Rhodes University Sustainable Land Management for Rural Resilience Project (RU-SLMRR)

Advertisement for Master of Science Study 2017-2019

Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University,

Grahamstown

Project overview and responsibilities

An MSc in the field of conservation agriculture is being offered by the Department of Environmental Science, Rhodes University, as part of a Sustainable Land Management for Rural Resilience Project **(RU-SLMRR)**. The RU-SLMRR Project forms part of a broader Global Environment Facility **(GEF)** funded sustainable land management **(SLM)** project. The GEF5-SLM project has four overarching objectives:

1) Improve natural resource management in degraded communal and commercial agricultural landscapes through climate-smart and ecosystem-smart land rehabilitation and management practices.
2) Improve technical capacity for management of land degradation risks, uncertainties and impacts. This objective involves training workshops held with government officials at all levels as well as local farmers and community based institutions and organisations.
3) Create an enabling environment for accessing the carbon market under new carbon tax laws in South Africa to create incentives for the rehabilitation of degraded subtropical thicket and sustainable land management.
4) Create effective governance and financing frameworks at national to local government levels to facilitate the mainstreaming of SLM in South African land-use and management policies and programmes.

The conservation agriculture MSc feeds into objectives 1 and 2 above, and will involve researching and assisting with the implementation of best practices in conservation agriculture suited to the Macubeni communal landscape, in the Eastern Cape. The project will require a person who is willing to interact regularly with rural community members and form close working relations. Furthermore, the appointed candidate will be expected to produce several deliverables related to the RU-SLMRR Project, as follows:

1) A comprehensive literature review of climate-smart conservation agriculture techniques and monitoring practices that could be trialled in the Macubeni communal landscape.
2) Baseline mapping and characterisation of the extent and types of agricultural practices, and management of agriculture resources at Macubeni.
3) With the support of an expert or local government agency, formulate a conservation agriculture plan suited to the agricultural potential and desires of the Macubeni community. The agriculture plan should be targeted at reducing the vulnerability of the

    community to climate-related perturbations, and improve the ecological functioning of landscape.

4) Contribute to the development of a training programme in climate-smart conservation agriculture concepts and techniques, targeted at local community members and local government.

The MSc project will be funded from April 2017 – April 2019. The appointed researcher will receive R70 000 pa bursary funding, and R30 000 pa will be available to cover project running costs.

<u>Requirements:</u>

Candidate must have a valid driver's license;

Candidate must be fluent in Xhosa;

Preference will be given to candidates who have some experience/training in Socio-Ecological Systems Theory or Community Based Natural Resource Management or a background in agriculture.

<u>Application procedure</u>

All applicants need to submit:

- An updated CV;
- Certified copies of previous degree certificates;
- A short essay (no more than 3 pages, 1.5 line spacing) describing how climate-smart conservation agriculture may reduce the vulnerability of rural communities to climate-related perturbations.

Please submit your application to Rebecca Powell (rebeccajoub@gmail.com) by the 28th of February, 2017.

Enquiries:

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