



Islamic Organization for Food Security
l'Organisation Islamique pour la Sécurité Alimentaire
المنظمة الإسلامية للأمن الغذائي



FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

supported by
the Islamic Organization for Food Security
and
Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation

OVERVIEW

Food insecurity is mainly defined as a lack of consistent access to enough and adequate food for an active, healthy life. It is commonly described in terms of food availability, food access, and food utilization, as well as the sustainability of these three aspects. Food insecurity remains the top major problem faced by the world population, especially in the region of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which suffers from acute hunger and malnutrition largely because of global recession, conflicts, and climate change effects. The situation day by day has been even worsening due to direct and indirect consequences of COVID-19, the current Ukraine crisis, as they are following with border lockdowns that disrupt the food supply chains, increase the costs of food for vulnerable households, and overall, intensify the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of national, regional and global food systems.

Agriculture plays a significant role in achieving global food and nutrition security, increasing economic growth, and attaining environmental sustainability. Representing close to 40% of the global workforce, agriculture is the world's largest provider of jobs, employing over 1.3 billion people. The emerging global trends such as globalization, increasing population, climate change, and environmental impacts, technology advancement, new institutional arrangements, and aging of the agricultural workforce offer both challenges and opportunities for agricultural development and food systems.

This scenario demands more updated modern knowledge and skill transfer to develop talent in agriculture and food security. It means up-skilling and re-tooling the current agricultural workforce with diverse and more holistic educational programmes and research training. It requires attracting a new generation of professionals by going beyond the traditional production agriculture sector and expanding to a broad range of aspects in the food security-agriculture-nutrition-environment nexus.

IOFS-COMSTECH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Given the significance of the talent development and capacity-building in the research and training on food security and agriculture for member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) and Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) apply the important attention to the development of human capital for sustainable food security, raising awareness on food and nutrition security from the level of young researchers and scientists, strengthening the capacity in the field of food security policy and governance, as well as in a wide range of areas that lead to sustainable food systems and development of agriculture.

In this regard, the IOFS and COMSTECH signed the Memorandum of Understanding and adopted the Joint Action Plan in November 2021, and one of the important areas of cooperation is joint efforts for enhancing the capacity of OIC member states, particularly from least-developed countries, in the field of food security and agriculture by establishing the Fellowship Program with the aim to provide opportunities for researchers, scientists and working professionals of the OIC member states for short/medium term research and training courses across the all-embracing fields of food security.

Fellowship Program objectives:

- To build the capacity and increase awareness of fellows in the comprehensive domain of food security and agriculture;
- To enhance fellows' ability to research in food security and agriculture;

- To contribute to the exchange of knowledge and experience among researchers, scientists and working professionals in the area of improving the food security and development of sustainable agriculture;
- To strengthen the local capacity of fellows from OIC least-developed countries for the appliance of the gained knowledge and practices in their home countries.

Annually around 10-15 fellowships are to be announced, and each of these would cover a maximum period of 3 months with short-duration research projects and training on specific food security areas. 60% of the fellowships will be reserved for OIC's least-developed countries. The parent country of the awardee or their parent institution would be expected to contribute any other required personal expenses, such as health insurance, visa, and local travel cost. The research institutions hosting the awardee will provide laboratory exposure, technical guidance, mentoring, and arrange training sessions. The selection of awardees for the fellowships will be made jointly by the IOFS and COMSTECH.

THEMATIC AREAS

The Fellowship Program offers opportunities in areas related to the below themes. The thematic areas are subject to revision and modification as per the requests of OIC member countries.

1. Food Security

Under the broad theme of Food Security, the fellowship will entail a comprehensive approach to food security issues with a focus on governance and policy-related areas. As such, the key objective is to develop and advance sustainable solutions for improving food security. The fellows will learn the assessment and analysis of food security strategies, policies, programs, and their implementation, as well as develop tools to effectively communicate to diverse institutional and community audiences. This fellowship theme is for working professionals and future leaders who are looking the advancement of their knowledge and experience in the areas of food security, nutrition security, public policy, and development programming. Professionals who are now working in governmental roles or national institutions and seek to expand their knowledge will be highly advised to apply for this fellowship theme.

Other themes of the fellowship program will include but are not limited to other, following areas. To this fellowship program, the curriculum is attached for the concern.

2. **Crop production**
3. **Agronomy**
4. **Plant protection**
5. **Livestock and Veterinary medicine**
6. **Food safety**
7. **Water management in agriculture**
8. **Agro-business, trade, food value chains**
9. **Agricultural technology and innovations**

HOSTING ORGANIZATION and PARTNERS

Under the Agreement between IOFS and the **Kazakh National Agrarian Research University (KazNARU)**, (<https://www.kaznaru.edu.kz/>), the KazNARU will host the first fellows of the program.

About KazNARU:

The main purpose of KazNARU is the integration of science and industry, creation of conceptions for intellectual property and technology products commercialization, and training of highly qualified scientific - pedagogic staff through participation in basic and applied scientific research and other scientific-technical projects. University has concentrated its resources and has become the core of the educational, scientific, and innovative environment of the agrarian-industrial development that significantly affects the country's competitiveness in that industry.



Currently, the University is successfully integrating into the world scientific space, cooperating with leading foreign universities and scientific centers, and realizing international programs on such global issues of humanity as climate change, environment protection, food safety, deficiency of drinking water, and others. High school of farmers which was established on the base of the University on the international model “Extension” renders consulting and educational services for the managers and workers of agro-industrial complex farms in our country. The main priority of KazNARU is and will remain a training of high-qualified specialties.

IOFS&COMSTECH will engage other universities, research institutions, and other organizations to host and contribute to the fellowship program. As such, preliminarily the involvement of Pakistan research institutions, American University in Beirut, Kazakh Scientific Research Institute of Agricultural Economy and Rural Development, and other institutions are agreed.

ELIGIBILITY

- The fellowship program is open to citizens of the OIC least-developed countries: *Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Yemen.*
- Applicants must have at least a Bachelor’s degree; having Master’s or Ph.D. degrees will be an asset. The academic background in food security, agriculture, public policy and administration, food science, business administration, social science, food safety, or another related field.
- Applicants with Bachelor’s degrees must have at least 5 years of substantive professional experience, preferably in government or national research institutions after university graduation. For applicants with a Master’s or Ph.D., at least 3 years of professional experience, preferably in a government or national research institution.
- Fluent and proficient in English, with excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Available full-time (40 hours per week) during the entire duration of the fellowship.
- IOFS&COMSTECH will accept applications on a yearly basis and select the candidates based on the pre-approved selection criteria.

LANGUAGE: The fellowship will be conducted in English language.

SCHEDULE

It is expected that the first fellows would begin their program in July-August 2022. Annually the fellowship will be organized in partnership with host institutions.

APPLICATION

To apply for the fellowship, please provide the following:

- Completed online application form.
- CV in English
- Official copies of academic transcripts, diplomas, and translations
- Two reference letters from university professors or employers
- Copy of passport

All supplementary documents should be uploaded to the application. Only nominated candidates will be requested to submit original paper copies of the supplementary documents. It is to notify the applicants that the nomination from the government authorities and research institutions will be prioritized in the selection process.

Application Deadline: 1 June 2022 at 24:00 hours Nur-Sultan time GMT+6). Potential applicants can access the online application by going to <https://www.iofs.org.kz/page/fellowship-programm> and sending it to the email of the IOFS and COMSTECH Focal points.

SELECTION

After the application deadline, all submitted applications undergo a technical review. Applications that pass the technical review will then be reviewed by an independent reading panel that will evaluate and score each application based on a set of standard criteria. Applicants with the highest scores will then be invited to online interviews or phone calls. Nominations will be made from the top candidates, after the online interviews or phone calls.

MORE INFORMATION

More information can be found in the IOFS website via the link:

<https://www.iofs.org.kz/page/fellowship-programm>.

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