

# Capacity Strengthening

Sharing our expertise to empower our research partners



Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical  
International Center for Tropical Agriculture  
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

*Eco-Efficient Agriculture for the Poor*

For 40 years, CIAT has generated great impact through its activities to strengthen the capacity of agricultural institutions in developing countries. Perhaps the impact has been as much as that made through its scientific research.



More than 10,000 professionals from Latin America, Africa, and Asia have benefited from training at CIAT, whether through specialized courses, group events, individualized training, or thesis work. The following table provides a breakdown of figures.



### Professionals trained at CIAT headquarters 1967–2008

Training	Participants (no.)
<b>By modality</b>	
Group	
Multidisciplinary and specialized courses	5,339
Specialized distance learning courses	22
Individualized specialization	3,952
Thesis work towards:	
An undergraduate degree	726
A master's degree	345
A doctorate	308
	<b>10,692</b>
<b>By region</b>	
Latin America and the Caribbean	4,625
Africa and Asia	542
Europe	397
North America	200
Colombia	4,928
	<b>10,692</b>

## Training at CIAT

Most training activities are carried out at the Center's headquarters located in Palmira, Colombia, with others, organized for collaborative projects, conducted in countries of Central America, Africa, and Asia.



Training at CIAT is based on the “learning by doing” approach. Group events therefore combine conferences, laboratory practices, and fieldwork.



Individualized training, as well as thesis work towards a master's degree or doctorate, is practical in nature and conducted under supervision from CIAT scientists.

## Training modalities

CIAT offers several training modalities at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

### Group events

- *Multidisciplinary courses:* Are offered to groups to provide knowledge, tools, and skills on a specific topic, for example, cassava improvement or integrated management of the rice crop.
- *Specialized courses:* Each focuses on a specific subject or discipline, for example, the use of molecular markers for identifying rice pathogens.
- *Specialized distance-learning courses:* CIAT, in partnership with other entities, recently gave a distance-education course on the “*ex situ* conservation of plant genetic resources”, with the



participation of 22 professionals from Latin America and Spain. This highly successful experience opened up the possibility of organizing other courses on a variety of topics of interest and importance to developing countries.

Most group courses are international events. Instruction is the responsibility of CIAT scientific personnel and their research teams. In specific cases, the Center may seek the support of internationally recognized experts for instruction or practice in those disciplines where it does not have a comparative advantage.

Group events are programmed annually and their duration varies between 1 and 3 weeks, depending on the nature and subject of the course.

### ***Individualized training***

- *Individualized specialization:* Under the supervision of CIAT scientists, young researchers gain practical experience in a specific discipline.
- *Thesis work towards a master's degree or doctorate:* Again, under the supervision of CIAT scientists, candidates conduct research on specific topics, working towards a master's degree or doctorate. This research must be endorsed and supported by the candidates' respective universities.



- *Practices, internships, and thesis work towards undergraduate degrees:* These modalities are designed to allow undergraduate students carry out internships, practices, or thesis work at CIAT to fulfill degree requirements.

Individualized training is offered year round. Its duration depends on the specific topic.



### **Beneficiaries**

CIAT offers training opportunities to the technical and scientific personnel of a broad range of local, national, and international institutions, whether public, private, or mixed. It also receives personnel from development and nongovernmental organizations, preferably those involved in agriculture-related topics. Special preference is given to those who work in the Center's areas of research ([www.ciat.cgiar.org](http://www.ciat.cgiar.org)).



### **Collaboration with our host country**

For the 40 years of its existence, CIAT has contributed significantly to the strengthening of the scientific and technical capacities of personnel from Colombia's research, development, and educational institutions.

To date, CIAT has trained more than 4800 Colombians, accounting for 46% of the total number of CIAT trainees since



training records were first kept. Group and individual training activities for Colombians have not only been carried out at the Center's headquarters, but also at institutions belonging to the national agricultural research system (NARS) such as CORPOICA, ICA, FEDEARROZ, and the departmental secretariats of agriculture.

Many of these activities were possible, thanks to the financial support of Colombia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, COLCIENCIAS, ICETEX, CORPOICA, national federations for different agricultural crops, research centers, and other national and international organizations located in Colombia.

### Other capacity-building mechanisms

Formal face-to-face professional training is perhaps the most prominent of the several mechanisms that CIAT uses to build capacity in a country. The other mechanisms that the Center uses are directed not only at individual professionals, but also at NARS programs and other development agencies, communities, and farmers. These are:

- *Conferences, workshops, and seminars.* These focus on providing particular groups with specific knowledge directed at solving given issues.

#### COLCIENCIAS

Colombian Institute for the Development of Science and Technology  
Francisco José de Caldas

#### CORPOICA

Colombian Corporation of Agricultural Research

#### FEDEARROZ

National Federation of Rice Growers

#### ICA

Colombian Institute of Agriculture and Livestock

#### ICETEX

Colombian Institute of Educational Credit and Technical Studies Abroad



- *Learning alliances with research organizations, donor and development agencies, policy makers, and private business.* These alliances seek to identify, share, and adapt good practices in research and development in specific contexts. The practices thus become more widely applied, with increased benefits to society, despite differing geographical and cultural contexts.
- *E-learning courses.*
- *Networking and other knowledge-sharing activities among experts, technicians, or community members.*
- *Technology transfer, where CIAT develops new technologies and demonstrates their use to, for example, national programs.*



## **A two-way process**

Improving the capacity of agricultural institutions in developing countries is very much a dynamic process. Not only do the students learn, but so do the teachers. CIAT scientists learn and benefit from the feedback they receive from the training events, thus improving the technologies they develop through research.



### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you, or your institution, would like to participate in a training modality offered by CIAT, please contact:

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