

International Scholarship

Post-Doctoral Programme on Molecular Characterization for Use of Genetic Resources 2008

Call for Applications



Two scholarships for the **Post-Doctoral Programme on Molecular Characterization for Use of Genetic Resources** will be awarded for an 18-24 month programme beginning in December 2008. The Post-Doctoral Programme on Molecular Characterization for Use of Genetic Resources is hosted by the Centre of Excellence for Training on Molecular Technologies for Management of Plant Genetic Resources, Huazhong Agricultural University (HZAU), Wuhan, China.

Information on the programme

The post-doctoral programme is an advanced course designed for developing country scientists who are currently involved in the characterization of PGR using molecular techniques. The programme will provide an opportunity for intensive hands-on study and research in the application of biotechnologies for the characterization, assessment and analysis of genetic diversity of crops which are a priority to the scholars' home institute or country. The scholars will be given an opportunity to present seminars on the topic of their research in order to promote sharing of information and experiences with other participants. Scholars are encouraged to discuss any specific problems they face in their current characterization work so that the instructors are able to suggest possible solutions. They are also encouraged to bring specific materials and data for analysis under the defined topic.

The programme aims to provide trainees with an opportunity to:

- Gain advanced knowledge of biotechnologies used for characterizing genetic resources, with an emphasis on molecular characterization techniques;
- Conduct at least one research project in molecular characterization of genetic diversity of a particular species, to be agreed in advance with the supervisor;
- Receive expert mentoring and develop professional networks with other scientists;
- Make at least two presentations of their work at national or international meetings;
- Publish at least one journal article on the research results.

Application requirements

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must have a PhD or equivalent level degree in PGR, genetics or agronomy;
- Must be actively working on characterization of PGR and preferably have previous experience using molecular tools in their work;
- Must be from a developing country;
- Must be no more than 40 years of age;
- Must be fluent in English;
- Upon completion of the training, scholars are required to return to their respective countries and contribute to the national programme on conservation and use of PGR.

Support for postdoctoral scholars

HZAU will support the scholars with a stipend ranging from US\$400 – 500 per month for the 18-24 month programme which covers the full cost of room and board. Scholars are also provided with research support, including travel to at least one meeting for presentation of a paper or poster and administrative support for the training experience, including access to computers for data analyses. Applicants are responsible for funding their own international travel costs to and from the training site.

Programme supervisors

The primary supervisor for the post-doctoral training is Dr. Xiuxin Deng, Professor at HZAU and also an academician with the Chinese Academy of Engineering. Prof. Deng is specialized in genetic resources and genetic improvement and application of biotechnology for assessing the biodiversity of fruit trees, particularly citrus. Prof. Deng will be assisted by his colleagues and staff from Bioversity International.

About the host institutes

The HZAU/Bioversity Centre of Excellence for Training on Molecular Technologies for Management of Plant Genetic Resources was established jointly by Huazhong Agricultural University and Bioversity International in 2003. The Centre of Excellence aims to provide training and research opportunities to enhance the capacity of national programmes in developing countries to use molecular methods for better management and enhanced use of PGR. The Centre of Excellence at HZAU is equipped with advanced facilities for molecular analysis and staffed with knowledgeable and experienced personnel responsible for imparting theoretical knowledge as well hands-on training. The Centre has successfully conducted six training courses on use of molecular markers for characterization of genetic resources with participants from many countries in the world.

New molecular tools can be used to reveal useful characteristics to assemble subsets of collections to assist in pre-breeding. Bioversity International works to strengthen the links among genebanks, breeders and farmers so that each is better able to make use of the others' resources. The end result will be more material conserved more effectively and more widely used to improve the overall performance of poor farmers' agriculture. Bioversity's collaboration with strong regional partners such as HZAU in China, means that talented national researchers will have an opportunity to be mentored by experts and international scientists to explore molecular tools to unlock useful characteristics of diversity important to their country.

Applications must be in English and should include a covering letter, completed application form, full curriculum vitae, copy of PhD certificate, a research proposal (no less than 1500 words including problem statement, objectives, expected outputs, activities and timeframe) and two reference letters, one of which must be from the applicant's employer or home institute.

The signed application forms and accompanying documents should be completed and sent scanned by e-mail or fax to:

Mr. Yuan Youliang, Department of International Cooperation and Exchange,
Huazhong Agricultural University, Wuhan, Hubei 430070, P. R. China
Tel: 86-27-87282026, Fax: 86-27-87396057
Email: Fao@mail.hzau.edu.cn

Or

Mr. Zhang Zongwen, Coordinator for Office for East Asia, Bioversity International
c/o CAAS, 12 Zhongguancun Nandajie, Beijing 100081, China
Tel: 86-10- 62163744 Fax: 86-10-68975192
E-mail: z.zhang@cgiar.org

Deadline for applications: 31st August 2008