

Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit Memorial Fellowship for Agrobiodiversity in Nepal

CALL FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/19 APPLICATION

Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit

Dr. Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit was one of the Founding Members and Ex-Board Chair of Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD) and a Senior Scientist of Bioversity International for over two decades. Before joining Bioversity International, he worked for Lumle Agriculture Research Center in Kaski, Nepal. He worked in the field of agrobiodiversity conservation, research and development throughout his life.

Born in 1954 in the scenic city of Pokhara, Nepal, Dr. Sthapit has a Master's and M Phil degree in agriculture from the University of Reading, UK and a PhD in Plant Breeding from the University of Wales, UK. He was a pioneer scientist in developing and strengthening participatory research methodologies in agrobiodiversity and institutionalizing these approaches in the national systems. He was a prolific writer and his writings have been published in many national and international books and journals.

Dr Sthapit was a proponent of empowerment of farmer and their institutions and valued farmers knowledge and context in scientifically rigorous research design and implementation. His work was guided by the principle of "letting locals lead". Dr Sthapit was a recipient of 'Pokhara Ratna', and is also known by the name 'Abiral' in Nepali literature society.



Photo: Mahesh Shrestha

Bhuwon Sthapit (1954-2017) leading the participatory farm work in Pokhareli Jethobudho field in 2008 in the Begnas watershed.

Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit Memorial Fellowship

In honor of the late Dr Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit and his life-long commitment to agrobiodiversity conservation, research and development, LI-BIRD and Bioversity International has established 'Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit Memorial Fellowship for Agrobiodiversity in Nepal' that will provide financial assistance to young students and researchers from Nepal who wish to pursue Master's degree in agrobiodiversity or related field. Recognizing the tremendous loss of leadership with Bhuwon's untimely demise, through this fellowship LI-BIRD and Bioversity International will help build a new generation of scientists and agrobiodiversity conservation leaders in preserving Nepal's rich agrobiodiversity heritage and habitat.

Beginning from the academic year 2018, each year LI-BIRD and Bioversity International will award Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit Memorial Scholarship to two students, male and female, to pursue Master's Degree in the field of agrobiodiversity or related field. The fellowship aims to encourage bright and promising students, especially from Nepal's rural and mountainous areas to pursue careers in agrobiodiversity or related field. The fellowship is available to Nepali citizens, with priority given to socio-economically disadvantaged applicants, who have secured admission at a university in Nepal.

Fellowship Benefits

- » Each fellow will receive Nepali Rupees 500,000 over a period of two years to cover partial or full tuition, living expenses, books and supplies, and thesis research costs while pursuing a Master's Degree in agrobiodiversity related field at a university in Nepal. However, it should be noted that LI-BIRD and Bioversity International reserves the sole right to reduce or split the fellowship amount between deserving students, if necessary; and
- » The students will have an opportunity to interact with LI-BIRD and Bioversity International's staff and an opportunity to carry out field research (as partial fulfillment of their Master's Degree thesis) in agrobiodiversity related projects managed by LI-BIRD and Bioversity International in Nepal.

Eligibility Criteria

- » All applicants, male and female, must be citizen and resident of Nepal;
- » Applicants must be admitted to a Master's Degree program in agrobiodiversity, participatory plant improvement, natural resource management, agro-ecosystem management, forestry, agroforestry or related field at a university in Nepal;
- » The students must begin in academic year 2018. Application from students who are already enrolled and attending classes before the academic year 2018 will not be considered or accepted. Application for the subsequent years will be announced on an annual basis; and
- » The applicants must be under the age of 35 years.

Selection Process and Procedures

Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit Memorial Fellows will be selected through a transparent, competitive and merit-based process. A selection committee comprising representatives from LI-BIRD Executive Board, LI-BIRD Management, Bioversity International, and an independent evaluator will review all eligible applications, interview finalists, and select a winner based on the following criteria:

- » **Professional Qualifications** - as evidenced by previous and current conservation, research and development work or positions, awards/certificates received, references from employer/s (if applicable) or professional colleagues, publications, and other sources;
- » **Leadership Potential/Quality** - through involvement in community, volunteer, and related extra-curricular activities;

- » **Academic Achievement/Excellence** - as evidenced by grades, academic awards, and references from faculty member, course director or supervisor; and
- » **Motivation and Commitment** - to contribute to agrobiodiversity conservation, research and development in Nepal.

Application Instructions and Checklist

- » Complete all pages of the 'Application' form (please see Annex A for details);
- » Print out and sign the 'Personal Service Agreement' and 'Applicant Acceptance Agreement' form (please see Annex B and C respectively for details);
- » Two letters of recommendation from the faculty member, course director, supervisor, previous employer or professional colleague (recommendation letters from family members will not be accepted);
- » Academic transcripts (School Leaving Certificate and above);
- » Proof of admission to the Master's Degree relevant to the fellowship program;
- » Citizenship certificate and recent passport size photo
- » Updated CV/resume;
- » Copies of awards or certificates received, if any; and
- » Copies of published journal articles and research papers presented at conferences that you have authored/co-authored, if any.

- Applications without the above required documents will not be considered.

- Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview.

- The deadline for the application is 31st March 2019.

- The application may be submitted either in hard copy or sent via e-mail. Please send your application to:

Bhuwon Ratna Sthapit Memorial Fellowship for Agrobiodiversity in Nepal Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD)

G.P.O Box 324; Gairapatan, Pokhara, Kaski
Email: info@libird.org

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