

## GO-FAU will STRENGTHEN

new • existing • short-term

**M.Sc. agriculture programs**

## GO-FAU will Partner

to develop **course modules**

**train faculty • facilitate thesis research**



Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

Traditional and open universities at the regional and national levels will deliver the courses via appropriate technology and grant degrees that meet international standards of excellence. By complementing and leveraging existing distance education courses in low- and middle-income countries, GO-FAU can increase the productivity of resources while rapidly building high-quality capacity.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.openaguniversity.cgiar.org> or contact:

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### Who can the global open university help?

- A developing country university that wants to establish or strengthen an existing master of science agriculture program
- Students who want to take postgraduate agriculture courses but cannot afford the high tuition or cannot move
- Young faculty members with a master of science degree at a developing-country university who want to improve the course contents they are teaching
- Mid-career professionals at nongovernmental organizations who want to learn about new and emerging issues in agriculture

### What are the benefits of this open university approach?

- Affordable and accessible postgraduate education
- Flexibility for students in managing education, work, and family responsibilities
- Fulfillment of the growing demand for new skills in agricultural development
- Effective development and sharing of global public goods
- High-quality capacity in agriculture and natural resources management

*High-Quality  
Flexible  
Affordable  
and  
Accessible*

**Postgraduate Education in Agriculture,  
Natural Resources, Livestock, and Fisheries**

A CGIAR Program

**The Global Open Food and  
Agriculture University**

**New Directions in Distance Learning**



## **Agriculture: Key to Development**

Agriculture, the dominant sector in most developing economies, is increasingly a knowledge-based sector. Bringing about sustainable improvements in this sector is critical for achieving economic growth, creating wealth, and reducing poverty and environmental degradation. However, achieving sustainable growth in agriculture and food systems depends on new science-based technologies, effective policies, responsive and efficient institutions, and a trained cadre of professionals knowledgeable in these areas. Therefore, a massive scaling up of trained personnel is needed, especially at the postgraduate level.

What if qualified students in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern and Central Europe could advance their studies without leaving home or work? Why not use distance-learning programs to meet the postgraduate education needs of students and mid-career professionals in low- and middle-income countries? With distance education, agricultural researchers, analysts, extension workers, and farmers in developing countries could sharpen their skills, increase their knowledge, and make decisions that lead to better policies and results.

## **Why Distance Learning in Agriculture?**

Distance learning is a cost-effective, time-saving approach that links aspiring agricultural researchers in developing

countries with expert teachers from all over the world. By studying in their own countries at their own convenience, students and professionals can obtain postgraduate degrees while working and fulfilling family responsibilities. Students can pursue an advanced degree or keep their skills current through courses whenever and wherever it is most convenient.

## **Why the CGIAR?**

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) is in an ideal position to establish a global open university. With more than 1,000 researchers who can impart solid, science-based knowledge on how to increase agricultural productivity, reduce hunger and poverty, and sustainably manage the natural resource base, the CGIAR system is well suited to promote postgraduate education in agriculture as a global public good. The CGIAR combines cutting-edge research with state-of-the-art teaching. Its centers have collective expertise, networks, and information and communication technologies in place for distance learning. And each of the centers already engages in teaching and coaching hundreds of postgraduate students through capacity-strengthening programs. Scaling up these activities through collective action is now timely and feasible.

## **What is the Global Open Food and Agriculture University (GO-FAU)?**

GO-FAU is a distance education program of the CGIAR. It will work collaboratively with partner universities to strengthen their master's degree programs in agriculture through the provision of high-quality course materials for distance and traditional education. GO-FAU learning materials will strengthen:

- existing M.Sc. agriculture programs;
- short-term M.Sc.-level agriculture courses; and
- new agricultural M.Sc. distance programs.

Initially, the program will focus on strengthening content in agroecology and agricultural economics/ agribusiness. GO-FAU shall train partner faculty in using the course modules, and it will facilitate student thesis research for those enrolled in these M.Sc. programs. GO-FAU partner universities, not GO-FAU itself, will deliver the courses, support learners, provide accreditation, and award degrees.

## **An Open Approach to Course Development**

The CGIAR shall facilitate a consortium of partner institutions in developing and developed countries. Together, knowledgeable faculty shall develop postgraduate-level degree

courses and programs at a price that students in low-income countries can afford. As an open institution, GO-FAU will invite experts both within and outside the CGIAR to submit course modules for peer review through a transparent process. Those modules that meet the standards and priorities identified through a collaborative needs-assessment process shall become open access to members of the consortium. GO-FAU shall collaborate with experts in developing countries to incorporate context-specific examples and exercises to enhance local relevance. The material developed would be offered in several languages.

## **Collaborative Approach to Course Delivery**

GO-FAU's academically rigorous course modules will be flexible and accessible. GO-FAU will provide teaching and learning materials to all interested educational and research institutions, capacity-strengthening programs, nongovernmental organizations, and networks that partner with GO-FAU.