



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service



UNI KASSEL
VERSITÄT

Pro-RUWA offers PhD positions for francophone sub-Saharan African candidates

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

3 PhD Scholarships within the Pro-RUWA Network

www.uni-kassel.de/forschung/Pro-RUWA/home

Application Deadline: 25 May 2022 (24:00, GMT+1)

Scholarship Start: 01 September 2022

The new West African-German network *Promoting Academic Capacities for Sustainable Agricultural Resources Use in West Africa – Pro-RUWA* is funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (AA) and monitored by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the world's largest scholarship donor. Pro-RUWA aims to train a new generation of excellent regionally and internationally educated young scientists, entrepreneurs, and administrators. Future decision makers in francophone West Africa shall be capacitated to jointly overcome bottlenecks in resource overuse, climate change, and food insecurity at the national and regional level. To this end Pro-RUWA will foster university education, international relations, regional development, and operational links between the academic, public and private sector. Pro-RUWA builds on existing structures of three universities in West Africa (University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin), University of Abdou Moumouni in cooperation with University of Agadez (Niger), University of Dédougou (Burkina Faso)) and University of Kassel, Germany. In the framework of its *Graduate School of Resources Management, Climate Change and Food Security*, the Pro-RUWA network hereby invites students from francophone West African countries with proficiency in English to apply for a PhD scholarship at one of the Pro-RUWA partner universities in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger.

Background

The Sudano-Sahelian countries Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger are heavily affected by indiscriminate resource exploitation and the effects of climate change. The latter is apparent in increasing temperatures, more erratic rainfall, recurrent droughts intermixed with torrential rainfall and floods, and negative effects on crop growth and pasture availability as well as on rural and urban economies.

Burkina Faso and Niger additionally exhibit high population growth, and a land-locked situation that hampers trade. To address these challenges, the four universities together with associated partners have pooled expertise in a joint MSc and PhD supervision network for Resources Management and Food Security, which offers a modular, interdisciplinary training program in Agricultural Sciences. While some training for professional English will be offered, the programme will be taught partly in French and in English, therefore documented proficiency in English is mandatory for applications.

Thematic clusters

Each applicant is requested to select one or more (maximum three) PhD research disciplines and link her/his application to this/these discipline(s). The topics are as follows: (1) Analyses and management of plant and animal biodiversity (Benin and Niger); (2) Livestock production and feeding (Benin and Burkina Faso); (3) Soil fertility improvement and carbon sequestration (all partner countries); (4) Arthropods and nematodes in agricultural systems (Benin); (5) Water and contamination of (agro-)ecosystems (Benin and Niger).

What We Offer - Scholarships

The *Pro-RUWA* network offers a graduate programme in which PhD students are co-supervised by professors from the partner universities. Each PhD student will have two supervisors from different partner universities; supervisors are chosen according to the PhD student's topic and thematic focus. PhD students will be based at their respective host university and enrolled in the *Pro-RUWA* PhD training programme; they may also spend at least six months at the partner university of the second supervisor. Moreover, they will be involved in the lively academic exchange within the *Pro-RUWA* network and the annual PhD conferences of the *Pro-RUWA* Graduate Academy.

The PhD scholarship will be awarded for 12 months with the possibility of extension of 12 + 12 months. The scholarships will cover a country-specific monthly living allowance (500 €), an annual research lump sum (920 €), enrolment and study fees (dependent on the host university), the participation in *Pro-RUWA* Graduate Academy activities, as well as the opportunity to apply for top-up funding to complete empirical research. Final admission to the *Pro-RUWA* Graduate Academy is conditioned on the admission to the PhD programme of the chosen partner university and a positive progress evaluation by the PhD Committee in the first scholarship year.

Application Procedure

Applicants hold a MSc degree in Agricultural Sciences or a closely related field with an above average final grade. **Please note:** The date of obtaining your MSc degree must not be more than six years ago. The application process involves two elements. Your application is only complete if all of these elements are submitted:

1.) Application package

Please provide the following documents in a single PDF file in English language. Only complete applications with all parts arranged in the order listed below, will be accepted:

1. A cover letter (including a motivation statement, max. 500 words);

2. A detailed curriculum vitae (including the academic background, the list of publications [if applicable], professional experience, language skills, voluntary work, max. three pages);
3. A preliminary PhD project proposal (written by the applicant!) for the (max. 3) chosen topic(s): about 2000 words, including topic, research question, short overview of the relevant literature, theoretical approach, research design and methodology, and a time schedule;
4. A short statement of the applicability of research results and its translation into sustainable products or services (max. 500 words)
5. A summary of the Master's thesis (about 500-1000 words);
6. The applicant must be proficient in the English language and supply a scanned copy of an English proficiency certificate (TOEFL or IELTS or 1+ year in an environment where the medium of instruction was/is English), B2 is considered the minimum level;
7. Above average study/professional proofs - scanned copies of the following documents in the original language with translations attached, if the language of these documents is not French, English or German:
 - a. the certificate and transcript of records of your recognised 2 years Master's (DEA) degree, listing all subjects and grades (if you have not yet completed your Master's / DEA degree, please provide only the transcript and substitute the certificate with a letter from the programme coordinator testifying the date and likelihood of the successful completion of the course);
 - b. the certificate and transcript of records of your recognised Bachelor's degree, listing all subjects and grades;
 - c. certificates for the completion of additional studies, listing all subjects and grades, if applicable;
 - d. scanned copies of certificates of previous professional/vocational experience, if applicable.
8. Two Letters of recommendation from former supervisors or external mentors
9. Signed statement if you are already involved in a PhD program and eventually receive a stipend already: yes or no.

These items of your application package must be submitted in the order listed above, with your cover letter as the first item, followed by your CV etc. Kindly remember that all items of the application must be assembled in one pdf document (use e.g. a pdf creator or your word processing programme), and should not exceed 50 MB. Submissions consisting of multiple files will be rejected.

Please name the file as follows: <Applicant's last name – year – application *Pro-RUWA*>, (e.g. Smith-2022-application *Pro-RUWA*).

2.) Completion of the online application form and upload of your application package

To complete the online application form and upload your application package, you need to first register with your name and email address on the following website (online survey tool of the University of Kassel, Germany): www.uni-kassel.de/go/pro-ruwa_2022

Once you have registered, a personalized link will be sent to you by email, with which you can then access the online application form. Completing the online application and uploading your application package is possible until the application deadline: 25 May 2022 (24:00 h, GMT+1).

For further information or questions, please contact the *Pro-RUWA* webpage (www.uni-kassel.de/forschung/Pro-RUWA/home) or contact us at graduateschool.pro-ruwa@uni-kassel.de