



INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION FOR
SCIENCE



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Policies,
Institutions
and Markets



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
Climate Change,
Agriculture and
Food Security



Call for applications to a Training Course on Scientific Writing and Communication with a focus on value chains of neglected and underutilised species of plants

Dates: Autumn, 2015 (dates to be announced); **Duration: five days**

Deadline for application: 19th July, 2015

We hereby invite young scientists who are nationals of eligible countries to submit a manuscript and apply to a training course on scientific writing and communication

Venue

Kenya

Zimbabwe

Benin

Eligible countries

Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, The Gambia, Togo

Background

Neglected and underutilised species of plants (NUS) include hundreds of locally domesticated and wild species, which are rich in nutrients and adapted to low-input agriculture. NUS are important to local food systems. Their resilience can help alleviate the effects of biotic and abiotic stresses—particularly those related to climate change. Their commercialisation can provide income opportunities and enrich the diet of consumers. Many NUS species are also important in traditional pharmacology.

Value chains of NUS species can be constrained by a range of biophysical and socio-economic factors. Research plays an important role in addressing such constraints or seizing new market opportunities. But to have impact, the research results not only need to be published in scientific journals, it also need to be ‘translated’ and communicated to a broader range of actors who are directly involved in NUS value chains or who influence them. Only then will research contribute to change in behaviour and innovation.

Being able to write a good paper, whether it is for peer-reviewed publications, popular science or for providing research evidence to inform policy makers or agricultural service providers, is a central and essential skill for young scientists. This fact is not emphasised often enough in normal academic training.

Plenty of research results on NUS crops are never published, and others are published in journals with limited circulation, or in 'grey literature' and so are neither read nor cited. Increasing the rate of

published research results on NUS crops is therefore important, while simultaneously strengthening the publishing record of young scientists. Secondly, the abilities to write about research results to non-scientific audiences and to effectively communicate are key skills for bringing results into use. This five-day training course will tackle both these skills.

The project '**Strengthening capacities and informing policies for developing value chains of neglected and underutilized crops in Africa**', supported by the EU-ACP Science & Technology Programme with co-financing by the project partners¹ and CGIAR Research Programmes, runs from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2016. The project's vision is 'Enhanced value chains of neglected and underutilized species (NUS) in Africa contributing to improved food and nutritional security, income of smallholder farmers and entrepreneurs and mitigation of, and adaptation to climatic, agronomic and economic risks.'

Towards this end, **the EU-ACP project is training young scientists in developing skills in scientific communication**. We are particularly interested in receiving applications that focus on the value chains of Bambara groundnut and amaranth (grain or vegetable), the priority crops of the project. Preference will be given to applicants working on these crops, but other underutilised species will also be considered (see Annex 1).

This call

One of the expected project results is 'Enhanced capacity in three African sub-regions to design value chain research, and to communicate results'. To achieve this, the project Partners offer three regional training courses on Scientific Writing and Communication, with emphasis on Bambara groundnut and amaranth (grain and vegetable) and their value chains. The courses target scientists **only from eligible countries** in East Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa, according to the following:

Region	Venue	Eligible countries
Eastern Africa	Kenya	Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.
Southern Africa	Zimbabwe	Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
West Africa	Benin	Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, The Gambia, Togo.

- This call is focused on research on NUS plants of priority in the Eastern and Southern Africa regions, and West Africa region, respectively (Annex 1).
- The five-day courses will be conducted in English and held sometime between September and November, 2015.
- The cost of the course, travel, accommodation and daily living for the successful candidates will be covered by the organisers.

Objectives and course content

The course objective is to provide young scientists working on NUS and interested in enhancing value chains of NUS with the skills and tools for writing and editing scientific papers intended for peer review, as well as communicating research evidence to inform agricultural development, policy and the media. The course will improve your communication skills (both scientifically and 'popular') and sharpen your ability to present your research results in various forums.

¹ The project is implemented by a partnership consisting of Bioversity International (Coordinator); Africa University, Zimbabwe; African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), Kenya; International Foundation for Science (IFS), Sweden; Laboratory of Agricultural Biodiversity and Tropical Plant Breeding (LAAPT), Benin, and; University of Nairobi, Kenya.

The course will specifically develop knowledge and skills for:

- Use of electronic resources for literature research
- Finalising manuscripts so that they can be accepted for publication in a scientific journal
- Peer review and editing scientific manuscripts
- Communicating research results to 'popular' target groups such as agricultural extension, policy makers and the general public

The courses will be jointly organised by:

- International Foundation for Science (IFS), Sweden, www.ifs.se
- Bioversity International, Italy, www.bioversityinternational.org
African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), Kenya, www.anafeafrica.org
- Laboratory of Agricultural Biodiversity and Tropical Plant Breeding (LAAPT), Benin, www.biorave.org
- University of Nairobi, Kenya, www.uonbi.ac.ke
- Africa University, Zimbabwe, www.africau.edu

Who should apply?

Applicants eligible for this call should:

- Be nationals of and living in one of the Eligible Countries
- Be national scientists attached to a university, national research institution or a research-oriented and not-for-profit NGO
- Be under 35 years (men) or 40 years (females) of age
- Have at least a Master's or equivalent degree
- We particularly welcome applications from female scientists.
- Have conducted research on regional priority NUS of crops/fruits, and be in the process of publishing the results in a scientific journal. Please refer to the list of priority species and research themes (Annex 1)

How to apply

Eligible applicants can apply by email that includes the following:

- Application form
- An abstract of a draft manuscript that you are preparing or that you have submitted but which you did not get published.
- Curriculum Vitae

Applications should be sent to the International Foundation for Science (IFS), email: nus@ifs.se

NB: In the Subject line, the applicant must write one of the following:

**'Scientific Writing Course-Benin'
'Scientific Writing Course-Kenya'
'Scientific Writing Course-Zimbabwe'**

Deadline for applications is 19 July 2015

Unfortunately, late applications cannot be considered.

Only selected participants will be notified.

Annex 1. Priority species

This call is focused on research on neglected and underutilized plant species of priority in three sub-regions: Eastern Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa, respectively. We are interested in applications that focus on:

1. The value chains of two target crops: **Bambara groundnut and amaranth** (grain or vegetable). Preference will be given to applicants working on these crops.
2. **Priority species of NUS plants**, as identified at two regional workshops in 2010 (Table 1).
3. Other **NUS plants of national/regional importance**.

Table 1. Priority species for NUS research¹

Type of crop	Priority species, Eastern and Southern Africa	Priority species, West Africa
Cereals	Grain Amaranth (<i>Amaranthus</i> spp) Finger millet (<i>Eleusine coracana</i>) Pearl Millet (<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i> and <i>Pennisetum</i> spp) Sim Sim (Sesame) Seed	Fonio (<i>Digitaria exilis</i>) Pearl Millet
Legumes	Bambara groundnut (<i>Vigna subterranea</i>) Cowpea <i>Vigna unguiculata</i> Lablab bean	Bambara groundnut (<i>Vigna subterranea</i>) Kersting's groundnut (<i>Macrotyloma [=Kerstingiella] geocarpum</i>) African yam bean (<i>Sphenostylis stenocarpa</i>)
Leafy vegetables	Vegetable amaranth (<i>Amaranthus</i> spp) African nightshades (<i>Solanum</i> spp) Spider plant (<i>Cleome gynandra</i>)	Vegetable amaranth (<i>Amaranthus cruentus</i>; <i>A. spp</i>) <i>Corchorus olitorius</i> <i>Crassocephalum rubens</i> <i>Telfairia occidentalis</i> <i>Cassia obtusifolia</i>
Roots and tubers	Arrow Roots (<i>Colocasia</i> spp) Livingstone potato (<i>Plectranthus</i> spp) Yams (<i>Dioscorea</i> Spp)	Bitter yam (<i>Dioscorea dumetorum</i>) Elephant ears/taro/cocoyam (<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>) <i>Xanthosoma</i> spp
Fruit trees	Guava (<i>Psidium guajava</i>) Prickly Pear (<i>Opuntia</i> spp) Mexican Wild Apple (<i>Uapaca</i> spp)	No regional priority species was agreed upon, due to differences across countries
Other undomesticated plant species	Horseradish tree/Drumstick tree (<i>Moringa</i> spp) Vine spinach (<i>Basella alba</i>) Baobab (<i>Adansonia digitata</i>)	

¹ Identified at two regional stakeholder workshop held in 2010, in Benin and Kenya, respectively, under the project 'Building human and institutional capacity for enhancing the conservation and use of Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS) of crops in West Africa, and Eastern and Southern Africa', financed by EU - ACP Science & Technology Programme. The following countries contributed: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda (Eastern and Southern Africa), and Benin, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal (West Africa).