

# Academy for International Agricultural Research (ACINAR)

Implemented by the *Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture (i4Ag)*  
As part of the special initiative *Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems*

## The Challenge

Ensuring German and international agricultural research agendas align during times of global change

Sustaining resilient rural livelihoods in times of global climate and environmental change requires new global partnerships for development-oriented research to promote agricultural innovation.

Reforming the global agricultural research partnership One CGIAR, formerly known as *Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research*, entails major changes in the way international agricultural research is conducted. This reformation concerns financing modalities – moving from bilateral to multilateral financing – and a thematic reorientation to global initiatives. Continued and improved exchange and cooperation between German agricultural research institutes and their international counterparts are paramount to ensuring the alignment of national and international research agendas. This cooperation will harness developmental benefits.

**25 PhDs / 96 MScs** will be allocated

**50% women** (half from partner countries) conduct doctoral research or hold internships in the context of an international research project

**10 articles** peer-reviewed and open access, presenting PhD scholars' research findings

**20 social media** posts presenting results of the scholarship programme

**70%** of research partners in the cooperation confirm improved academic networks

The project contributes to the achievement of these Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



## The Innovation

A graduate scholarship programme allowing German and international agricultural researchers to better network

ACINAR is an innovative instrument for the promotion of development-oriented agricultural research. Through scholarship programmes for PhD and MSc students enrolled at German universities as well as students from OECD-DAC partner countries, it offers an institutionalised platform for networking German research institutions and international agricultural research centres\*. These scholars conduct research attached to ongoing research programmes at one of the international research centres.

Under ACINAR, German and international research institutions and scholarship holders have joined forces to build a powerful, future-oriented network addressing urgent challenges and promoting innovation in the agricultural and food sector of Germany's partner countries. The broad scope of research disciplines addressed by the ACINAR-scholarships ensures a balance between applied and development-oriented research topics. The topics range across various thematic areas and are at different stages of innovation development – from the development of innovations through to the scaling and dissemination of such innovations via agricultural advisories.

\* Including the CGIAR centres, the World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg), the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe) and, potentially, members of the Association of International Research and Development Centers for Agriculture (AIRCA).

Name of the Project	Academy for International Agricultural Research (ACINAR)
Name of the Global Fund	Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture (i4Ag)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project Region	Global
Implementing Partners	The Council for Tropical and Subtropical Agricultural Research (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Tropische und Subtropische Agrarforschung (ATSAF) e.V.)
Duration	01/2021 – 12/2025

## Methodological Approach and Innovation Partnership

ACINAR consists of two distinct but interlinked scholarship programmes: 1) a six-month internship programme for **MSc students** to gain insights into international agricultural research and 2) a three-year scholarship programme for **PhD students** to conduct their doctoral research in the context of an international research project. As a precondition for funding, students and supervisors from German universities and international research centres form a group of three called a tridem. Research proposals submitted by these tridems are evaluated by an independent expert committee consisting of representatives from German and international agricultural research centres. ACINAR ensures that ongoing research programmes from these international research centres along with cross-institutional learning and networking are embedded in the proposals. As such, it helps to improve the contributions of international agricultural research toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

ACINAR scholarships for MSc and PhD students differ in terms of the amount and duration of monthly stipends as well as the number available. PhD scholars receive a monthly scholarship amount and a research grant for conducting their doctoral research as attached to ongoing research programmes at one of the international research centres. MSc scholars are organised as tandems between students enrolled at German universities and students from OECD-DAC partner countries. While MSc scholars enrolled at German universities conduct their internships at an international research centre, students from OECD-DAC partner countries conduct their internships at a German research institution. Tandems work on related research questions within the same international research project. Wherever possible, synergies are leveraged, for example by aligning MSc and PhD research topics. This way, PhD scholars can profit from additional in-depth MSc research, while MSc scholars can benefit from supervision and research infrastructure. ACINAR provides digital learning modules on state-of-the-art methods and emerging cross-cutting issues in development-oriented agricultural research. The partnership likewise offers opportunities for virtual and physical exchange as well as networking for the scholars and researchers involved.

## Important Activities

- Digital promotion of ACINAR to raise awareness throughout the scientific community
- Establishing an international expert committee consisting of representatives from German and international research centres
- Defining relevant research topics and criteria for the evaluation of research proposals and selection of scholars
- Designing digital learning modules and establishing formats for virtual exchanges based on scholars' needs and preferences
- Implementing digital learning modules and conducting virtual and physical networking events

## Sustainability and Scaling Strategy

Due to its innovative institutional design, ACINAR is much more than a programme for applied research promotion. Through scholarships granted to students who are embedded in tridems with researchers at German universities and international research centres, ACINAR incentivises and promotes the means for establishing long-lasting scientific networks. Students benefit from insights into their future working environments and can network with potential future employers. At the same time, researchers at international research centres profit from improved institutional and personal relationships with German research institutions; they can establish long-term professional connections. ACINAR provides an institutional lever for strengthening international scientific exchange and cooperation and serves as a fertile ground for innovation through development-oriented agricultural research.

## The Main Objective

*Improve scientific cooperation between German and international agricultural research.*

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für  
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH  
Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany  
Department G530  
Global Agendas for Food and Nutrition Security  
Fund for the Promotion of Innovation in Agriculture  
Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36  
53113 Bonn  
T +49 228 44 60-0  
F +49 228 44 60-17 66  
i4Ag@giz.de  
<https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/94538.html>

Photo credits

-

Text

Till Rockenbauch, GIZ

Legal disclaimer

This geographical map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute recognition of international boundaries or regions; GIZ makes no claims concerning the validity, accuracy or completeness of the maps nor assumes any liability resulting from the use of the information therein.

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of

Federal Ministry for Economic  
Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

As at

January 2023