

The Ginés-Mera Memorial Fellowship Fund For Postgraduate Studies In Biodiversity

The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT, its Spanish acronym) and the Canadian International Development Research Center (IDRC) are happy to announce the creation of “**The Ginés-Mera Memorial Fellowship Fund For Postgraduate Studies In Biodiversity.**” This fund, provided by IDRC, is aimed at memorializing Dr. Maria Jesús (Chusa) Ginés and Ms. Verónica Mera, Cassava Biotechnology Network Coordinator and Social Scientist, respectively, who lost their lives in a tragic airplane accident on January 28, 2002, while on an official trip from their base in Quito, Ecuador, to the headquarters of CIAT in Cali, Colombia.

This initiative is a means for family, friends and staff members individually, for the programs in which they took part (IDRC’s Sustainable Use of Biodiversity - SUB - Program Initiative, and the CBN-LAC), and for CIAT and IDRC to pay tribute to Chusa and Veronica. The objective is to perpetuate their memory through a fund that will provide scholarships for young women and men from developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean to complete Master’s-level theses in molecular biology, and/or social and rights-related aspects of agrobiodiversity and its conservation.

Maria Jesús (Chusa) Ginés

Chusa, aged 43, had been CBN Coordinator since 2000. A dual citizen of Spain and Canada, Chusa was a respected biodiversity expert and molecular biologist, with a keen interest in plant genetic conservation. Through her diverse international contacts and activities, she also championed the rights of poor farmers. She received her PhD in biology (molecular genetics and biotechnology) from Carleton University in Ottawa in 1987, and a graduate diploma in International Development and Cooperation from the University of Ottawa in 1991.

Before joining CIAT and CBN, Chusa worked for IDRC in Ottawa for nearly a decade. During that time she held several progressively senior research and management positions in the areas of biodiversity, environment, and natural resources.

Verónica Mera

Veronica, aged 36, a dual citizen of Ecuador and the Netherlands, received her MSc in Management of Agricultural Knowledge Systems in 1998 from Wageningen University and Research Center in the Netherlands. She was a Social Scientist and Research Associate with the Network.

Application for awards

Applications are invited from suitably qualified female and male candidates to compete for limited spaces for the award of scholarships starting in 2003. Scholarship awards will be made to young women and men (at least 50% of the awardees will be female).

Eligibility: funds for 2003

In order to maximize the impact from the resources available for this fund, interested candidates whose proposed work must demonstrate social relevance are expected to meet the following eligibility conditions as well as the academic criteria.

❖ Candidates

The following criteria shall be used in determining the suitability of candidates for the awards:

- ❖ Applicants must be nationals of developing countries, no more than thirty-five years of age at the time of application.
- ❖ To qualify for consideration, applicants must be matriculated Masters students who are seeking full or additional support to complete their studies and thesis in home country universities within one or more of the following thematic areas:
 1. Intellectual property rights and access to agricultural genetic resources;
 2. Molecular characterization of agrobiodiversity;
 3. Community-based conservation of genetic agrobiodiversity.

It is envisaged that the 2003 awards shall be made to a candidate or candidates whose work will be conducted in whole or in part in either **Ecuador or Colombia**, or both countries. (Subsequent awards will be made on a rotating country and continent basis.)

❖ Feasibility

The proposed project should demonstrate a reasonable chance of a successful completion in terms of human and material resources that can be committed to it.

❖ Academic Excellence

The proposed research projects must contain demonstrable potential for making original contributions to knowledge in the subject area. The results of such research projects should also be able to provide legitimate support or critique for existing theories or bodies of knowledge in the subject matter. A thorough coverage of the bibliography in this area is also required.

❖ Social Relevance

The projects must demonstrate social relevance especially in its potential to contribute to the strengthening of methods for the sustainable use of biodiversity.

❖ Use of the results

The proposals should specify the potential uses to which the results arising from the research project shall be put. The main target audience for the project should also be specified.

Guiding Principles

The Selection Committee in addition to the above shall be guided by the following considerations implicit in the creation of this memorial fund, especially in:

- i) Striving to ensure as wide distribution as possible of awardees to the different qualifying continents and within such continents to the different sub-regions and countries;
- ii) Promoting as much as possible a gender balance amongst the awardees, a 50:50 male to female awardees ratio being the target;

- iii) Attaining as much as possible a balance in the disciplines of awardees (the life sciences and the social sciences); and
- iv) Encouraging applied and inter-disciplinary studies.

Rights and duties of grantees

In the event of an award being made, the following shall apply:

- Award recipients will provide regular reports to the selection committee on the results of their work.
- Support of the fund should be recognized in the awardees' theses and other related publications.
- Recipients who are stationed at a CIAT or IDRC worksite will be expected to offer a seminar on their work during the course of their support from the fund.

Fellowship amounts and budget structure

Each award shall be determined by the selection committee with institutional approval from CIAT and IDRC for a maximum amount of support of US\$18,000. Expenses may include tuition fees, stipend, materials and equipment, and fieldwork.

Guidelines for submitting applications

Interested candidates who fit the profiles specified above are being invited to submit applications for the award of the grants. Such applications should reach the CBN Coordination office (Alfredo Alves), Biotechnology and Agrobiodiversity Project, CIAT, AA 6713, KM 17 Recta Cali – Palmira, Cali, COLOMBIA, no later than May 30, 2003. Applicants are strongly encouraged to send their applications via e-mail (a.alves@cgiar.org or c.s.zuniga@cgiar.org). Submissions could also be made by fax (++57-2) 445 0073 or (++1-650) 833 6626. Such electronic and fax submissions must however be matched by hard paper copies sent by airmail or courier and postmarked no later than the above dates.

- A signed letter of intent accompanied by a detailed proposal should be submitted. Such proposals must be **no more than 5 pages** and as Selection Committee members cannot guarantee reading beyond these 5 pages, all applicants are well advised to adhere strictly to this page limit!
- Proposals should be **single-spaced**, one side of the paper only, using **12 characters per inch** or larger (never smaller).
- Submit **2 copies**, stapled or clipped, but **not** bound.
- The following supporting documents, exclusive of the 5-page maximum for the proposals, must accompany all applications:
 - Curriculum Vitae specifying amongst other things, a list of publications
 - Evidence of firm registration for the degree course program;
 - A letter of support by the candidate's primary University supervisor
 - Two official referral letters.

Outlines for proposals

Applicants are requested to kindly ensure that their proposals conform strictly to the following outline:

1. Title
2. Objective(s)
3. Justification
4. Expected Outcome(s) and beneficiaries
5. Methodology
6. Activities, Participants, Responsibilities, Timetable
7. Itemized Budget and explanations of items requested
8. Bibliography