.

The core donors of the ISNAR Division of IFPRI are supporting the current activities of GO-FAU. However, with the finalization of this business plan, the AE Oversight Committee/Support Group and the Secretariat will need to pursue financial support for the on-going activities of GO-FAU. It is envisaged that resources will be secured from a range of sources, notably:

- CGIAR Centers core funding.

- Traditional CGIAR donors.
- Non-traditional CGIAR donor (including education donors, IT donors, private sector donors, etc.).
- Universities involved in course provision through tuition payments (see below).

While attempts will be made to secure funding for the entire program as one package, separate parcels of funding for individual components of the program will be pursued. Funding will also be sought from donors that are willing to support GO-FAU activities in particular target countries. Through this multi-pronged approach, it is intended that funding for the activities of GO-FAU will be secured for the five-year implementation period to 2010.

Donors are encouraged to provide the least restrictive support possible to this program. Broad support is critical to enable all of the program's components to proceed according to an efficient workplan. However, many donors target their funding to a particular component of a larger program that may be more aligned with internal donor goals than others. Recognizing this reality, GO-FAU will accept donor-designated funds and direct these accordingly.

Potential donors are clearly concerned about the longer-term sustainability of GO-FAU, which largely relates to on-going operating costs. While there are concerns about the impact on access by institutions and/or students that have limited financial means, the plan is for a minimal charge to be levied to partner institutions that adopt GO-FAU courses and/or programs and that have income from student tuition fees; the level of this fee has yet to be determined. This charge will be implemented once the portfolio of GO-FAU courses and programs has been developed and implemented, and offered through at least one complete cycle of students so that issues arising from the initial offering of courses and programs can be addressed. Thus, it is not envisaged that the charge will be levied before the implementation period to 2010 has been completed and, as a result, this fee income does not figure as a resource stream in the budget. The costs of course and program delivery will also be covered in their entirety by the partner institutions.

The GO-FAU Secretariat has held discussions with potential donors; indeed a number of donors provided input to the development of the program. In August 2004, interested donors attended a dialogue with partners on the program. Other participants at this event included developing country universities engaged in education through traditional face-to-face and distance modes of delivery and education-based associations. The Secretariat has remained in contact with interested donors and provided updates on an on-going basis. As the process of raising financial support for the program proceeds, the GO-FAU Secretariat will work closely with partner institutions to identify opportunities for raising funds from regional and national institutions.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION:

For further information on the GO-FAU program, please contact:

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Table 2. GO-FAU Program Milestones to 2010

Date	Administrative Concerns	Partnerships	Curriculum Development, Phase 1: New programs in the subject areas of Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	Enrichment of Existing Programs in the subject areas of Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness
2005	Establishment of Program Advisory Committee (PAC) and CPRC for Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness		Initiation of curriculum development for new degree programs in the subject areas of Agroecology and Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness	Decision of the nature of enrichment required for an existing program in the partner universities
2006 1 st quarter			Completion of catalogue of learning resources available at CGIAR centers in the subject areas of Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	
2006 2 nd quarter	Completion of initial staff hires	Completion of process of negotiating Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with phase 1 partners	Completion of assessment of best practice curricula for MSc Programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	
2006 3 rd quarter	Completion of initial dissemination activities on GO-FAU through its own website, media, appropriate newsletters, journals and magazines, both internationally and in the three initial regions		Completion of review of distance education programs within CGIAR and other organizations	
2006 4 th quarter	Completion of initial dissemination activities on GO-FAU in the two new regions		Completion of curriculum and approval of its offering in phase 1 partner partners	Decision on new courses and instructional materials to be developed and acceptance of the same by partner universities

2007, 1 st quarter			Ongoing course development	Completion of development of new courses and instructional materials
2007, 2 nd quarter		Completion of process of negotiating Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with phase 2 partners		Establishment of Competitive Postgraduate Research Program for MSc programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness
2007, 3 rd quarter	Establishment of CPRC for three further subject areas			Initiation of use of materials and courses developed in existing programs of partner universities
2007, 4 th quarter			Completion of 50% of course development for MSc programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	
2008, 1 st quarter			Initiation of first course delivery for MSc programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	
			Initiation of work on other subject areas (Potential subject areas are Livestock Management and Animal Agriculture, Water Resource Management, and Agricultural Technology and Biotechnology Management): Details are the same as those for the first two programs	

2008, 2 nd quarter	First GO-FAU program evaluation on the enrichment of existing courses	Completion of process of negotiating Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with phase 3 partners	Initiation of student course evaluations for MSc programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	
2009, 2 nd quarter	Second GO-FAU program evaluation after the first year of offering of the new degree programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	Completion of process of negotiating Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with phase 4 partners	Initiation of translation of course modules for MSc programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	
2010	Third GO-FAU program evaluation after the graduation of the first batch of students in the new degree programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness		Graduation of the first batch of students in the new degree programs in Agroecology and Agricultural Economics / Agribusiness	