UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
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African Climate & Development Initiative
acdi.uct.ac.za

ASCEND
African Synthesis Centre for Climate Change, Environment and Development
ascendclimate.org

Call for Applications: ASCEND Postdoctoral Research Fellowship

Green Resilience Africa - Innovative Approaches for Forest Landscape Restoration and Climate Adaptation in Africa

Application Deadline: Sunday 19 January 2025 or until the position is filled

Call for applications
The African Synthesis Centre For Climate Change, Environment and Development (ASCEND) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) is seeking a Postdoctoral Research Fellow (PDRF) with expertise in climate change adaptation and Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR)..

This PDRF is a unique and excellent opportunity to expand your network with researchers and decision-makers, as well as deliver cutting-edge research to inform policy and practice. ASCEND provides specialised infrastructure for hosting collaborative synthesis teams that accelerate solutions-oriented research for climate action across Africa and globally.

Synthesis team project description
The PDRF will join the Green Resilience Africa synthesis research team hosted by ASCEND. The team has up to 15 members from research, policy, and practitioner backgrounds who will travel to ASCEND for up to four in-person working meetings over 2 years. The PDRF will be based full-time at ASCEND as a core member of the team, working closely with the team's co-leads to deliver actionable research.

The overall aim of the project is to provide improved synthesis knowledge on Forest Land Restoration (FLR) innovations to enhance climate change management policies and practices. Candidates will be encouraged to develop their own research ideas within the goals of the project.

Project research will address the following key objectives:

(1) Synthesize existing knowledge and data on FLR to enhance climate change management policies and practices
(2) Assessing the impacts of different restoration practices on biodiversity, ecosystems and local livelihoods to highlight the benefits and limitations of each approach.
(3) Modelling carbon sequestration potentials and benefits for climate resilience and the contribution of FLR to addressing climate change.
(4) Strengthening Gender Transformative Change by focusing on inclusive, gender-responsive practices
(5) Draw up specific guidelines and recommendations to guide political decision-makers, NGOs and local stakeholders in implementing restoration strategies.

Roles and responsibilities of the Postdoctoral Research Fellow
The PDRF will be highly motivated to work as part of a transdisciplinary research team, grow their research expertise, engage with climate change researchers and decision-makers, and generate peer-reviewed publications.

The PDRF will be based at ASCEND at UCT and advised remotely by **Prof Dr. Kouami Kokou at University of Lomé in Togo and Dr. Katharina Löhr at Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF) in Germany.** ASCEND will also appoint a mentor to the PDRF based locally to provide professional development support in consultation with the academic mentors at University of Lome

and ZALF in Germany. ASCEND will support, when possible, travel for short visits to work with the academic mentors at their host institutions.

The PDRF will also be part of a larger cohort of PDRFs at ASCEND working on climate change and development-related topics with other synthesis teams.. The PDRF will participate in career development activities organised by ASCEND for the wider cohort of ASCEND PDRFs to develop transdisciplinary skills, share knowledge on what works for actionable research, and foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

Other responsibilities of the PDRF will be discussed and assigned collectively with the Green Resilience synthesis team. It is expected that these responsibilities will result in specific outputs, such as policy briefs and toolkits.

Resources provided by ASCEND

The PDRF will be given the necessary resources for their work, including:

- Desk and office space
- IT and communication infrastructure
- Career and professional development activities as part of larger ASCEND PDRF cohort.

Value and tenure:

- The value of the fellowship is ZAR 450,000 – 480,000 per year for up to 2 years, with potential extension for a 3rd year based on performance and funding availability.
- Application for tax exemption of the fellowship stipend will be made by the University.

Academic / experience criteria:

Required

- A PhD, awarded within the previous five years, in a related discipline (e.g., forestry, climate change, ecology or socio-ecology, agricultural economics, economics).
- Strong understanding of climate change, restoration policies and international initiatives such as the Bonn Challenge, AFR100 and other international and regional policy frameworks.
- Experience in synthesizing and managing large datasets.
- Experience in econometric analysis
- Excellent technical ability to code in *R*, *Python*, and/or other statistical programming language, ideally including analysis of socio-economic data, geophysical (ecological) as well as and/or other geospatial datasets.
- Experience in working in a virtual and interdisciplinary research team setting.
- Demonstrated ability to produce peer-reviewed research articles in international journals.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English and French.

Desired

- Familiarity with the specific socio-economic and environmental contexts of the target countries (Ethiopia, Togo, Madagascar).
- Knowledge and experience in working with gender-sensitive approaches.
- High interest and experience in creative science communication.
- Interest and experience in transdisciplinary collaborations; particularly engagement with decision-makers.
- Experience in giving international oral presentations and interest in public communication of science to an international audience.
- Excellent data visualisation skills.

Conditions of award:

- Applicants may not previously have held a full-time permanent academic post.
- The successful applicant will be required to register as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Cape Town and will be expected to join the synthesis team at a mutually agreed date that is ideally **no later than early March 2025.**

- The successful applicant will be required to be a full participant in the Green Resilience synthesis research team.
- The successful applicant will be required to comply with the university's approved policies, procedures and practices for the postdoctoral sector.

Application requirements:

Applicants should submit as a single PDF: (i) an application letter no longer than 2 pages that includes a description of research interests, research expertise, and explanation on how they can work as part of the transdisciplinary synthesis team in line with the project objectives described above; (ii) a CV including a publication list; (iii) copies of academic transcripts and/or certificates; (iv) an example of written work; (v) email addresses of two references who have been directly involved in their PhD and/or previous postdoctoral research.

Applicants must submit the PDF application document to ascend.info@uct.ac.za . **Please type "*Baobab PDR Application: Green Resilience Africa*" as the email subject line.**

Closing date
Midnight (GMT+2) on Sunday 19 January 2025 or until the position is filled.

Selection process
Eligible and complete applications will be considered by ASCEND and we will communicate with short-listed applicants. ASCEND in consultation with the synthesis team academic mentors will conduct interviews of the short-listed applicants.

If you have not heard from ASCEND within two months of the deadline, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.

Contact details for enquiries about the PDRF and ASCEND: farai.kapfudzaruwa@uct.ac.za

Additional information on ASCEND can be found at: https://ascendclimate.org/

The University of Cape Town reserves the right to
- *Disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications;*
- *Change the conditions of the award or to make no awards at all*