



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

CANDIDATE BRIEF

Research Fellow in Central African Carbon Dynamics, School of Geography, Faculty of Environment



Salary: Grade 7 (£38,205 – £45,585 p.a. depending on experience)

Reporting to: Professor Simon Lewis

Reference: ENVGE1247

Available on a fixed term basis for 26 months (To complete specific time limited work)

Location: University Campus

We are open to discussing flexible working arrangements

Overview of the Role

Do you want to expand our understanding of the forests of the Congo Basin? Do you have skills in engaging partners in tropical research and developing high-quality ecological datasets? Do you want to further your career in one of the UK's leading research-intensive Universities?

The Ecology and Global Change research cluster at Leeds conducts world-leading research in tropical ecology and change. We are looking to recruit a highly skilled Postdoctoral Research Fellow to lead plot data collection and compilation from the African Topical Rainforest Observatory Network (AfriTRON) and analyse AfriTRON, for the CongoFor1.5 project. The central aim of CongoFor1.5 is to understand the carbon balance and ecology of the forests of the Congo Basin over time. We are looking for a motivated researcher who can discover how the carbon dynamics of intact central African forests have changed from 1985 to 2025.

The CongoFor1.5 project is large project designed to census at least 225 long-term forest monitoring plots across Cameroon (45 plots), Democratic Republic of Congo (90 plots), Gabon (45 plots), and Republic of the Congo (45 plots), in close collaboration with our long-term partners in each of the four countries. You will join a vibrant team, led by Professor Simon Lewis, and will benefit from the support of the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) who fund the project.

You will be responsible for leading the collection and compilation of the plot dataset from central Africa, with support from the project PI and a wider team in Leeds, including a Research Fellow in African Forest Measurement, Project Assistant, a Research Data Officer, and our partners across the Congo Basin. You will conduct fieldwork in central Africa to assist training partners' field teams and to ensure that high-quality data are acquired, quality controlled, and archived in the database ForestPlots.net. The successful candidate is expected to utilise the AfriTRON dataset to publish high-impact papers, based on the project and their interests.

The successful candidate will be expected to contribute to CongoFor1.5 in other ways, including helping early career researchers in central Africa with analyses. You will be based in the UK, but will work with colleagues in Central Africa, and take part in potentially lengthy and remote field campaigns, particularly early in the project. You will have excellent existing field skills as well as skills in statistical analysis, a



willingness to collaborate widely with colleagues in Africa, as well as a track-record of publishing high-quality papers from your previous research.

Main duties and responsibilities

- Overseeing the implementation of the CongoFor1.5 fieldwork across the four countries, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and Republic of the Congo, including co-ordinating with the Research Fellow in African Forest Measurement, and delegating tasks to the Project Manager and Research Data Officer;
- Ensuring that partners in the four countries adopt consistent and high-quality field methods, though face-to-face and remote support;
- Supporting and potentially leading fieldwork in several central African sites, including coordinating with a more fieldwork-oriented project Research Fellow (Including the management of budgets for fieldwork);
- Supporting the use of consistent botanical identifications and vouchers;
- Leading data management and data quality control during upload to ForestPlots.net, including delegating tasks to the Research Data Officer;
- Participating in and contributing to project meetings, and producing regular project update reports for the funder;
- Preparing papers for publication in leading international journals and disseminating research results through other recognised forms of output by leading analyses and manuscripts using the AfriTRON dataset and contributing to manuscripts led by other members of the team;
- Contributing, as appropriate, to the successful implementation of CongoFor1.5, including working both independently and also as part of a larger team of researchers, engaging in knowledge-transfer activities where appropriate and feasible;
- Developing research objectives and proposals and contributing to setting the direction of the research project and team including preparing proposals for funding in collaboration with colleagues;
- Maintaining your own continuing professional development and acting as a mentor to less experienced colleagues as appropriate;



These duties provide a framework for the role and should not be regarded as a definitive list. Other reasonable duties may be required consistent with the grade of the post.

Qualifications and skills

Essential

- A PhD or near completion - i.e. the initial thesis needs to have been handed in at the point of application in ecology or plant biodiversity science or a closely allied discipline;
- Tropical forest fieldwork experience;
- Strong quantitative data analysis skills;
- Ability to work effectively and collaboratively in a team environment and maintain long-term, high quality professional relationships among a culturally diverse team;
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills, with the ability to clearly articulate and present information, ideas and analysis, modifying your approach to suit different audiences;
- Initiative to explore new ideas and contribute to the development of the research, both conceptually and in practice;
- A developing track record of peer-reviewed publications in international journals related tropical ecology or closely related fields.
- Good time management and planning skills, with the ability to meet tight deadlines, manage competing demands and work effectively under pressure without close support;
- A proven ability to work well both individually and in a team;
- A strong commitment to your own continuous professional development.

Desirable

- Excellent communication skills in French;
- Proven track record of leading the establishment and/or remeasurement of permanent plots in tropical forests with large and diverse teams;
- Specific, advanced knowledge of African forest ecology and plant biodiversity;
- Experience of working independently in several countries;
- Proven track record of line management or managing a small team;
- Knowledge of the rationale for the project, e.g. the challenges of understanding the carbon balance of tropical forests;



- Experience of using ForestPlots.net;

Additional information

Please note: If you are not a British or Irish citizen, from 1 January 2021 you will require permission to work in the UK. This will normally be in the form of a visa but, if you are an EEA/Swiss citizen and resident in the UK before 31 December 2020, this may be your passport or status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Please note that this post may be suitable for sponsorship under the Skilled Worker visa route but first-time applicants might need to qualify for salary concessions. For more information please visit: www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa

For research and academic posts, we will consider eligibility under the Global Talent visa. For more information please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/global-talent>

Find out more about the [Faculty of Environment](#)

Find out more about our [School of Geography](#)

Find out more about [Equality in the Faculty](#)

Our University

As an international research-intensive university, we welcome students and staff from all walks of life and from across the world. We foster an inclusive environment where all can flourish and prosper, and we are proud of our strong commitment to student education. Within the Faculty of Environment we are dedicated to diversifying our community and we welcome the unique contributions that individuals can bring, and particularly encourage applications from, but not limited to Black, Asian, people who belong to a minority ethnic community; people who identify as LGBT+; and disabled people. Candidates will always be selected based on merit and ability.

The Faculty of Environment has received a prestigious Athena SWAN silver award from [Advance HE](#), the national body that promotes equality in the higher education sector. This award represents the combined efforts of all schools in the Faculty and shows the positive actions we have taken to ensure that our policies, processes and ethos all promote an equal and inclusive environment for work and study.



Working at Leeds

We are a campus based community and regular interaction with campus is an expectation of all roles in line with academic and service needs and the requirements of the role. We are also open to discussing flexible working arrangements. To find out more about the benefits of working at the University and what it is like to live and work in the Leeds area visit our [Working at Leeds](#) information page.

Candidates with disabilities

Information for candidates with disabilities, impairments or health conditions, including requesting alternative formats, can be found on our [Accessibility](#) information page or by getting in touch with us at hr@leeds.ac.uk.

Criminal record information

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

A criminal record check is not required for this position. However, all applicants will be required to declare if they have any 'unspent' criminal offences, including those pending.

Any offer of appointment will be in accordance with our Criminal Records policy. You can find out more about required checks and declarations in our [Criminal Records](#) information page.

