



Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST)

Researcher / Senior Researcher: Fonseca Leadership Programme to Rejuvenate CBNRM and Wildlife Economy in Africa

(Two-year fixed-term contract with the possibility of extension subject to availability of funding)

Ref. EBW13/237/0924

The Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST) is a leading research and postgraduate training centre within the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at Stellenbosch University (SU) in South Africa. It brings together research on transdisciplinary approaches, complexity, sustainability, governance and social-ecological resilience to inform pressing national, continental, and global sustainability and development challenges. The CST hosts leading scientists and students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, and fosters collaborations with a variety of departments across the University, nationally and globally, providing a vibrant hub for solution-oriented, transdisciplinary sustainability science, that is primarily funded from external research grants. The primary objective of the CST is to co-produce transformational knowledge on the dynamics of multi-scale social-ecological and socio-technical change in partnership with key stakeholders, and thereby provide strategic insights into the new modes of research and governance that can bring about a just transition to a more equitable and sustainable society, in southern Africa and globally.

The Global Biodiversity Framework calls for countries to conserve 30% of the planet by 3030, with no clear theory of change. Many of the poorest people live amongst the best wildlife and biodiversity. Therefore, just sustainability transitions require well-crafted synergies between household economic development and sustainable land use. In seeking an inclusive \$30 billion wildlife economy, there is a need to develop African capacities in Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) governance and wildlife economy. However, conceptual understanding and implementation of CBNRM and the wildlife economy is decaying rather than progressing. Consequently, the wildlife economy is performing at a fraction of its potential,

especially in communities. Further, rural people aspire to be shareholders, not stakeholders, in the wildlife economy, yet are subjected to a ubiquitous committee-based model of representational governance that favours external wildlife conservation objectives over community upliftment.

We are seeking an exceptional researcher to advance research under the theme of sustainability transitions in CBNRM and wildlife economies at the CST. Specifically, the CST seeks a candidate who can play a central role in the Lifethroughwildlife and Fonseca Leadership Programme (<https://www.lifethroughwildlife.com/>) led by Prof Brian Child (University of Florida and a CST research fellow). The position can be at Researcher or Senior Researcher level, and we will consider exceptional early through to mid-career researchers. The incumbent will work with project leads, partners and Fonseca Fellows to conceptualise and implement a regional research-to-impact initiative, focusing on CBNRM governance and wildlife economies across southern Africa. This builds on a significant upfront investment by the Lifethroughwildlife programme, which has trained over 90 leading CBNRM managers and established CBNRM anchor research sites in multiple countries to develop and evaluate participatory governance. The programme works closely with the Community Leaders Network of Southern Africa (and national CBNRM Associations). As a key part of this programme, the incumbent will supervise and mentor students registered for an MPhil in Sustainable Development at the CST to develop strategic research projects at anchor sites, as part of a Fonseca Leadership Programme. Most Fonseca Fellows will be managing or supporting a network of carefully selected CBNRM anchor sites in Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe and elsewhere.

The ideal candidate will be someone very passionate in just sustainability transitions through CBNRM governance and wildlife economies, who can play a substantial intellectual leadership role in the programme – both in terms of supervising the content of the student theses, and also through synthetic and comparative analyses between anchor sites. The ideal candidate is someone who wants to build up a career in this field and connect with and support a large team of embedded practitioner students. This is an amazing opportunity for the right person, and we are recruiting someone who can lead, grow and evolve this programme into the future.

Duties:

- Contributing thought leadership to the Lifethroughwildlife programme.
- Managing a regional governance and wildlife economy research programme, including research conceptualization, data standardisation, databases, and comparative analysis.
- Supporting a CBNRM transformation strategy at anchor sites across southern Africa that includes (1) baseline surveys and analysis, (2) the conceptualisation and implementing of a governance / economy change management processes, and (3) ensuring that results are tracked, analysed, reported and published by Fellows.
- Providing support, mentoring and academic supervision or, in most cases, co-supervision to 16 Fonseca Fellows (two cohorts of eight fellows per year).
- Supporting Fellow participation in (1) research and methodology training courses at CST, (2) the conceptual “wildlife economy, governance and community” University of

Florida certificate, (3) practical governance methods training, and (4) producing an MPhil research thesis.

- Travelling to anchor sites to engage with students and other stakeholders.

Note that Fonseca Fellows are part of a regional research and training programme managed by Prof Brian Child (University of Florida), with the academic Master's programme administration managed by CST, and student travel and field events administration managed by Jamma International's Financial Administrator. Thus, the incumbent will not need to undertake substantive administrative tasks, but will need to interface between administrators. The incumbent will report to Dr Hayley Clements with respect to the Master's degree programme and will work closely with Prof Brian Child regarding the implementation of the anchor site and wildlife economy programme and enhancements to the Master's training (i.e. the certificate, practical training modules, and overall anchor site management). The incumbent will liaise with Prof Brian Child and the Jamma International Project and Financial Administrator to organise student travel, fees, field events and training workshops, fieldwork grants, etc.

We anticipate recruiting a Researcher who has the potential to take the Lifethroughwildlife and Fonseca Leadership programme to new levels beyond the tasks outlined above. At the core of our philosophy is team-based research, education and practice that is applied and impactful, and that generates substantial improvement in CBNRM governance and wildlife economy in the region. In addition to applied research, future opportunities lie in supporting a rapidly expanding and dedicated community of practice that already includes over 90 leaders from ten countries, and developing CBNRM governance and wildlife economy training for practitioners in well over 500 communities.

Requirements:

General Requirements – applicable to both Researcher and Senior Researcher levels:

We are seeking a dynamic individual to join our team as a Research Coordinator, to manage Fonseca Fellows and contribute to a programme in CBNRM governance research and capacity building. The ideal candidate will have relevant experience and academic credentials in CBNRM or related fields, plus the leadership, coaching and organisational skills to supervise a cohort of talented field-based students committed to enhancing rural livelihoods through innovative research and practice in community governance and the wildlife economy. Strong organisational abilities, a spirit of curiosity, and aspirations to lead in applied academia are essential for success in this role. The incumbent should be passionate about working with a dynamic team to make a meaningful impact, foster the next generation of leaders, and develop their own academic capabilities in CBNRM governance and wildlife economy.

- Knowledge in the fields of community governance and/or wildlife economies.
- Good understanding of the southern African conservation and development context.
- Proven experience in research management, complemented by strong organisational and coaching skills.

- An effective team player with the ability to work with diverse stakeholders including researchers, students, practitioners and communities.
- Demonstrated ability to mentor and supervise or co-supervise postgraduate students.
- The ability to co-manage a regional research and education programme focused on CBNRM and the wildlife economy.
- An interdisciplinary perspective, with the capacity to connect scholarship and training to practice.
- A commitment to ensuring research has real-world impact.
- Strong communication skills, enabling effective collaboration with diverse stakeholders.
- Demonstrated leadership abilities and a commitment to enhancing African capacity in wildlife economy and governance.
- Availability to travel to anchor sites across southern Africa.

Minimum Requirements: Researcher:

- All of the above general requirements.
- PhD or a Master's degree with considerable work experience in a relevant field such as sustainability science, agricultural economics, environmental policy, political science, administration and governance, human geography, conservation, social-ecological systems, or a related discipline.
- At least one peer-reviewed publication.

Minimum Requirements: Senior Researcher

- All of the above general requirements.
- PhD in a relevant field such as sustainability science, agricultural economics, environmental policy, political science, administration and governance, human geography, conservation, social-ecological systems, or a related discipline.
- At least ten peer-reviewed publications with some as first/only author.
- PI (or Co-PI) on one or more grants (small or large), or *de facto* PI (i.e. assistant to a PI) on a large grant.
- At least one Master's student graduated, and one or more PhDs enrolled.
- Some teaching experience, e.g. co-/convenor of a course, course moderator, and/or delivery of lectures on one or more modules.
- Evidence of institutional leadership and services activities (both internal and external), e.g. thesis examination, course moderation, journal reviewer, service on institutional committees.
- Experience in running stakeholder workshops or policy engagement processes.
- National recognition e.g. NRF rating or serving on national scientific boards.

Recommendations:

Recommendations: Researcher:

- A PhD in a relevant field.

- Specialist knowledge and research experience in CBNRM and wildlife economies, ideally across multiple southern African countries.
- Experience in supervising postgraduate students.
- A research publication record in relevant fields and contexts.
- A track record of being involved in projects / research that seeks to advance actionable research, especially in relation to supporting participatory governance and just sustainability transitions.
- Experience and a desire to work in participatory interdisciplinary and multicultural environments.
- Demonstrable quantitative skills and the ability to manage databases.
- Willingness to secure ongoing funding to support the position as well as those of more junior researchers and postgraduate students at the CST.
- Evidence of institutional leadership and services activities (both internal and external).
- PI, Co-PI or collaboration with a PI to submit funding proposals to raise research funding.
- Some teaching experience, e.g. teaching assistance, course coordination support.
- Experience in running stakeholder workshops or policy engagement processes.
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Recommendations: Senior Researcher:

- Specialist knowledge and research experience in CBNRM and wildlife economies, ideally across multiple southern African countries.
- A substantial research publication record in relevant fields and contexts.
- A track record of being involved in projects / research that seeks to advance actionable research, especially in relation to supporting participatory governance and just sustainability transitions.
- Experience and a desire to work in participatory interdisciplinary and multicultural environments.
- Demonstrable quantitative skills and the ability to manage databases.
- Substantial experience in supervising postgraduate students.
- Willingness to secure ongoing funding to support the position as well as those of more junior researchers and postgraduate students at the CST.

Commencement of duties:

1 January 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Closing date:

11 October 2024

Term: Two-year fixed-term contract, with the possibility of extension subject to the availability of funding.

Enquiries regarding this post: Nina Callaghan on 021 808 9607, or at ninac@sun.ac.za

Enquiries regarding remuneration/benefits, as well as technical assistance with the

electronic application process: Human Resources Client Services Centre on 021 808 2753, or at sun-e-hr@sun.ac.za

Application Instructions: Interested candidates should submit a CV, cover letter outlining their qualifications and experience relevant to the position, academic transcripts, and contact information for three professional references.

Stellenbosch University is committed to employment equity (EE), and appointments will be made in line with the EE plan for the specific environment as well as the institutional EE Plan of the University.

Stellenbosch University reserves the right not to make an appointment.

Your application, comprising a **comprehensive curriculum vitae (including the names and email addresses of at least three referees)**, must reach the University before or on the closing date of the advertised post.

APPLY ONLINE AT <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/careers> BY USING THE APPLY NOW LINK AT THE TOP RIGHT-HAND CORNER OF THE SPECIFIC VACANCY PAGE.

The University reserves the right to investigate qualifications and conduct background checks on all candidates.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires people in occupations that entail potential exposure to certain hazards (such as, but not limited to: noise, hazardous chemical substances and hazardous biological agents) to be subjected to medical screening, to determine their fitness to work in the said occupations.

Should no feedback be received from the University within four to six weeks of the closing date, kindly accept that your application did not succeed.
