

The Ginés–Mera Memorial Fellowship Fund for Postgraduate Studies

2008

Call for Applications centered on Asia

We are pleased to announce the 2008 call for applications to **The Ginés–Mera Memorial Fellowship Fund for Postgraduate Studies**. The Fund is supported by the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which provides resources, and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT – Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical).

Background

The Fund pays tribute to the memory of Dr María Jesús (“Chusa”) Ginés and Ms Verónica Mera in the name of their families, friends, individual staff members, their programs, IDRC, and CIAT. The two scientists lost their lives tragically in an airplane accident on 28 January 2002, while traveling from their base in Quito, Ecuador, to the headquarters of CIAT in Cali, Colombia.

The goal of the Fund is to provide fellowships for young women and men from developing countries to complete research towards theses to be submitted as part of postgraduate degrees. In previous years the call has been for applicants from Latin America and Africa. In 2008 the applicants must have links to CIAT research for development activities in Southeast Asia. The main thrust of on-going CIAT activities in Asia are on poverty alleviation through market-oriented developments for the marginalized rural poor in a wide range of crop and livestock based farming systems. There is particular, although not exclusive focus on cassava farming systems and improved feeding systems for smallholder livestock production.

María Jesús (“Chusa”) Ginés

Chusa, 43, was the Coordinator of the CIAT-IDRC Cassava Biotechnology Network (CBN) during 2000–2002. 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

Verónica, 36, was a dual citizen of Ecuador and the Netherlands. She received her MSc in Management of Agricultural Knowledge Systems in 1998 from the Wageningen University and Research Center in the Netherlands. She then joined the CBN as Social Scientist and Research Associate.

Applying for an award

We invite suitably qualified candidates to apply for the fellowships made available for 2008. We desire to make awards equally between young women and men.

To maximize the impact from the resources available for this Fund, the proposed work of interested candidates must demonstrate social relevance. Also, the candidates are expected to meet the following eligibility conditions and academic criteria.

Candidates

Applicants must be:

- Nationals of developing countries
- Aged 45 years or younger at the time of application, with a preference for those under 35 years
- Enrolled as Masters or PhD students
- Seeking full or additional support to complete their theses
- Studying in one or more of the following areas:
 - Food prices and production systems in the region
 - Sustainable food and feed production systems
 - Spatial analysis of production, processing, and/or marketing systems
 - Economic and/or environmental impacts of expansion of cassava production
 - Advances towards a cassava crop growth model
 - Feeding systems for smallholder livestock production
 - A decision support system for village feeding systems for pig production

We particularly invite applications for the 2008 awards from Masters and PhD students whose work will be conducted in whole or in part in or for the **Greater Mekong Subregion** (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and the southern provinces of China) and normally, but not necessarily, by nationals of those countries.

Proposed project

The proposed project of the successful candidate must demonstrate the following:

- **Feasibility**, that is, the project has a reasonable chance of being completed successfully in terms of the human and material resources that are committed to it.
- **Academic excellence** in that:
 - It has potential for making original contributions to knowledge in its subject area
 - It will provide results that will legitimately support or critique existing theories or bodies of knowledge in the subject area
 - It will cover the literature of the subject area thoroughly
- **Social relevance**, that is, it has potential for contributing to poverty alleviation through market-oriented developments for the marginalized rural poor in the region
- **Potential use of results**. The potential end uses of results and their expected beneficiaries must be specified.

Guiding principles

The Fund's Selection Committee will seek to achieve the following, which are implicit in the creation of this memorial fund:

- Promote, as much as possible, gender balance among the successful candidates, aiming at a 50:50 ratio of men to women
- Attain, where possible, a balance in the disciplines of the successful candidates (life sciences and social sciences)
- Encourage applied and inter-disciplinary studies
- Ensure that the supported field research is linked closely to on-going CIAT-supported projects

Rights and duties of successful candidates

On receiving their awards, the successful candidates are expected to:

- Report regularly to the Selection Committee on the results of their work
- Recognize the Fund's support in their theses and other related publications
- Present a seminar on their work while receiving funds

Fellowship amounts and budget structure

With institutional approval from CIAT and IDRC, the Selection Committee shall determine the value of each award to a maximum amount of \$25,000 for MSc/PhD. Expenses may include tuition fees, stipend, materials and equipment, travel, and fieldwork. We expect to offer 7 awards.

Submitting applications

Interested candidates who fit the profile specified above are invited to apply for an award. Your application should be addressed to the CBN Coordination Office, Biotechnology and Agrobiodiversity Project, CIAT, A.A. 6713, Km 17 Recta Cali–Palmira, Cali, Colombia or via e-mail to Claudia Stella Zúñiga (c.s.zuniga@cgiar.org). You may also submit by fax at (57-2) 445 0073 or (1-650) 833 6626. However, such electronic and fax submissions must be matched by hard copy sent by airmail or courier and postmarked no later than 30 June 2008. Your application should also contain the following:

- A signed letter of intent (*please include the e-mail, telephone number and complete address*).
- **Two copies** of your proposal described in detail. It must be **no longer than 5 pages**. You are strongly advised to adhere strictly to this page limit! Write your proposal in **single spacing**, on **one side** of the paper, with a **minimum of 12 characters per inch**. The proposal may be stapled or clipped, but **not** bound
- The following supporting documents:
 - Curriculum Vitae, which specifies among other things, a list of publications
 - Evidence of confirmed registration for the degree program
 - A letter of support from the primary supervisor at your university
 - Two official letters of reference

- You are recommended to first seek advice from CIAT staff based in Asia or with links to work in Asia to discuss the relevance of your chosen topic, the research questions to study, and the likely contributions your research will make to market-oriented developments for the marginalized rural poor in the region.

Proposal outline

You are requested to ensure that your proposal conforms strictly to the following outline:

- Title
- Objective(s)
- Justification
- Expected outcome(s) and beneficiaries
- Methodology
- Activities, participants, responsibilities, timetable
- Itemized budget and explanations of items requested
- Bibliography