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The Virtual University for Agroecology project



www.ea.inra.fr/uvae



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Context and stakes

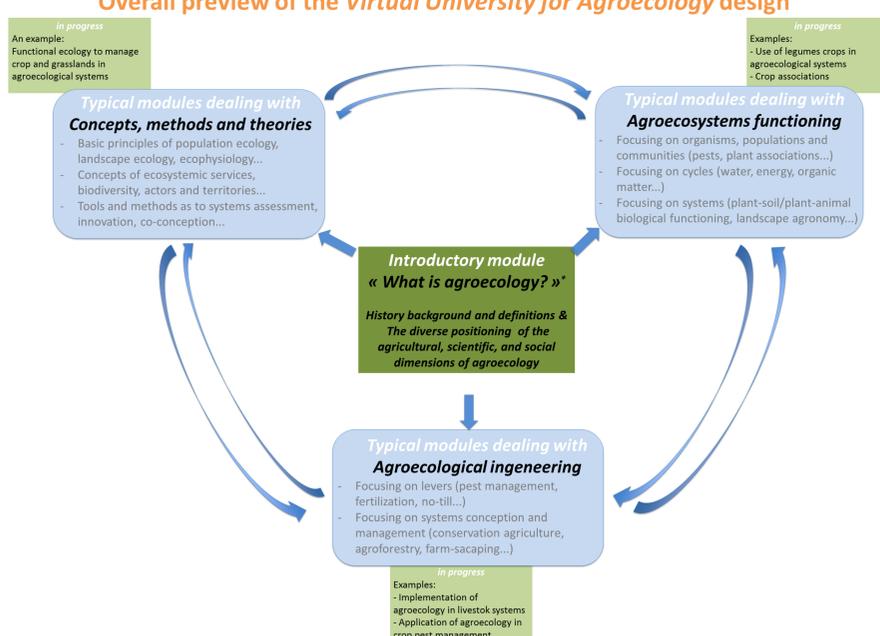
New dynamics of agriculture is needed to face multidimensional challenges such as food security, climate change or environment protection. This implies changes in the way to analyze functioning of agroecosystems and to design agricultural systems. Improving the use of biological interactions is necessary. Agroecology is hence a priority of research and higher education institutions, as well as of national and international policies. In this context a consortium of French public research and higher education institutions in agronomy considered continuing training directed towards their own staff as an essential lever alongside specific recruitments. They decided to build up the project of Virtual University for Agroecology.

Objectives and plan

UVAE is a distance learning, french speaking, facility which aims to allow staff in agricultural research and higher education institutions to acquire or perfect their knowledge and skills in agroecology. It can also be used for students training at master level. Its design combines an introductory module, delivered in 2014, and three-types modules, in progress. The introductory module enables learners to familiarise themselves with the diverse positioning of the agricultural, scientific and social dimensions of agroecology. It constitutes the entry point to modules that aim the appropriation of concepts, methods and theories, alongside modules allowing to acquire knowledge on agroecosystems functioning and agroecological engineering. The overall plan is not designed for a single learning path but rather to promote dialogue and feedback between engineering and concepts and to allow for diverse potential learning paths.



Overall preview of the Virtual University for Agroecology design



* « Qu'est-ce que l'agroécologie? » AgroParisTech, INRA, IRD, AgroCampusOuest, INPT-ENSAT, in collaboration with UVED (www.ea.inra.fr/uvae)

Project dynamics

The UVAE, which will also feed the Agreenium university on line, is now developing under a dual dynamics regarding production of modules and training based on them. This aims to make the UVAE a space for collective action beyond individual training achievements, towards restrengthening agroecology in agronomic research.