



INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE ERAIFT REGIONAL MASTERS PROGRAMME

(5th Cohort: January 2023 - December 2024)

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

In the framework of the AGRINATURA-ÉRAIFT consortium, an international call for applications has been launched for the recruitment of the 40 scholarship beneficiaries who will make up the 5th class of the ERAIFT regional masters degrees.

This call for applications is part of the project entitled: "**Capacity Building of Biodiversity Practitioners, Scientists and Policy Makers for the Sustainable Management of Protected Areas and Forest Ecosystems in Africa**" "Action DCI-ENV 2020/416-397". The latter is part of the programme entitled: "**Knowledge-based Sustainable Management of Tropical Ecosystems**", under the European Union's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) No. 41928.

The overall objective of the project is "**To support environmental policies and investments for the sustainable, participatory and equitable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa**".

Operationally, this project aims "**To contribute to the capacity building of biodiversity practitioners, scientists and policy makers in the production and use of information needed for the sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa**".

The project target groups are "**biodiversity practitioners, scientists, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector, as well as policy makers**".

The project covers the Congo Basin and West Africa. The project is implemented by AGRINATURA-EEIG (= European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development) as "applicant", and the Ecole Régionale Postuniversitaire d'Aménagement et de Gestion Intégrées des Forêts et Territoires Tropicaux (ÉRAIFT) – co-applicant. In addition, AGRINATURA-EEIG has delegated the **University of Liege** (Belgium) to manage the project activities dedicated to The European Alliance.



II. KEY PROJECT ACTORS

2.1 AGRINATURA

AGRINATURA is an association of 35 European universities and research organizations (Table 1) with a common interest in supporting sustainable agricultural development to improve people's living conditions, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

AGRINATURA pools its resources to work in partnership with international collaborators, particularly in developing countries. AGRINATURA promotes scientific excellence, through joint research, education and training projects; and development, through the provision of scientific expertise for the implementation of field projects and capacity building of stakeholders. The AGRINATURA European Economic Interest Grouping (AGRINATURA-EEIG) has been specifically set up to implement and manage projects that call on the expertise of several of its members. The group represents more than 10,000 researchers, teacher-researchers and engineers in the field of agricultural research for development, in permanent positions.

Table 1: AGRINATURA member institutions

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| 1. Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania | 19. Georg-August University Göttingen, Centre of Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Use, Germany |
| 2. University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Austria | 20. Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany |
| 3. Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Belgium | 21. University of Hohenheim, Germany |
| 4. Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium | 22. Szent Istvan University, Hungary |
| 5. Ghent University, Belgium | 23. National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland |
| 6. Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University of Liège, Belgium | 24. University College Cork, Ireland |
| 7. Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic | 25. The University of Catania, Italy |
| 8. Aarhus University, Denmark | 26. Wageningen University and Research, the Netherlands |
| 9. University of Copenhagen, Denmark | 27. International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA), the Netherlands |
| 10. Helsinki University, Finland | 28. Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Portugal |
| 11. Agropolis International, France | 29. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Sweden |
| 12. Montpellier SupAgro, France | 30. Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland |
| 13. Institute of research for development, France | 31. Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK |
| 14. Centre for international cooperation research and development in agriculture, CIRAD, France | 32. Polytechnic University of Madrid, Spain |
| 15. Agreenium, France | 33. University of Reading, UK |
| 16. Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech- University of Liège, Belgium | |



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| 17. College of International Agro-Development (ISTOM), France | 34. Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE), Finland |
| 18. Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria (CREA), Italy | 35. Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Netherlands |

2.2 ERAIFT

This Regional School was created on 10 April 1999. It is based on the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere project (MAB programme) which aims at sustainable human development in harmony with the environment.

It was initially a UNESCO project, but has been institutionally established over the past few years and has been granted the status of a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO¹ with its own international decision-making bodies. Since its creation, ERAIFT has been contributing to build the capacities of managers and decision-makers from 22 French- and Portuguese-speaking countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean region in the management of protected areas, as well as in the sustainable development of tropical forests and territories (approximately 340 Masters, 21 PhDs and hundreds of managers from the public and private sectors trained in the field of "forest-environment").

Its various management bodies – *The Conference of Member States, Board of Directors, Academic and Research Council (ARC) and Direction* give the School an international governance ensuring institutional sustainability and viability.

In addition, in view of its smooth functioning, several collaboration agreements have been concluded at the national, regional and international levels with various technical and financial partners.

At the national level, ERAIFT is located on the campus of the University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN) and maintains a fruitful scientific and academic collaboration with this institution. Furthermore, ERAIFT has concluded partnerships with UNIKIS (Kisangani) and UNILU (Lubumbashi), the 3 major official universities of the DR Congo.

At the regional level, ERAIFT is developing a partnership with ENEF and USTM (Gabon), the Universities of Dschang and Yaoundé 1 and EFG (Cameroon) as well as with all the member institutions of RIFFEAC².

At the international level, ERAIFT is developing a fruitful cooperation with the European network AGRINATURA, including the Universities of Liège (ULiège) and Gent (UGent, Belgium). In the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve (DRC), ERAIFT is developing close scientific cooperation with UNESCO (MAB-Paris-France), CIFOR (Indonesia), INERA (DRD), MRAC (Belgium), JBM (Belgium), CIRAD (France) and Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech (Belgium). It is also active in the Luki Biosphere Reserve (DRC), in the Mayombe forest, where it maintains a fruitful collaboration with the various institutions present: WWF, INERA, MAB, etc. In each of these two biosphere reserves, the School has a research station with a full-time assistant.

¹ Category 2 centres and institutes contribute to the implementation of UNESCO's programme through capacity-building, exchange of information in a particular discipline, theoretical and experimental research, and advanced training in specific fields of competence. They are under the auspices of UNESCO, but are not legally part of the Organization; they are governed by their own rules officially approved by the General Conference. These centres and institutes form a large network of associated centres in the fields of water, renewable energy, science policy, biotechnology, geosciences, basic sciences and remote sensing.

² RIFFEAC: Network of Central African Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions



III. ORGANISATION OF THE REGIONAL MASTERS

3.1 Tracks and institutions involved in training

ERAIFT has concluded a memorandum of understanding with the following regional institutions for the implementation of a regional Masters programme based on the LMD system of the Bologna decree: *Universities of Dschang and Yaoundé I as well as the Ecole de Faune de Garoua (EFG/Cameroon), Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts (ENEF/Libreville) and the Université des Sciences et Technique de Masuku (USTM/Gabon), and the University of Kisangani (UNIKIS/DRC).*

The implementation of this regional program is also carried out in close collaboration with the 35 member institutions of AGRINATURA. The official language of education is French, however English is frequently used by faculty, external lecturers and assistants. One of the challenges of the School is to develop bilingualism: French-English in teaching and scientific research.

The following degree courses are covered by this regional programme:

1. *Professional Master in Forest Management Technology (TAF);*
2. *Professional Master in Protected Area Management (GAP);*
3. *MAB Professional Master in Biosphere Reserve Management (GRB);*
4. *Research Master in Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands (AGIFT).*

3.2 Structuring of the master's programme

The Master's programme is linked to the LMD system of the Bologna Decree. It covers a period of 24 months broken into 4 semesters (Semi-annualisation of courses). The mobility of students and trainers is also foreseen during the third semester (second year) devoted to specialization or professionalization.

First year of the master

- A *core curriculum* is organised in the first year during which students learn the basics of *the systems approach*, which is the ERAIFT pedagogical and conceptual base. Over these two semesters, students receive the *general skills (Cg)* based on the systems approach, which is participatory, interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral; in short, global and integrated.
- This refresher course on the fundamentals of systemics is conducted exclusively at ERAIFT by Chair holders appointed by its Academic and Research Council (CAR).
- In addition to theoretical lectures and practical sessions, year 1 ends with an internship in the forestry world in order to learn about the issues of rational and sustainable management of the equatorial forest.

Second year of the master

For Semester III: Specialisation course or professionalisation

- At the end of the first year, students who have validated at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of their credits are admitted to the second year (M2) for their specialisation in one of the 4 tracks mentioned above (GAP, GRB, TAF, AGIFT).



Category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO

- The placement of students in these new majors is a merit-based process concluded after an ERAIFT Academic and Research Council Meeting.
- It should be remembered that the organisation of this third semester takes place in the form of regional mobility either at ERAIFT or at one of ERAIFT's partner institutions with a better training offer and a good anchoring structure for the training. This decision is made by the Academic and Research Council (ARC), after a special meeting with the regional partner institutions.

For Semester IV and the last one: Dissertation or End-of-Cycle written Work

- The last semester of the master is intended for the completion of an end-of-cycle work or **academic internship** and usually takes place in the student's home country or at the "South African Wildlife College (SAWC)" if the student wishes to do so and passes a complementary exam in English.
- At the end of their fieldwork, students publicly present their findings either at ERAIFT or at the South African Wildlife College, before an international and interdisciplinary jury.
- Students who validate all the credits provided for in the program receive a Master 2 degree in the above-mentioned fields.

IV. MASTER'S GRANT

Scholarships are available but in limited numbers and are therefore awarded on a competitive basis. This study grant essentially covers the costs related to the candidate's stay in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and/or abroad as well as the organisation of his or her diploma course. The cost of training for the complete Master's course at ERAIFT is EUR14,954 per year (Euro fourteen thousand nine hundred and fifty-four). A total of 40 scholarships are available for the top 40 candidates who will be selected on a competitive basis, following this call for applications, by the Academic and Research Council meeting expanded to partners.

This cost includes the fees related to the organisation of teaching, tutorials and practical fieldwork, the stay of the learners in the framework of their sub-regional mobility, immersion and dissertation internship, etc.

V. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following profile is required for the recruitment of learners for this 5th cohort:

- Hold at least a degree – **with at 70%, i.e. with honours** – equivalent to BAC + 3 of the LMD system or BAC + 5 of the former system in natural sciences (Biology, Ecology, Botany, Zoology, Environment, Geography, etc.); in engineering sciences (agronomy engineer, forestry engineer, bio-engineer, engineer in the rural engineering, etc.), geomatics, demography, veterinary and/or human medicine, social sciences and humanities (Sociology, Administrative and Political Sciences, Economics, Anthropology, Law, Psychology, Communication, etc.);
- Be **under 40 years of age** at the time of application selection;



- Have **sufficient knowledge of basic computer skills** (Internet, Mail, GIS and its applications ...) and have a good laptop with at least the following technical specifications (Processor I5, Hard disk 500 GB, Ram 8 GB and an external hard disk is recommended for data backup);
- Have enough skills in **qualitative and quantitative data analysis**;
- Be **proactive and autonomous**, and able to work in a **multicultural and sometimes difficult environment**;
- Be able to live in a **community** and adapt to the varying conditions of the study environment;
- Successfully pass the **French, English, mathematics and computer tests** which will be organised and compulsory for all candidates meeting the administrative and academic selection criteria;
- **Abide by UNESCO's ethical and moral values**
- Present an **official medical certificate of physical fitness and good health** dated no more than 6 months from the date of submission and submit **proof of full vaccination against COVID 19**;
- **At least 3 years of professional experience** in the forestry and environmental sector would be an asset.

VI. ELEMENTS OF THE FILE

Each candidate will send to ERAIFT, before the deadline, a complete file including the following elements:

1. A duly completed and signed **application form** (to be requested from ERAIFT or downloaded from its website: www.eraift-rdc.org);
2. A **letter of motivation** addressed to the ERAIFT's Director and President of the Academic and Research Council, requesting enrolment in the 5th class of this regional master's programme. This one page-letter must be handwritten, in both versions French and English;
3. The following legalised **certificates**: a birth certificate, a current physical fitness certificate and good health (issued in less than 6 months before the application screening), a recent medical certificate issued by a clinic of international renown, international yellow fever and COVID 19 **vaccination cards** with QR code); a certificate of nationality, a certificate of good conduct or equivalent,
4. certified copies of your original university diplomas and photocopies of transcript of records for each academic year (original diplomas must be presented for confirmation of enrolment at ERAIFT). The certification of copies of diplomas, reports, transcripts, etc. is done at the level of the educational institution (Dean/Head of Department/Head of Section, etc.), but the legalization of administrative documents will be done at the municipality or the Town Hall, depending on the case;
5. For the civil servant candidate, a **lay-off certificate** issued by the employer for the duration of the training at ERAIFT is required (24 months of training);
6. Three **letters of recommendation** from persons authorised to give an informed opinion on the applicant (Heads of School, Employers, etc.);
7. A resume (**updated curriculum vitae**) of maximum 3 pages, showing especially *the applicant's competences, references of scientific productions (list of publications and scans of the first page of the publication; etc.)*;



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8. Three **recent passport photos** (one of which should be attached to the application form);
9. Scan of the first two pages of passport **valid for at least three years as of the date of submission**,
10. A **handwritten and signed declaration on honour**, attesting that once enrolled in this Master programme, the candidate commits to scrupulously abide by the study and examination regulations of ERAIFT, to pursue their studies throughout the duration of the training, to display ethical and moral behaviour, and to produce all deliverables requested by the School at the end of their training (internship reports, Master 2 thesis, etc.), failing which they will have to reimburse all or part of the scholarship they received.

VII. REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINE FOR FILE TRANSMISSION

All applications should be sent to ERAIFT only **by digital means in a single zip file in PDF format (not multiple zipped files)**, via email: recrutement@eraift-rdc.org, with a copy to h.mishidi@eraift-rdc.org with the subject line: "**My application to the Regional Masters Programme, 5th class**".

Failure to do so will negatively impact your application.

The applicant should check if the scan is well done and visible!

- **Address:** Baudouin MICHEL, Director of ERAIFT and President of the Academic and Research Council.
- **Maximum file size** to be sent: **10 MB**
- **Deadline for submission:** **Saturday, October 15, 2022 at 12 o'clock (Kinshasa time)**
- Only complete and timely submitted applications will be screened by a **joint team, consisting of members of the Extended ERAIFT Academic and Research Council (ARC), under the chairmanship of the ERAIFT Director and Chair of the ARC.**
 - In a first step, **review of the applications for administrative compliance**, as for preselection: then, shortlisted candidates will be notified for an **entrance test in mathematics, French, English and computer science.**
 - An interview may also be arranged by the extended ARC.
 - Where applicable, **ethics, behavior and leadership** aspects are also assessed in an interview.
 - **Only successful applicants will be informed of their enrolment in the 5th class of this regional master's programme.**
 - With equal skills, female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Done in Kinshasa, on September 01, 2022

The Director of ERAIFT

Baudouin MICHEL

