Duty station: Dresden, Germany

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Doctoral Research Project
"Biodiversity Economy in Selected Landscapes in Namibia"
(Personnel Service Agreement - PSA)

Organisational Unit: United Nations University Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES)

Reference Number: 2021/UNU/FLORES/PSA/DR/BE/83

Closing Date: 12 September 2021

About United Nations University
The United Nations University (UNU) is an international community of scholars engaged in policy-oriented research, capacity development and dissemination of knowledge in furthering the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The mission of UNU is to contribute, through research and capacity building, to efforts to resolve the pressing global problems that are the concern of the United Nations and its Member States.

For the past four decades, UNU has been a go-to think tank for impartial research on human survival, conflict prevention, sustainable development, and welfare. With more than 400 researchers in 12 countries, UNU's work spans the 17 Sustainable Development Goals' full breadth, generating policy-relevant knowledge to effect positive global change. UNU maintains more than 200 collaborations with UN agencies and leading universities and research institutions across the globe. For more information, please visit http://unu.edu.

United Nations University for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (UNU-FLORES)
UNU-FLORES develops strategies to resolve pressing issues in the sustainable use and integrated management of environmental resources such as water, soil, waste, energy, and other geo-resources that are of concern to the United Nations and its Member States – particularly in developing and emerging economies. Based in Dresden, Germany, the Institute engages in research, capacity development, postgraduate teaching, advanced training, and knowledge dissemination to advance the Resource Nexus. https://flores.unu.edu/

Doctoral Research
Biodiversity loss is one of the most acute crises threatening human wellbeing. Many vital economic activities depend on biodiversity and the associated ecosystem services. For example, biodiversity forms a crucial basis of Namibia's economy and livelihoods, where 70% of the population depend on biodiversity and natural resources. Thus, it is essential to enhance the sustainable use of biodiversity. In close
collaboration, UNU-FLORES, Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) will support research and capacity building in the field of Biodiversity Economics in Namibia. The project’s primary aim is to conduct and support the research needed to underpin the approach and mainstreaming of Namibia’s biodiversity economy and support selected communities to maximise livelihood opportunities from biodiversity sustainably. Through this collaboration, UNU-FLORES aims at integrating biodiversity assessments (impact and dependencies) into business strategies. In selected case studies in Namibia, the natural capital protocol (NCP), an internationally recognised framework, will be applied.

The successful candidate will have the opportunity to conduct research work on the topic of Biodiversity Economy under the guidance of supervisors at both UNU-FLORES and Technische Universitaet Dresden. Students will also collaborate with fellow doctoral students and senior scientists in research, event organisation and participation, publications where possible, and contribute to the Implementation Plan of UNU-FLORES and the mission of the United Nations. As a facet of the project, the students must consider the impact of their research on communities, and the potential for their research to be transferred upon completion of the doctorate.

Responsibilities

- Conduct research work related to the “Biodiversity Economy in Selected Landscapes in Namibia” project;
- Research, write and publish papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals;
- Develop a robust methodology to identify and implement the natural capital protocol in selected companies to identify and develop corporate best practices and recommendations;
- Conduct field research in Namibia, including collecting and analysing data;
- Collaborate and maintain relationships with essential stakeholders to integrate biodiversity economics into Namibia’s community, commercial, and national biodiversity conservation programmes;
- Collaborate and coordinate the implementation with the projects partners;
- Support with the assessment of ecosystem services in Namibia;
- Develop strategies for the possible dissemination and transfer of knowledge to other regions that face similar challenges;
- Organise activities such as workshops related to the research project;
- Work closely alongside the supervising team, with the eventual goal of co-supervising master theses in the research field;
- Report research progress to the supervising team and in the project management system of UNU;
- Responsible for maintaining the database of the research project;
- Contribute to the Institute’s educational programme and events, such as academic seminar, Dresden Nexus Conference, teaching activities, etc.;
- Perform other duties as assigned by the supervisor and the director.

Required Qualifications and Experience

- An excellent academic profile including a Master’s degree (minimum grade 2.5 or equivalent) in the field of Economics, Natural Sciences or a related discipline;
- Candidates without a business degree must have proven experience or knowledge in business acquired through higher education, work, advanced training, internships, volunteering or scientific thesis, or equivalent;
- Proven skills in statistical analysis;
- Working knowledge and experience in biodiversity, sustainability assessment, ecosystem services, or resource economics acquired through higher education, work, advanced training, internships, volunteering or scientific thesis, or equivalent would be highly advantageous;
- Understanding of the resource nexus and the natural capital protocol would be desirable;
- Working experience and/or education in Namibia or Western Africa is mandatory;
• Demonstrated proficiency in English, with excellent writing and presentation skills;
• Proficiency in both oral and written communication in a major language of Namibia, including for instance Afrikaans, Oshiwambo dialects, Khoekhoe, Kwangali, Herero, or German, is mandatory;
• Previous experience of fieldwork and/or project management is highly desirable;
• Strong planning, organisation and time management skills, with the ability to communicate clearly and efficiently;
• Must be flexible with the ability to establish priorities and work within prescribed timeframes;
• An excellent team player with strong interpersonal skills, as demonstrated by the ability to work in a multicultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity.

Duration and remuneration

UNU-FLORES will provide a monthly salary of EUR 2,231.25 for the duration of the Doctoral Research (up to a maximum of 3 years). Funding is provided by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). This salary is expected to cover relocation, living and education expenses. While the Doctoral programme is tuition-free, semester fees of approximately EUR 250-300 will need to be paid directly to TU Dresden for enrollment. For additional information on the programme and the admission procedure, please visit our website.

The duration of the initial contract is for one (1) year. This is Personnel Service Agreement (PSA) contract is offered as a part-time (75%) position with UNU-FLORES, with the possibility for renewal subject to requirements and satisfactory work performance. The combined duration on a PSA contract with UNU may not exceed three (3) years. The mandatory age of retirement for PSA is 65 years.

Please note that due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19 and the travel restrictions imposed by national authorities, the selected candidate may be required to start the appointment remotely and until further notice.

Starting Date: as soon as possible

Application Procedure

Interested applicants should submit their applications online via Impactpool and must upload the following:

1. A completed and signed Doctoral Programme application form
2. A letter of motivation setting out how your qualifications and experience match the requirements of the position;
3. A full CV with a list of publications
4. A short research proposal (max two pages) describing how you would approach the research topic;
5. A completed and signed UNU Personal History (P.11) form. Please avoid using similar forms provided by other United Nations organisations;
6. Copies of ALL university transcripts, including the German equivalent grade;
7. Copy of TOEFL/IELTS or evidence proving that English was the language of instruction for at least one of the previously completed degree programmes, in the form of a letter issued by the relevant university authority;
8. Abstract of MSc thesis (or equivalent);
9. Two reference letters;

Candidates who do not provide all required documents will not be considered. Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Assessment

Evaluation of qualified candidates may include a desk review and/or a competency-based interview, background checks and references.
Special notice

PSA holders do not hold international civil servant status, nor are they considered a "staff member" as defined in the UN Staff Rules and Regulations.

PSA holders may be assigned to any of the activities or offices of the United Nations University.

UNU is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, nationality, religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities to apply and become part of the organisation. Applications from developing countries, and from women are strongly encouraged. Eligible internal applicants are encouraged to apply.

UNU has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNU, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination.

Information about UNU rosters

UNU reserves the right to select one or more candidates from this vacancy announcement. We may also retain applications and consider candidates applying to this post for other similar positions with UNU at the same grade level and with similar job description, experience, and educational requirements.

Scam warning

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