



**INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR A POST-
DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP UNDER THE "ERAIFT- AGRINATURA"
CONSORTIUM FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Capacity-building of biodiversity practitioners, scientists and policymakers for the sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa

**Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)
(Decision No. 41928)**

1. Background and rationale

ERAIFT in collaboration with its partner institutions of AGRINATURA launches this postdoctoral fellowship for the recruitment of a candidate whose mission is defined in the following pages. This international call for expressions of interest follows two previous calls that resulted in the selection of 13 fellows for ERAIFT's PhD training in co-supervision with AGRINATURA.

This call for applications is part of the program called: "Knowledge-based sustainable management of tropical ecosystems", under the funding of the EU-Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) No. 41928. The program has several components, including "Capacity-building of biodiversity practitioners, scientists and policymakers for the sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa". The project's overall objective is to "Support environmental policies and investments for the sustainable, participatory and equitable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa".

The overall objective of the project is *"To support environmental policies and investments for the sustainable, participatory and equitable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa"*. Operationally, this project aims *"To contribute to the capacity building of biodiversity practitioners, scientists and policy makers in the production and use of information needed for the sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa"*.

The project target groups are *"biodiversity practitioners, scientists, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector, as well as policy makers"*.

The project area covers the Congo Basin and West Africa and it is implemented by **AGRINATURA-EEIG** (European Alliance on Agricultural Knowledge for Development) and the Ecole Régionale Postuniversitaire d'Aménagement et de Gestion Intégrés des Forêts et Territoires Tropicaux (ERAIFT). AGRINATURA-EEIG has also delegated the management of the project activities – dedicated to it – to the University of Liège (Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech).



2. Key project stakeholders

2.1 AGRINATURA

AGRINATURA is a consortium of 35 European universities and research institutions with a shared interest in supporting sustainable agricultural development to improve people's living conditions, according to the Sustainable Development Goals. AGRINATURA pools its resources to work in partnership with international collaborators, particularly in developing countries. Through joint research, education and training projects, and development, AGRINATURA promotes scientific excellence by providing expertise to implement field projects and build stakeholders' capacity. The European Economic Interest Grouping AGRINATURA has been specially created to implement and manage projects that call on the expertise of several of its members. The group represents more than 10,000 researchers, teacher-researchers, and engineers in agricultural research for development, in permanent positions. The member institutions of AGRINATURA are:

1. University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Austria	19. Center for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn, Germany
2. Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Belgium	20. University of Hohenheim, Germany
3. Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium	21. Szent Istvan University, Hungary
4. Ghent University, Belgium	22. National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland
5. Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University of Liège, Belgium	23. University College Cork, Ireland
6. Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic	24. The University of Catania, Italy
7. Aarhus University, Denmark	25. Wageningen University and Research, the Netherlands
8. University of Copenhagen, Denmark	26. International Centre for development oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA), the Netherlands
9. Helsinki University, Finland	27. Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Portugal
10. Agropolis International, France	28. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Sweden
11. Montpellier SupAgro, France	29. Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland
12. Institute of research for development, France	30. Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich, UK
13. Centre for international cooperation research and development in agriculture, CIRAD, France	31. Polytechnic University of Madrid, Spain
14. Agreenium, France	32. University of Reading, UK
15. Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech- University of Liège, Belgium	33. Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE), Finland
16. College of International Agro-Development (ISTOM), France	34. Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Netherlands
17. Consiglio per la ricerca in agricoltura e l'analisi dell'economia agraria (CREA), Italy	



2.2 ERAIFT

Created on April 10, 1999, the School is based on the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere project (MAB program), which aims at sustainable human development in harmony with the environment. Since 2016, ERAIFT enjoys the status of a UNESCO Category-II Center¹ and contributes since its creation to the capacity-building of executives and decision-makers from 23 French and Portuguese speaking countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean region in the management of protected areas, as well as in the sustainable development of tropical forests and lands (about 300 Masters, 21 PhDs and more than a thousand executives from the public and private sectors trained in the field of "forest-environment").

Its management bodies (*the Conference of Member States, Board of Directors, Academic and Research Council - CAR, Executive board*) confer the School an international governance ensuring institutional sustainability and viability. ERAIFT currently enjoys the status of a category 2-center under the auspices of UNESCO. Moreover, in order to ensure its smooth functioning, several collaboration agreements have been concluded at the national, regional and international levels with various technical and financial partners (TFP).

At the national level, ERAIFT is located on the University of Kinshasa (UNIKIN) campus and maintains a fruitful scientific and academic collaboration with this academic institution. In addition, ERAIFT has concluded a partnership for the execution of its three regional Master's programmes with the University of Kisangani (UNIKIS) located in the eastern part of the DRC, in the region of lowland tropical rainforests. This university-teaching institution is located in the forest zone and surrounded by several protected areas, including the Maiko National Park, the Okapi Wildlife Reserve (OWR), and the Yangambi Biosphere Reserve (YBR). This geographic location provides UNIKIS with good conditions for field learning in forestry and environmental sciences. ERAIFT has also signed a collaboration agreement with the University of Lubumbashi (UNILU) in the southern part of the DRC, in the mining region of Katanga, in the middle of a "miombo" clear forest. This environment is particularly favorable to study this type of forest and the numerous surrounding savannahs and to understand the impact of mining on the environment and humans.

At the sub-regional level, a collaboration agreement has been signed for the collaborative implementation of the regional training organized by ERAIFT with:

- 1) the Universities of Dschang and Yaoundé 1 as well as the Garoua's Wildlife School in Cameroon;
- 2) the University of Sciences and Technology of Masuku and the *Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forêts* (National School of Water and Forests) in Gabon.

These various agreements with national and regional institutions provide for the regional mobility of students and trainers in order to foster an exchange of experiences and expertise in the implementation of joint projects, research projects, under joint supervision, and the sharing of experiences and lessons learned for capitalization at the regional level.

The present project will thus allow to further consolidate regional partnership in Central Africa, but also to build other partnerships, underway in the Eastern and Southern Africa (with, for example, The African Leadership University (School of Wildlife Conservation, based in Rwanda²), The South African Wildlife College, The Kitabi College of Conservation and Environmental Management) to collegially implement the Master's courses, and to ensure the regional mobility of the students and trainers as recommended by the "LMD system"³. The objective is to network ERAIFT, the Garoua Wildlife School (Cameroon), the

¹ Category-2 centers and institutes contribute to the execution of UNESCO's programme through capacity-building, exchange of information in a particular discipline, theoretical and experimental research, and advanced training in specific fields of competence. They are under the auspices of UNESCO, but are not legally part of the Organization; they are governed by their own rules formally approved by the General Conference. These centers and institutes form a vast network of associated centers in the fields of water, renewable energy, science policy, biotechnology, geosciences, basic sciences and remote sensing.

² ALU also cooperates with Kitabi College in Rwanda and Wildlife College in South Africa.

³ Within the framework of the European Higher Education Area, the "LMD" system (L for License/Bachelor, M for Master and D for Doctorate) aims to harmonize higher education curricula in Europe and to promote student mobility at regional, national and European



ALU School of Wildlife Conservation (Rwanda), the Kitabi College (Rwanda), and the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC in South Africa) and other French and English speaking partners to be identified.

Moreover, in the framework of South-South cooperation, in 2008, the Executive Board of UNESCO decided to transfer the experience of ERAIFT to other sub-regions of Africa, particularly in West Africa (a project for the creation of IRAIFT - Regional Post-Graduate Institute for Integrated Management of Tropical Forests and Lands - is underway, possibly in Côte d'Ivoire).

At the international level, the consolidation of this network of French and English-speaking African institutions will also increase their capacity to integrate into the "Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Program - EMJM", as is already the case for the University of Dschang in Cameroon. Indeed, this high-level integrated international educational program is delivered by an international consortium of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from different countries and, where appropriate, other teaching or non-teaching partners with specific expertise and interest in the fields of study/professional areas covered by the joint educational program.

EMJM aims to:

- 1) foster quality enhancement, innovation, excellence, and internationalization at the level of higher education institutions (HEIs);
- 2) enhance the quality and attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and support the Union's external action in the field of higher education by awarding scholarships to the best Master's students in the world to prepare for a full Master's degree; and
- 3) improve the level of competences and skills of Master's graduates and, in particular, the relevance of Joint Masters for the labor market, by involving employers more in the world of education.

In addition, ERAIFT has negotiated and concluded several partnership agreements with institutions allowing for international scientific supervision of researchers and doctoral students, such as the University of Liège with its "Central Africa" Platform located within the ERAIFT facilities, the University of Gent, the University of Laval the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, the Botanical Garden of Meise, the Satellite Observatory of Central African Forests (OSFAC), OFAC, HIST (China), the Federal University of Para, the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, CIRAD, and the Centre for International Forestry Research-CIFOR.

ERAIFT is also a co-founder, together with ENEF, and member of the Central African Network of Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions (RIFFEAC). This technical platform currently includes 23 training institutions in the Central African sub-region and aims to build the capacities and structures necessary for joint and sustainable environmental and forestry resources management. Created in Libreville, Gabon, in 2001, RIFFEAC became in 2006 the partner of the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) for the implementation of the strategic axis of its Convergence Plan related to "Capacity building, stakeholder participation, information, and training".

Finally, a key element of ERAIFT's role at the international level was formalized by the signing of an MoU creating the "South-South Cooperation network for sustainable development in the three great tropical forest basins of the world" between the UNESCO-Chair in Sustainable Development of the Federal University of Para, Belém, Brazil (Amazon Basin), ERAIFT, University of Kinshasa, DRC (Congo Basin) and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (Southeast Asia) in the context of the 21st session of the International Coordinating Council of the MAB Programme held in Jeju (Republic of Korea, May 28, 2009).

Thanks to the UNESCO, a structural cooperation with the UNESCO HIST Category 2 Centre in China (Beijing), which specialized in remote sensing, has also been established. Furthermore, joint visits to Biosphere Reserves with Brazilian (Yangambi Reserve, DRC) and Indonesian (Wundanlachi Reserve in

levels.



China, Pekanbaru, Indonesia) partners and data sharing between these institutions have also been carried out.

3. Key components of the present AGRINATURA/EU EU-funded program

The main expected results of this program can be summarized in the following five outputs:

- Output 1:** Future agents for the sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa are trained (masters, doctorates) within specialized regional schools (ERAIFT and its partner institutions).
- Output 2:** Ongoing training organized for the different categories of actors involved in the sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa.
- Output 3:** Training and research tools and materials on biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa are designed, made accessible, and disseminated.
- Output 4:** ERAIFT and its national and regional partner institutions are strengthened in terms of hosting capacity, digitalized management, and field equipment/materials.
- Output 5:** The results of scientific research carried out within AGRINATURA and/or ERAIFT institutions, in collaboration with their regional partners, on biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa, are capitalized and made available to decision-makers as decision support tools.

As it can be noticed, the project plans five different products, which mainly focus on continuous and diploma training, logistic support to the concerned institutions, and scientific research, in order to generate new capitalisable knowledge in sustainable forest management.

This call for applications is part of the support to scientific research at the postdoctoral level. It aims to select a qualified postdoctoral fellow whose research results will contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives – “Knowledge-based Sustainable Management of Tropical Ecosystems”.

4. Profile of the beneficiary and elements of the application file for the postdoctoral fellowship

Applicants for this fellowship should:

- be from sub-Saharan Africa;
- hold a doctoral degree in natural or environmental sciences or equivalent field; in humanities or social sciences with an environmental focus;
- have obtained their doctoral degree no more than 5 years before the launch of the call and be no more than 50 years old at the time of application, and have successfully completed their doctorate with at least "distinction" or 70% in one of the internationally renowned universities;
- use the systems approach as the guiding principle of his post-doctoral research program. This is a multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral, participatory approach – global and integrated
- present in English and French their research protocol according to the systems approach, including a logical framework, a coherent planning of activities over four years and a realistic budget estimate;
- present a summary of their CV including essentially international publications in credible journals during the last 5 years, participation in international scientific conferences with communications in the field of *biodiversity conservation, sustainable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa*;
- present certificates of birth, physical fitness, nationality and good conduct and morals or equivalent (recently issued);



- write a letter of motivation outlining the major reasons for applying for the AGRINATURA/ERAIFT consortium postdoctoral fellowship; the letter must be handwritten, in French and English, and each version signed (a one-page letter each);
- demonstrate sufficient French and English bilingualism to work and publish in both languages;
- work under the direct authority of the Academic and Research Secretary of ERAIFT (the ASR);
- regularly submit reports of scientific research activities to the academic authorities of ERAIFT;
- regularly valorize his/her research data in international scientific publications in credible and indexed journals, at least one article per year;
- Agree to live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ERAIFT or its research stations) and contribute effectively to the supervision of new PhD students of the ERAIFT/AGRINATURA consortium.

5. Key research areas for the postdoctoral fellowship

Priority research topics must be in line with the overall objective of the program. Examples of eligible topics

- Assessment of climate change impact and implementation of REDD+ mechanisms in the context of timber logging;
- Analysis of the restoration of disturbed ecosystems;
- Valorization of local/indigenous knowledge in the study of protected areas and their management;
- Replenishment of commercial species in forest concessions;
- Inclusion of tropical commercial species in the periphery of protected areas;
- Implementation of timber species improvement programs;
- Spatial analysis of the land cover dynamics of conservation areas and corresponding landscapes;
- Rational and sustainable management of large and medium-sized fauna;
- Harmonization of forest policies in the Congo Basin and West Africa;
- Governance of protected areas and biosphere reserves;
- Development and sustainable management of tropical wetlands;
- Forest genetics and breeding;
- Sustainable agricultural development towards the improvement of the livelihoods in the protected areas;
- Impacts on environmental policies and investments for the sustainable, participatory and equitable management of protected areas and forest ecosystems in Africa;
- Economic and social value of protected areas;
- Land conflicts (broad sense) between urbanization, agricultural development and nature conservation;
- Local communities' perceptions of protected areas and biodiversity conservation;
- Value chain analysis of agricultural and forestry products;
- Analysis of the ecological functioning of natural, semi-natural and anthropogenic systems.
- Other topics related to the operation, analysis and management of protected areas and natural resources;
- Valorization of woody species with commercial potential; Community forestry issues.



6. Reference amounts for the postdoctoral fellowship

The estimated amount for the postdoctoral fellowship is distributed as follows:

1	South-North-South research travel costs	Round trip	4	€1 000.00	€4 000.00	Ticket, visas, Covid19 screening test and incidental expenses for scientific research trips
2	Fixed monthly stipend for subsistence	Month	33	€1,500.00	€49,500.00	Living expenses in DRC
3	Miscellaneous research expenses (harvesting, lab and analysis, seminar, symposium)	Fixed rate	1	€6,830.00	€6,830.00	To be paid to the beneficiary but to be justified according to the expenses including the costs of accommodation and catering during the research missions
4	Publication costs	Publication	6	€700.00	€4,200.00	Credible international scientific journal
5	Health insurance in the North and in the South	Month	33	€90.00	€2,970.00	Invoice for Health-care mutual company in DRC
6	Administrative costs and scientific monitoring of the postdoctoral fellowship	Year	3	€2,500.00	€7,500.00	Invoice ERAIFT
	Total				€75,000.00	

7. Application submission and deadline

The compressed file will be sent by email, preferably as a link, only to the following addresses:

- Addressee: **Baudouin MICHEL**, Director of ERAIFT and President of the Academic and Research Council (CAR): info@eraift-rdc.org; CC Hervé MISHIDI: h.mishidi@eraift-rdc.org
- Subject: application for an ERAIFT-AGRINATURA **postdoctoral** research fellowship.
- Maximum file size: **10 Mo**
- Deadline for submission of application: **Saturday, 10/12/2022 at 16 hours (Kinshasa Time)**.

Only complete and timely applications will be reviewed by a joint team of assessors consisting of members of the Academic and Research Council (CAR) of ERAIFT and AGRINATURA, under the chairmanship of the Director of ERAIFT.

Only successful applicants will be notified.

Done in Kinshasa, on 16/11/2022

The Director of ERAIFT

Baudouin MICHEL