

ACDI Postdoctoral Research Fellowship

Forecasting Climate Change Risks to Wild Food Plants

Application Deadline: 31 August 2020 or until position is filled

Call for Applications

A research team from the African Climate and Development Initiative (ACDI) at the University of Cape Town is seeking a Postdoctoral Research Fellow (PDRF) to join a project forecasting climate change risks to wild food plants and the nutritional consequences for the communities that depend on them.

The PDRF will be motivated to work as part of a diverse research team, engage with decision-makers in food systems and conservation, and generate peer-reviewed publications. Additionally, there is the opportunity to work with the ACDI-based team on climate change impacts and adaptation in Africa for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 6th Assessment Report, due in 2021.

Project research will address the following objectives:

- (1) Synthesize evidence from diverse case studies (Zambia, Brazil, Turkey, among others) on the importance of wild edible plants for nutrition.**
- (2) Forecast where and when wild-harvested food plant species are at risk from climate change.**
- (3) Assess how wild edible plants might help people adapt to climate change risks to food systems.**

The overall aim of the broader research project is to link these key objectives in order to provide improved forecasting about climate change risks and adaptation options for biodiversity and food systems that goes beyond staple crops to the exceptional diversity of wild edible plants.

The PDRF is an excellent opportunity for those who want to push forward the frontiers in biodiversity and food systems analyses, considering climate change. Research will be based on existing case study and biodiversity data on plants, including work flows for high spatial resolution species geographic range maps.

The PDRF will be advised by **Dr Christopher Trisos** at ACDI and will join an international team including researchers at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and at Biodiversity International. The PDRF will be based at ACDI. ACDI promotes a diverse and inclusive work community and excellent candidates are encouraged to apply.

The PDRF will be given the necessary resources for their work: office space, IT and communication infrastructure and may participate in the Emerging Researcher Programme (ERP) and other supportive training at University of Cape Town for early career researchers. Remote working is allowed.

Value and tenure:

- The value of the fellowship is ZAR 330,000 per year, with extension for a second year dependent on performance and funding.
- 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. biodiversity, food systems, agriculture impact modelling, climate change, conservation biology, ecology).
- Demonstrated ability to produce peer-reviewed research articles in international journals.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English.
- Desire and ability to work in and coordinate an international and interdisciplinary team.
- Experience of handling large datasets.
- Excellent technical ability to code in *R* and/or *Python*, including analysis of biodiversity, agriculture, climate or other geospatial datasets.

Desired

- Species distribution modelling.
- Experience at the intersection of biodiversity, food systems and climate change.
- Interest and experience in engagement with decision-makers.
- Experience in giving oral presentations and interest in public communication of science.
- Experience of controlling online collaborations of computer code using *GitHub* and *RStudio*.
- Experience working with climate data analysis software such as *CDO* for spatial and temporal analysis of climate data.

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 Fellow at the University of Cape Town and will be expected to commence the required research at a mutually agreed date that is ideally **no later than end of September 2020**. Given the Covid-19 context, remote working is allowed.
- 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: (i) an application letter no longer than 2 pages that includes a description of research interests, research expertise, and suggestion for how they can work towards one or more of the broad project objectives; (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 referees who have been directly involved in their PhD and/or previous postdoctoral research.

Selection process:

- Only eligible and complete applications will be considered for selection.
- Interviews will take place during early September 2020 and the successful candidate is expected to start as soon as possible thereafter.

Closing date: Applications received before **31 August 2020** are guaranteed to be considered. Applications received thereafter may be considered if the position has not been filled.

Contact details for submission of applications: adiela.floris@uct.ac.za

Contact details for enquiries about the fellowship topic and ACDI: christopher.trisos@uct.ac.za

Additional information on ACDI, UCT and the Climate Risk Lab can be found at: www.acdi.uct.ac.za / www.uct.ac.za / www.climaterisklab.com

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*