

CALL FOR APPLICATION

AGREE Virtual Winter School

December 7-12, 2020

Sustainability of AGRI-Ecological Systems in the MENA REGION

Olfa Mahjoub ©

Background

Food and water security are inextricably linked. Water for food poses one of the key bottlenecks for human wellbeing and future economic development; this is especially true for the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) Region where population growth, urbanisation, climate change, and migratory flows further add to the pressures owed to water resources scarcity. Changes in diets, policies concerning national food security, and investments into production of cash crops linked to global agro-food chains exacerbate pressures on water resources in the MENA Region. The entire region will require more food and more water for cities, agriculture, and industry. Besides important biophysical constraints that the region faces in relation to improving sustainable food and water security for its population, there is a whole series of institutional and governance-related issues that affect water management and water provision for agriculture and beyond. Hence, the sustainability of agri-food systems in the MENA Region is a rich and complex topic that requires an inter- and transdisciplinary analysis. Active participation of early-career researchers of agricultural sciences, environmental policy, human geography, and economic development in such research processes is of utmost importance.

Objectives

IAV Hassan-II Rabat (Morocco), University of Carthage/INRREF and ESA Mograne (Tunisia), American University of Beirut (Lebanon), and University of Kassel (Germany) are holding the joint Virtual Winter School for bringing together graduate students and early-career researchers from Germany and participating MENA countries for the following purposes:

- To initiate exchange about the structures of research and higher education systems in participating countries with particular reference to Master and Ph.D. programs in interdisciplinary food system analysis, transdisciplinarity and institutional and governance analysis;
- To complement the qualifications of excellent students with policy relevant skills to improve their employability through interdisciplinary social-ecological agro-food system analysis;
- To foster intercultural and interdisciplinary exchange among students and lecturers and to promote junior researcher in a gender-balanced way;
- To promote a sound basis for strategic and long term cooperation among the partners.

Concept and event unfolding

The **six-day event** is scheduled to take place in a decentralized way with **national groups** meeting in Rabat (Morocco), Tunis (Tunisia), Beirut (Lebanon), and Witzenhausen (Germany) under consideration of legally required and adequate health and hygiene precautions*.

The virtual common program includes **lectures and practice sessions** focusing on concepts and methods for social-ecological systems' and institutional analysis of agri-food systems and food production. Here, food security and food systems in the MENA Region will be at the center. Acquired knowledge will be practiced in problem-based learning group work.

* **COVID-19:** In case the organizers decide that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions and health and security concerns the winter school cannot take place in the decentralized format, the event will shift to a completely virtual format.

Language

English is the official language.

Eligibility

The Virtual Winter School is aimed at **advanced Master students and early-stage PhD students** with an adequate background in a relevant discipline and a keen interest in the topics sketched out above.

Grant

Given the limited number of grants, only selected students from each partner country will be able to participate; selection is based on the applications received. **National travel and local accommodation** will be paid thanks to generous **funding from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)**.

Application

Interested candidates are invited to send their applications including **CV (2 pager in English)**, **letter of motivation (ca. 350 words)**, and **relevant university certificates** (Graduation, MSc, etc.) **by October 9, 2020** to agree@uni-kassel.de. **All inquiries** regarding this call should be directed to this email address.

Acceptance letters will be sent by the **end of October 2020**, the latest.

Certificate

All participants will receive a certificate of attendance; **German students can obtain 3 Credit Points** by successful participation.

Partners and teams

- **Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II (IAV Hassan II)** Rabat, Morocco
Prof. Si Bennasseur Alaoui, Prof. Lamiae Ghaoui, Prof. Rachid Hamimaz, and Dr. Ouïam Lahlou
- **University of Carthage (UCAR)/National Research institute for Rural Engineering, Water, and Forestry (INRGREF), and High School of Agriculture of Mograne (ESA Mograne)**, Tunis, Tunisia
Dr. Olfa Mahjoub and Dr. Ayoub Fouzai
- **American University of Beirut (AUB)**, Lebanon
Dr. Hadi Jafaar, Rachel Bahn (M.Sc.), and Dr. Martin Keulertz
- **University of Kassel**, Germany
Prof. Andreas Thiel, PD Dr. Christian Schleyer, PD Dr. Thomas Kluge, Dr. Sören Köpke, Dr. Ariane Götz, and Kai Buchtal (B.Sc.)