

Fact sheet

agLe@rn

A Type 2 partnership initiative

E-Learning opportunities for agricultural professionals

agLe@rn is an interactive web-based educational tool for agricultural professionals who's responsibilities involve facilitating farmer training. Agricultural professionals who have access to an internet-connected computer and are unable to travel to formal training courses can learn more about the underlying concepts and skills of modern sustainable agriculture by using agLe@rn.

agLe@rn is run by the Asia Pacific Regional Technology Centre, a non-profit corporation, in partnership with CropLife International and the WorldView International Foundation, offers online courses focused on sustainable agriculture for subjects such as digital literacy for agricultural professionals, Integrated Pest Management and responsible pesticide use.

agLe@rn utilises modern information, communication and education technologies to provide agricultural professionals working with small holder farmers with the updated knowledge and skills they need to be effective agents of change for sustainable agriculture. With demonstrable potential to help bridge knowledge and technology gaps between centres of learning and the knowledge required by millions of the developing world's rural poor, the value of agLe@rn has already been realised within the Asia-Pacific region.

agLe@rn is now seeking to expand towards global outreach and looking for new partners to develop and broaden the content through further educational modules on key elements

of sustainable agriculture such as soil fertility and biodiversity conservation as well as the provision of courses in different languages.

More partners are required in order to forge strong linkages with community based organisations, facilitating knowledge penetration, module adaptation and thus locally-appropriate information exchange. Support is also required to help identify course participants.

Through wider stakeholder engagement within the partnership, agLe@rn has considerable value to offer as a comprehensive yet flexible education tool to further the promotion and uptake of sustainable agriculture practices world-wide.

About agLe@rn

A typical 6-week agLe@rn course costs US\$225. Individuals working in the public, academic or NGO sectors may be eligible for a scholarship through the recently established agLe@rn Scholarship Fund.

Course materials are freely downloadable but considerable benefit derives from the interaction between facilitators and students as well as between students themselves.

Facilitators for the agLe@rn courses have come from the following educational institutions:

- University of the Philippines Los Banos
- Kasetsart University, Thailand
- Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand
- The Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich, UK
- International Rice Research Institute, Philippines

agLe@rn will address the following International Development Targets (IDTs):

- Education
- Gender
- Environment
- Health
- Sustainable Development

The target number of participants on the agLe@rn courses for 2002 is 700 students. Each student is expected to train a further 15 to 25 people making the estimated overall outreach to between 10,000 and 15,000 people.

APRTC is very committed to transparent evaluation and reporting of its activities. Student evaluations of courses are conducted and published on its Website. A Web-based alumni database is being developed and visitors to APRTC's Website will be able to view reports on alumni by sector, by organisation, by country and by gender.

Great efforts are made to have independent reviews of all courses and courses to date have been reviewed by expert individuals from FAO and the University of Florida. Scholarship funds, administered by an independent board, will be audited and reported annually.

The use of materials in subsequent farmer training programmes, as well as the impact of the programmes will be assessed through a survey of the alumni. The survey results will also help refine the course content.

For more details email: info@aprtc.org or telephone Stephen Weller: +32 479 372 339 during the Summit.

The agLearn programme is supported by CropLife International, The Asia Pacific Regional Technology Centre and WorldView International.

