

Vacancy with BRECCIA: Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) on Research Policy Analysis for Kenya, Malawi and Ghana (1 Position)

Introduction

The **Building Research Capacity** for sustainable water and food security insub-Saharan Africa (**BRECCIA**) project; (see www.gcrf-breccia.com) is led by the **University of Southampton** in the United Kingdom and partners with five Universities located in three countries (Malawi, Kenya and Ghana), and partnerships with 8 international organizations, working on research and capacity development in the coupled areas of water and food security. The 4 year project is part of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) RCUK Collective Fund “**Growing Research Capability to Meet the Challenges Faced by Developing Countries**” programme which is ‘one of the most ambitious international research programmes created; with £225 million being invested across 37 interdisciplinary projects’ to address a range of global development challenges.

The overall objective of the proposed work is to strengthen research capacity and capabilities in institutions in three Sub-Saharan African countries to carry out impactful research that leads to positive **policy/practice change for sustainable water and food security**, and to ensure that this capacity is sustained and propagated throughout and after the project.

The specific objectives of the proposed project are:

1. To enable partner institutions to understand the barriers and enablers to high quality scientific research, and to co-develop a pipeline of capacity-building activities to strengthen research technical and management skills, professional skills, and professional development.
2. To develop research networks across African institutions around water and food security, and to leverage these to co-design pertinent research questions on key global challenges.
3. To engage in collaborative research programmes that advance knowledge of food and water security in partner countries, identifies solutions to water and food security challenges, and produce a new cohort of trained researchers in this field that are capable of leading and shaping the direction of future research.
4. To ensure impactful research that influences policy/practice through engagement with regional climate, hydrological and agricultural information providers, and with stakeholders and policy makers at national and local levels to empower local communities.

5. To facilitate sustained research capacity within partner institutions after the end of the project and to provide opportunities to self-propagate capacity to a broader set of institutions and researchers across Africa.

This will be delivered through high-level research programmes that integrate across disciplines and are underpinned by local and regional priorities. The Universities of Ghana and Malawi, as well as the universities of Nairobi, Kenyatta and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in Kenya are key African academic partners. Regional centres include AGRHYMET in West Africa and SADC/Waternet in southern Africa. We are also partnering with impact champions: LEAD and IIED; as well as training champions: SARIMA and Vitae.

Job Summary:

The project BRECCIA seeks one (1) qualified candidate to serve as a Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) for a renewable two (2) year, fixed term appointment for its Policy Analysis Working Group (WG). The PDRA will focus on the three countries of interest. The position reports to the Leader of the Policy Analysis WG, Project Manager and the Principal Investigator of BRECCIA. The post holder will carry out research that enables BRECCIA to better understand policy making agendas, processes and mechanisms concerning food and water security among the partner countries. Using the information obtained and research findings to facilitate the impact of BRECCIA's wider research; disseminating research and advising project partners, where appropriate, on the policy influencing aspects of capacity building. Working with policy makers, networks, and other stakeholders.

Essential Duties:

Essential duties include but are not limited to:

- ☐ Conducting research and analysis related broadly to water, agriculture and food policies. Some specific areas of potential research include policies relating to sustainable water use, sustainable agriculture, agricultural commodity value chains, social capital, technology adoption, governance, and research and development
- ☐ Strengthening capacity through research collaboration and training events
- ☐ Developing and overseeing individual work plans and managing or coordinating research projects
- ☐ Developing or assisting in the development of in-house research funding proposals and preparing project reports.
- ☐ Maintaining a high level of research output for publication both within BRECCIA, and for peer-reviewed journals within the wider scientific community, on topics of close relevance to the work of the WG.
- ☐ Creating linkages to external collaborators and other working research groups, when possible to further BRECCIA's overall vision
- ☐ Maintaining active policy communication with national counterparts in the respective country through individual consultations, regular policy seminars, policy briefs, and other

fora; establishing active links with various national research and government institutions; and liaising with potential partners, when necessary.

- ☐ Working with the projects stakeholder engagement group to plan stakeholder workshops at community, national and regional levels
- ☐ Reporting or assist in reporting on program/project activities including internal and external reviews
- ☐ May supervise or assist in supervising or coordinating the work of Research support staff.

Required Qualifications:

- ☐ PhD in Agricultural Economics, Applied Economics, Public Policy, Social Science or closely related field.
- ☐ Demonstrated research experience in policy analysis and policy recommendations. ☐ Demonstrated ability to perform critical analyses of own as well as existing research ☐ Experience in developing, managing and/or reporting on project activities.
- ☐ Willingness to travel extensively as required
- ☐ Excellent written and spoken English communication skills with demonstrated excellence in written and oral presentations.
- ☐ Demonstrated computer literacy (PC and Microsoft Applications), Quantitative and Qualitative data analyses softwares

Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) - special requirements

- ☐ Demonstrated capacity to produce good publications record in high impact factor peer-reviewed journals
- ☐ Demonstrated experience in effective interactions in a multicultural setting with other researchers and with policymakers, donors, and civil society, facilitating impact of research & capacity strengthening
- ☐ Demonstrated interaction and participation in professional networks in economics or related field.
- ☐ Experience in supervising and/or coordinating research support staff desirable.
- ☐ Experience of working in African countries, preferably Kenya, Ghana, Malawi
- ☐ Experience of working in developing water, agricultural policy strategies that address the drylands ecosystems challenges and opportunities in these countries

BRECCIA project offers a multicultural, collegial research environment and believes that diversity of its staff contributes to excellence. We encourage **women professionals to apply**

In your application, kindly address the questions below:

1. What strengths do you think research into policy making brings to BRECCIA?
2. Please give an example of when you had to persuade or convince someone (or a group of people) of a different course of action, and what you found most challenging about that?

3. What do you consider to be most important when working with a diverse team of people; please indicate, with examples, your approach and what you find most inspiring and most demanding?

To apply, please send your applications with a cover letter of **not more than 2 pages** clearly stating why you feel you are the right candidate for this position, **providing examples** that specifically address the Essential Duties, Required Qualifications and the PDRA special requirements above. The applications should be **received before or on 17th August , 2018**

Send this letter together with a Curriculum Vitae of not more than 5-page, that includes:

- ☐ Personal details (including full name and contact details)
- ☐ Education and Professional Development/training courses (name of course, institution, start and end dates, results)
- ☐ Memberships held
- ☐ Publication record
- ☐ Work experience (with a brief description of relevant duties)
- ☐ 3 traceable referees

Send your application to: shisanya.christopher@ku.ac.ke