



UNIVERSITY OF  
COPENHAGEN



## Climate change, rural livelihoods, and nature protection in the Rufiji Delta ( $\Delta$ Rufiji)

### Call for Applications – 3 PhD Scholarships

The DANIDA-funded  $\Delta$ Rufiji project is announcing two PhD positions at the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Tourism, Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Tanzania, and one PhD position at the Institute of Resource Assessment, University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Tanzania

The College of Forestry, Wildlife and Tourism at SUA, the Institute of Resource Assessment at UDSM and the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), Denmark, hereby invite interested and qualified applicants to submit applications for three PhD scholarships under the five-year research capacity development project “Climate change, rural livelihoods, and nature protection in the Rufiji Delta” ( $\Delta$ Rufiji). The project is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and aims to develop research capacity at the participating institutions. In the context of the Rufiji Delta, this project will investigate environmental and social impacts of climate change, nature protection, and development projects in mangroves, and how local people respond to interlinked climatic, biophysical, socio-economic and political changes.

The three four-year PhD positions will emphasize and explore environmental, ecological, socio-economic and political aspects of changes in the Rufiji Delta as described below for each of the three scholarships. PhD studies will include formal enrollment at either SUA or UDSM, so awarding the scholarship is subject to successful formal enrollment. PhD fellows will receive supervision from both SUA and UDSM and co-supervision from UCPH, and the positions include visits to UCPH totaling 6-9 months. PhD fellows should be prepared to collect data in the field for a total of 6-8 months across three years and should work closely together with the other PhD students, postdocs and MSc students involved in the project. The three positions are available from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter, and include stipends reflecting the applicants’ employment situation during the PhD period and budgets for fieldwork.

### Brief descriptions of the three PhD projects

**PhD scholarship #1:** This project, anchored at SUA, will examine the productive and reproductive capacity and economic potential of sustainable mangrove forest management, including how mangrove ecosystems respond to human interventions and climate change. Main research questions are: What is the growth and regeneration capacity and what are the causes of change and the rate of deforestation and degradation in the Rufiji Delta mangrove forest?

**PhD scholarship #2:** This PhD project, anchored at UDSM, will examine the interaction between human use and ecosystem and the economic costs and benefits that households experience as consequences of changes in climate and socio-political conditions. Main research questions are: How do the biophysical and socio-political changes in mangroves affect local livelihoods, and what are the implications in relation to agency, risk and resilience?

**PhD scholarship #3:** This PhD project, anchored at SUA, will examine how local people respond, individually and institutionally, to climate change, conservation and development projects, and associated mechanisms of exclusion. Main research questions are: what are the perceived economic and social impacts of, and responses to, management and conservation initiatives, and what institutional arrangements might in practice promote socially just, climate-resilient local livelihoods and nature conservation?

## Qualifications

Successful applicants will be expected to have:

- An MSc degree within a relevant field, e.g., forestry, geography, environmental studies, natural resources management, environmental economics, conservation studies, or similar, and a competitive grade point average (at least 3.8, both at MSc and BSc levels).
- Other professional and academic qualifications relevant to the PhD project applied for and to the ΔRufiji project.
- Interest in conducting fieldwork, including working remotely and under challenging field conditions.
- Field work experience from rural areas in Tanzania of relevance to the PhD project applied for.
- For scholarships #1 and #2: Experience with quantitative data analysis, preferably in R, and a strong interest in combining field data with modelling.
- A curious and flexible mindset and good interpersonal skills.
- An interest in working within a team and openness to different cultures
- Skills and abilities to work independently.
- At least one peer-reviewed publication relevant to the PhD project.
- Excellent communication and writing skills.
- Fluency in Swahili and English.

**Contact information:** Further information about the positions can be obtained from Prof. Ezekiel E. Mwakalukwa ([ezedwa@sua.ac.tz](mailto:ezedwa@sua.ac.tz)) at SUA and Dr. Catherine A. Masao ([masao.catherine@udsm.ac.tz](mailto:masao.catherine@udsm.ac.tz) , [catherine.mmbaga@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.mmbaga@gmail.com)) at UDSM. Mobile numbers for any urgent queries:

For UDSM applications: Dr. Catherine A. Masao: +255 758206780 or +255 784598280

For SUA applications: Prof. Ezekiel E. Mwakalukwa: +255 782232381

## How to apply

Deadline for applications: March 1, 2026, at 12 noon East Africa Time.

Please send your application by email with a single PDF file including **all** documents attached. For the position anchored at UDSM (#2), the email must be sent to the project PI

(Dr. Catherine A. Masao, [masao.catherine@udsm.ac.tz](mailto:masao.catherine@udsm.ac.tz) and [catherine.mmbaga@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.mmbaga@gmail.com)) and copied to the IRA director's office ([ira@udsm.ac.tz](mailto:ira@udsm.ac.tz)). For the positions anchored at SUA (#1 and #3) the email must be sent to the Director of postgraduate studies ([drpgs@sua.ac.tz](mailto:drpgs@sua.ac.tz)) and copied to the project PI (Prof. Ezekiel E. Mwakalukwa, [ezedwa@sua.ac.tz](mailto:ezedwa@sua.ac.tz)).

The PDF file attached to the application email should contain; A short CV including publication list (1-3 pages); a short (1-2 pages) concept note clearly outlining and justifying research questions in relation to the scholarship applied for (#1, #2 or #3) and describing relevant theories and indicating study approach and methods; scanned copies of certificates and transcripts; names and contact details of two references.

Shortlisted applicants will be informed by March 25 and invited for an interview that takes place at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, one of the days between April 13 and 17, 2026.

You can find more information about the  $\Delta$ Rufiji project, including the project description, at <https://ifro.ku.dk/english/research/projects/rufiji/>