GBioS
Genetics, Biotechnology and Seed Science Unit
Excellence in Seed Sciences

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Call for scholarship application for a PhD position in the framework of the Intra Africa PATH project at the University of Abomey-Calavi (Republic of Benin)

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Note: For applicants from University of Cape Coast (Ghana) only!!!!

PATH Project:
Capacity Building of African Young Scientists in Precision Agriculture Through Cross-Regional Academic Mobility for Enhanced Climate-Smart Agri-Food System

1- Background

Climate change is one of the main problems affecting food and nutrition globally, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Adapting to and mitigating climate change in the agri-food sector requires merging **information technologies, genetic innovations, and sustainable farming practices** to empower the agricultural youth sector to create effective and locally adapted solutions. **Precision Agriculture applied to crops (PAAC)**, has been advocated as a strategic solution to mitigate/adapt agriculture at a smallholder and global scales to climate change effects and enhance the digital skills of the younger generations, whilst increasing their interest in agriculture. PATH project, funded by the Intra-Africa Program of the **Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission**, is an initiative of four highly qualified public universities from three African regions and one university in Europe to advance knowledge in precision/digital agriculture. The Project is coordinated by the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC), Republic of Benin. Partner universities include the University of Cape Coast in Ghana (West Africa), the University of Rwanda (Eastern Africa), the University of Eswatini (Southern Africa) and Institut Agro Montpellier in France (Technical partner). The University of UM6P in Morocco is also member of the consortium as associate partner.

The objectives of PATH project are to:

- train 12 PhD and 32 MSc African scholars in precision agriculture applied to crops (PAAC) to upgrade the continent's capability;
- build capacity of 10 young African staff and 10 trainees in PAAC; and
- improve PAAC and ICT4Ag (Information and Communication Technology for Agriculture) curricula and research at the participating African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to address more efficiently the current challenges of agriculture and climate change.

We value collaboration with seed companies and private enterprises involved in digital agriculture for hosting trainees for entrepreneurship.

2- Priority species per country and related topics

Selected crops for PhD at the University of Abomey-Calavi (Republic of Benin) are listed in the Table below.

Countries	Crops	Key words for MSc candidates
Benin	Pineapple	*Artificial intelligence + Crop biophysical models+ Precision farming + Satellite*
	Maize	Machine learning + Image processing, Internet of things + Pest management + Precision farming

Students are invited to develop their research proposal on a selected crop with focus on the key words listed in Table 1.

P.S. The hosting university reserves the right to change the crop and/or modify the subject depending on the gap in the literature.

3- Scholarship: financial support and duration

The scholarship includes subsistence allowances (including the return ticket of the students during his mobility, settling-in allowances), participation costs, contribution to research costs and insurance in line with EACEA procedures.

- the maximum duration of a PhD scholarship is 36 months (**degree seeking mobility**),
- **PhD students will receive a monthly stipend of 1230 Euros. This also includes (1) travels cost to and from the host institution and (2) settling allowance.**

Research costs, tuitions fees, costs related to training, participation to conferences and insurance costs are covered by the host institution following EACEA guidelines. Note that participation to conferences and special training has to be approved by the supervision team in the host institution.

4- Eligibility

To apply to this call, students should be proficient **in ICT/Embedded systems with a willingness to learn agricultural sciences**. In addition, eligible "students" must comply with the below criteria at the time of the application for a scholarship:

a) at the time they apply for a scholarship, candidates must be national of and resident in an African country.
b) be registered/admitted in or having obtained a degree from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana

The consortium involves Francophone and Anglophone countries and will promote bilingual aptitude in students throughout the implementation of the project. Language courses will be offered to help students improve their skills.

In each HEI involved in the consortium, two main faculties/departments will be involved

5- Number of available scholarships for this first call

Only one (01) PhD position is available.

6- Submission

The Scholarship application form (here) together with other required documents should be sent as a unique PDF attachment to emails indicated below. Other required documents include:

1. Cover letter
2. Student research proposal or detailed research concept note
3. National ID or Copy of Passport Data page
4. Certificate of previous degree(s) /or a Proof that the degree(s) has been completed
5. All Transcripts/academic records (Please note that selected candidate will receive final admission after he/she has provided suitable transcripts)
6. A support letter from home HEIs (from an authority of the University, Vice chancellor or Dean or Vice Dean or Head of Department/School)
7. wo recommendation letters
8. Curriculum Vitae.
9. Certificate of English or French language skills if any
10. Proof of socio-economic vulnerability attested by an authority of the home HEI. The letter should be on the HEI letterhead with Email and contact of the signatory person.
11. Any other supporting documents

7- Contact

For more information, please contact Mr. Christel Azon, christelazon@gmail.com and copy Dr Carlos Houdégbé, houdariscarl@gmail.com and Prof Kwame Agyei, kfrimpong@ucc.edu.gh.

8- Deadline

Applications should be submitted To: mobilitypathb@gmail.com and copied Prof Kwame Agyei kfrimpong@ucc.edu.gh and Dr Dompreh Kwadwo kwadwo.dompreh@ucc.edu.gh no later than **September 18th, 2024**. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted and invited for interviews.

Female and socio economic vulnerable applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

The list of academic programmes offered by different host institutions can be found below

LIST OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES*
Project Acronym: PATH

Beneficiary name	Country**	Type of programme**	Name of the programme	Thematic field of study
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Master	MSc in Biotechnology and Plant Breeding	Agricultural sciences
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Master	MSc in Sustainable Management of Tropical Soil Fertility	Agricultural sciences
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Master	MSc in Sustainable Pest Management and Biopesticide Development	Agricultural sciences
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Doctorate	PhD in Plant Genetic Resources and Crop Protection	Agricultural sciences
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Master	MSc in Information System and Computer Networks	Computer Science
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Master	MSc in IT Security	Computer Science
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Doctorate	PhD in Computer Science	Computer Science
University of Abomey-Calavi	Benin	Master	MSc in Software Engineering	Computer Science
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Master	Land Use and Environmental Science	Land Use, Precision Agriculture,climate Change, climate Change
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Doctorate	PhD in Crop Science	Agricultural Sciences
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Master	Master Crop Science	Agricultural Sciences
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Doctorate	PhD Soil Science	Agricultural Sciences
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Master	MSc Soil Science	Agricultural Sciences
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Doctorate	Land Use and Environmental Science	Land Use , Precision Agriculture
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Master	Land Policy and Administration	Land Policy and Administration
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Doctorate	Computer Science	Embedded systems
University of Cape Coast	Ghana	Master	Computer Science	Embedded systems
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Master	MSc in crop Science	Agricultural Sciences
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Master	MSc in Horticulture	Agricultural Sciences
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Master	MSc in Environmental Resource Management	Agricultural Sciences
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Doctorate	PhD by Research (Horticulture)	Agricultural Sciences
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Doctorate	PhD by Research (Computer Science)	Applied Computer Science
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Doctorate	PhD by Research (Crop Production)	Agricultural Sciences
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Doctorate	PhD by Research (Biosystems Engineering)	Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering
University of Eswatini	Eswatini	Master	Computer Science	Applied Computer Science
University of Rwanda	Rwanda	Master	MSc, Crop Science	Agricultural Sciences
University of Rwanda	Rwanda	Master	MSc, Agroforestry and Soil Management	Agricultural Sciences
University of Rwanda	Rwanda	Master	MSc, Agribusiness	Agricultural Sciences
University of Rwanda	Rwanda	Doctorate	Crop Science	Agricultural Sciences
University of Rwanda	Rwanda	Doctorate	Agroforestry and Soil Management	Agricultural Sciences
University of Rwanda	Rwanda	Master	Africa Centre of Excellence in Internet of Things	Computer Science