



MAIB Former student: Where are they?

Research studies

Follow-up research findings (June 2011)

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Background and objectives

Follow-up studies are commonly used by academic Institutions to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of their educational and academic programs. The results of such studies can be used to avoid mistakes and improve performance in the future (Erickson, 1947). Those studies often seek to measure the relationship between the training the students received and the expertise needed for their occupational placement (Randavay, 1990). Moreover, Graham (2001) reported that If Agricultural industries are to survive, the agriculture curriculum must be dynamic and able to adjust to new situations and environment that help to improve on-the-job effectiveness of future graduates. Therefore, the on-going follow-up survey of the Former Trainees of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institutete of Bari attempted mainly to:

- 1- update the database of the former trainees records and keep in contact with them;
- 2- ascertain what impact the MAIB Actions (Training, Research and Cooperation) have on their career progress.

Methodology

Procedures: The tool used to conducted the follow-up survey is a self-administered questionnaire. It was designed and developed in August-September 2010 and was made available through the *surveymonkey* website, in *English* and *French* languages. More than 1300 former students/trainees, who attended Educational/Training programs at MAI of Bari between the years 1998 and 2010, were invited via email, phone or fax to follow a [link](#) which allowed them to complete the questionnaire online. Participation was entirely volunteer and responses were analyzed only in aggregate.

Questionnaire structure: The questionnaire used a combination of one and/or multiple choice and open-ended questions, allowing for free text input. It was developed into 2 main sections **A**: FTN data base updating and **B**: FTN Follow-up. The two sections are articulated in 6 parts: **(1)** General information and demographic data; **(2)** Career progress and further development; **(3)** Recognition of research excellence; **(4)** Commercial spin-offs; **(5)** Scientific outputs and **(6)** Overall evaluation .

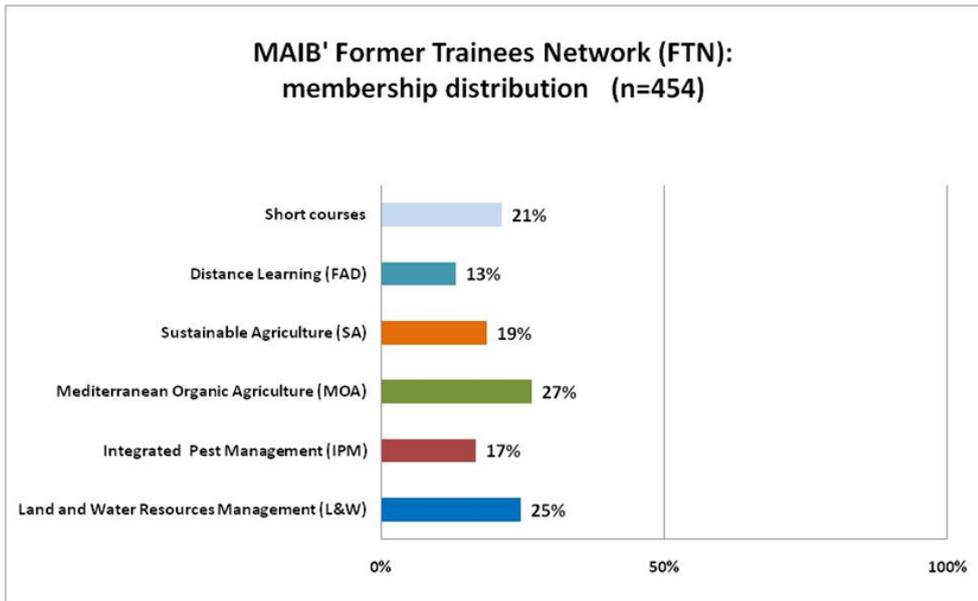
Findings progress (latest data processing June 2011)

Selected findings are presented regarding (a) Membership distribution by attended courses (b) Activity of FT' employer/organisation (c) Current FT employer Status (d) Location of FT employer.

Objective one: Updating demographic data ...

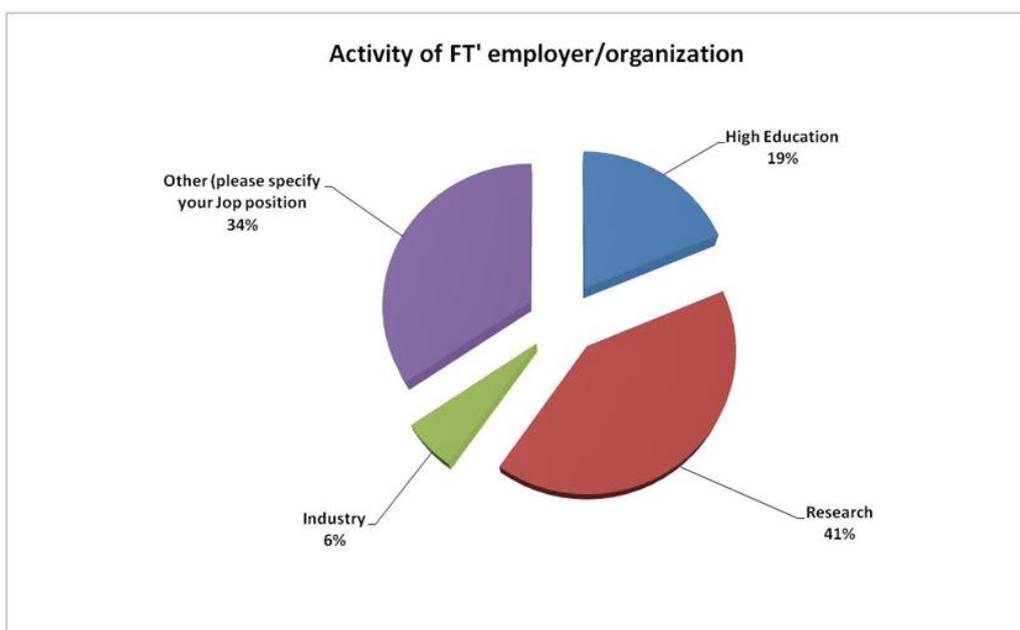
The sample of respondents reached a total of **454** memberships, a **14%** increase compared to first data processed in February 2011 ([link](#)), and still not equally distributed among women and men (**33 % and 67%**

respectively). The **454** members completed their demographic data and updated their records. The membership rating showed that 25 %, 17% and 27% have post-graduated respectively on Msc courses L&W: IPM and MOA.. Instead 19% ; 13 % and 21% attended specialized advanced courses respectively on SA, FAD and various short courses. The summing-up of the percent responding resulted in 122% . The latest value is explained by the fact that of respondents were indentified in more than one course choice. Specifically, 6 respondents of the sample have attended one to two courses (i.e. SA and MOA..) (**Fig.1**).



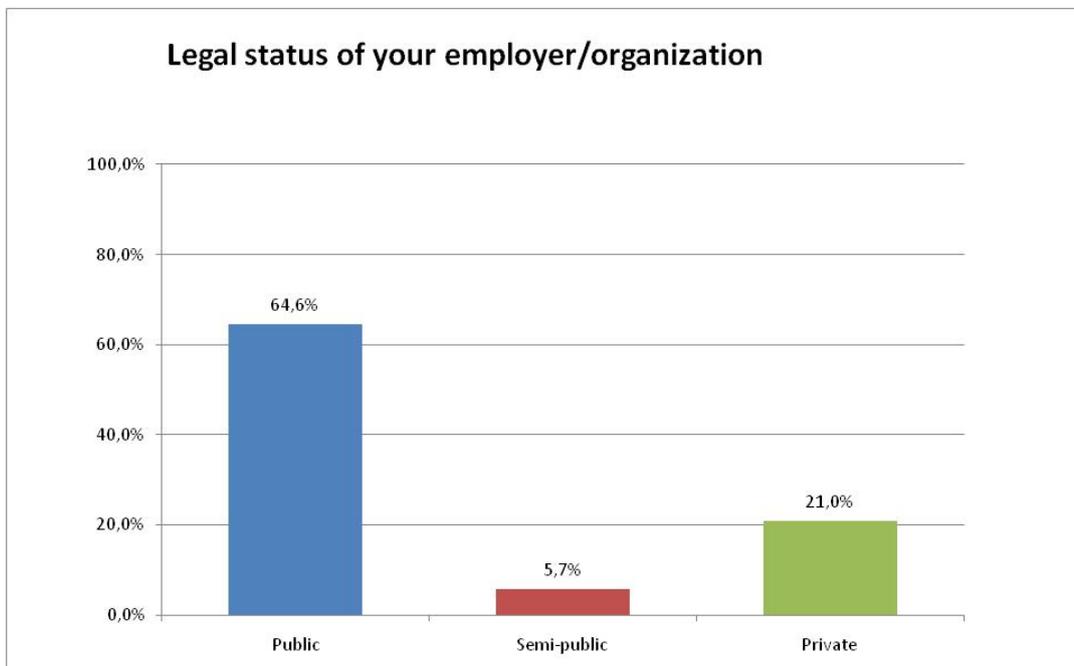
Objective two: Career progress

When respondents were asked about the activity of their employer/ organization in relation to their job position 41 %, 19 % and 6% indicated respectively Research, High Education and Industry/private while 34 % mentioned other (i.e. PhD student, freelance, unemployed..etc). Further specifications and data analysis are needed to elucidate whether the current job position of the respondents is correlated or not with their MAIB former Education/training at MAIB (**Fig 2**).



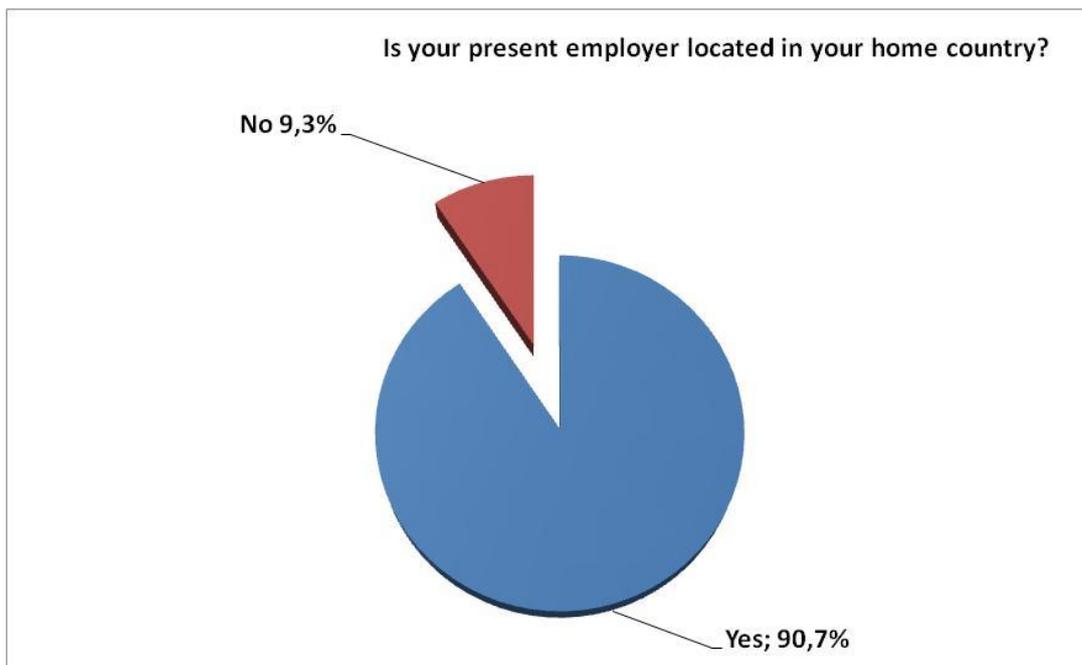
What is the legal status of your employer/organisation?

Among the surveyed sample, **65%** of respondents indicated that they are working in Public Agricultural Institutions (i.e. Ministries of Agriculture). While only **6 %** identified the status of their employer as a semi-public. Instead **21 %** have their own business or worked in private sector (**Fig. 3**). It noticed that sum of percent of responding is less than 100. This is explained by the fact that **7 %** of respondent skipped to answer this question.



Is your present employer located in your home country?

The **91%** of surveyed respondents indicated home country as location of their employer. This preliminary findings support the CIHEAM-MAIB mission . And only **9 %** are working abroad (i.e. USA, Canada , EU..). Motivations of working abroad were various: lack of job opportunities , family reasons (**Fig 4**).



General conclusions and recommendations

The 454 respondents felt satisfied overall with MAIB' experience and with their participation in the follow-up survey study. The total number reached, as a FTN membership, represented a 41 % over 1300 contacted former students/trainees. Additionally the on-going follow-up survey still providing a wealth of extremely valuable and reliable indicators, information, ideas and insights for the MAIB administration. The findings of this study highlight the importance of involving former students/trainees in MAIB's courses and programs curricula. It is also a valuable technique for providing informative data for MAIB institution which can be utilized in improving various aspects of the current and future programs.

A limitations of follow-up studies is the inability to generalized beyond the study population. All recommendations from this on-going research specifically addressed the CIHEAM-Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari Education/Training and Research programs. Finally, continued follow-up studies should be conducted to track curricula changes and determine if those changes are reflected in former trainees' response.

References

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- Graham L.D. 2001.** Are We Preparing the Society Ready Graduate?. 28th Annual national Agricultural Education Research Conference, December 12-2011-P. 269.
- Randavay S., 1990.** A follow-up study of the Doctoral program in Agricultural and Extension Education. *Journal of Agricultural. Volume 31, number 2, pp. 40-44 DOI: 10.50.31/jae. 1990.02040*