



PhD Scholarship Announcement (2 vacancies)

Makerere University – MAK (Uganda) & Kyambogo University (Uganda), in collaboration with Wageningen University (The Netherlands), Tree Adoption Uganda (TAU) and The Africa 2000 Network (A2N) invites applicants for 2 PhD scholarships under a four-year Project titled ‘Restoring Resilience & Stimulating Stewardship of the Manafwa Watershed (2019 – 2022)’

Information about the project

Watersheds worldwide provide crucial ecosystem services, such as the regulation of water and climate, and the provision of food and raw materials. However, watersheds are increasingly under threat of degradation and over-exploitation of their natural resources. This project focuses on the Manafwa watershed in Eastern Uganda, which forms part of the Mount Elgon National Park, and is impacted by increasingly frequent floods, landslides, shrinking forest reserves, soil degradation and droughts. The urgency to conserve and restore the watershed’s ecosystem services and establish resilient farming systems for sustainable local food production is huge. To tackle this challenge, mobilizing the local population is key: from farmers to policy-makers. This requires a bottom-up participatory approach, in which generating intrinsic motivation, commitment and collaboration to invest in the watershed are crucial. The PIP approach – Integrated Farm Planning approach – has proven to do exactly that in a similar setting in Burundi: it profoundly motivates farmers to transform their reality by conscious collective action, mainly by vision and capacity building to plan for a more sustainable future. The goal of “The Manafwa Project” is to restore resilience and stimulate stewardship of the Manafwa watershed; the PIP approach is its core cross-cutting strategy. During 4 years the project consortium (WENR, Wageningen University and 4 Ugandan partners) will work on resilient farming systems, environmental education, landscape restoration and enhanced collaboration to protect the National Park. Research at PhD level will strengthen the lessons learned, while state-of-the-art innovations will be integrated into the project to foster the required change towards resilience and stewardship of the Manafwa watershed.

The 2 PhD positions

1. The PhD study at Makerere University will focus on finding and analysing the drivers of restoration, reforestation, conservation and increasing biodiversity within the park boundaries and adjacent areas, through in-depth analysis of the human-nature interaction, the friction between the National Park and the needs of the people, and how a mind-set change can contribute to the restoration and conservation of the park, prevention of landslides and flash floods, and positive spill-over effects in the neighbouring areas.
2. The PhD study at Kyambogo University will use participatory research to assess the ecological impact in the already cultivated areas outside the park boundaries, linked to the mind-set change

created by the PIP. Focus will be on quantifying the gains made by the PIP approach, socio-economic impact created by the PIP approach, and how the approach can be scaled-up horizontally and vertically in the project area, by including different stakeholders in the process.

Awards are competitive, and strong proposals are a key to funding. Female candidates are encouraged to apply. Further information about the described topics can be obtained from either Prof Frank Muggaga (topic 1 - mfrank@caes.mak.ac.ug / fmugagga@gmail.com) or from Dr. Fiona Mutekanga (topic 2 - fmutekanga@kyu.ac.ug / fiona.mutekanga@gmail.com).

How to apply: Interested applicants should submit applications by e-mail to either Prof Frank Muggaga (topic 1) or Dr. Fiona Mutekanga (topic 2), including:

- 1) a brief statement of interest or cover letter describing your motivation to apply (max 1 page);
- 2) a description of your research ideas for the specific topic of no more than 2 pages, outlining the thematic focus, possible research questions, and the methodological and theoretical focus;
- 3) a curriculum vitae (CV) of max 4 pages;
- 5) publications if any; and as it is often difficult to judge the applicant's contribution to publications with multiple authors, a short description of the applicant's contribution must be included.
- 6) contact information (with phone numbers and e-mail addresses) for two persons who may act as references.

Application deadline: Applications must be received by 15th May 2019 by email to the above indicated email addresses.

Eligibility requirements, qualifications and experience: The applicant should have completed a Masters degree in Natural Sciences (Biology/Botany, Wildlife Ecology); Social Sciences (Geography, Political science, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, Development Studies); Environmental Sciences or any other closely related subject. Applicants should have an excellent academic and educational record (Minimum: Upper Second for undergraduate and an average of B for the Masters) and strong analytical and writing skills (any peer-reviewed publications or previous research experience will be an advantage). Successful applicants will be expected to contribute to the project's publication targets and will be encouraged to publish in international, peer-reviewed ISI journals. The candidates should be able to work independently but also as part of the project team.

Age limits: Not more than **40 years** (female applicants) and **35** (male applicants) at the time of application.

PhD study conditions: Successful applicants will register with either Makerere University or Kyambogo University for a sandwich PhD with WUR, and thus will spend six (6) months at Wageningen University at the start of the PhD study to write the research proposal, and six (6) months at the end of the PhD to finalize the thesis.

The selection process: Applications will be evaluated by an independent evaluation committee. Applicants will be notified of the composition of the committee and will receive the part of the evaluation that concerns her/him. The Project Team will make the final selection of successful candidates based on recommendations from the evaluation committee. The successful candidates will enroll as PhD students at Wageningen University, with a promoter and co-promoter from the Soil Physics & Land Management group.

Expected start date: The planned starting date is **1st July 2019**. The PhD contract will include a Go/No-Go decision moment after one year, which is taken based on the performance of the PhD student and compliance with the research work.

The Scholarship: The successful candidates will have a PhD scholarship for a period of four years, covering tuition fees at the respective Universities, research and travel expenses. The monthly stipend is Euro 1290 during the months working in Wageningen, and an equivalent of Euro 500 for the months working in Uganda. Accommodation at the research site in the Manafwa watershed is available.

For specific inquiries about the project content and the PhD scholarships, please contact Prof Frank Mugagga Email: mfrank@caes.mak.ac.ug / fmugagga@gmail.com; or Dr. Fiona Mutekanga Email: fmutekanga@kyu.ac.ug / fiona.mutekanga@gmail.com