

Call for FOUR Master's Field Scholarship

A. Project Background

The University of Nairobi (UoN), the University of Copenhagen (UCPH), and the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) with funding from DANIDA hereby invite applications for FOUR Masters field scholarships under the project *Governing Nature based Solutions: The prospects for a just green transition in Kenya (JUCAN – Justice, Carbon, Nature)*. <https://jucan.uonbi.ac.ke/>

B. About the research project

Nature based Solutions (NbS) are actions that aim at benefiting climate, biodiversity and people simultaneously. NbS are high on the global and national carbon offsetting and biodiversity conservation agendas. The number of NbS projects is growing in the Global South, including in Kenya. While NbS scholars tend to focus on technical aspects of how to address the climate, biodiversity, and people objectives simultaneously, there is less knowledge about NbS governance. Critics argue that there are considerable trade-offs between the NbS objectives, and there is a risk that interventionist approaches and skewed power relations marginalize local communities by disrupting their institutions and undermining their rights to land and other natural resources, thus contributing to environmental injustice. JUCAN sets out to learn from the institutional dynamics and government arrangements of NbS in Kenya. Kenya has a long and devastating record of environmental injustice, but rural communities depend on the conservation and restoration of their degraded natural resources. The main research question is: What are the implications of NbS governance for a just green transition in Kenya?

The project has four research questions (R1-4) and related four Work Package teams (WP1-4). The four research questions are:

WP1-R1. Priorities and perceptions: How and to what extent do private, public and civil society actors' priorities differ and align vis-à-vis the possible trade-offs between climate, biodiversity and community development objectives, and what is their "sense of environmental justice" in NbS?

WP2-R2. Agency and practices: How do the different actors engage in, influence, and shape the emergence of NbS institutions as they pursue their priorities, and what NbS governance practices and arrangements emerge from this at national and local levels?

WP3-R3. Outcomes: How do NbS governance practices and arrangements affect the nature of carbon, biodiversity, and socioeconomic activities and outcomes in NbS projects?

WP-4-R4. Implications: What are the implications of 1-3 for the three types of environmental justice, and what lessons can be learned for policy and practice to ensure a just transition in Kenya?

C. About the Scholarship:

The scholarship aims to complement the ongoing PhD research and senior researchers work in the three study sites that is Northern rangelands, Chyulu carbon project and blue-economy in Gazi and Vanga. Each student will be attached to one of the four Work Packages (WP) and will work closely with doctoral and post doc students to complement their research.

The field scholarship will support **four Master's students** for a period of one year to undertake data collection and publish scientific articles in peer reviewed journals, starting in the third quarter of 2025.

D. Thematic Focus Areas for the Research and focus of four Field Scholarship

1. WP 1 - Blue Forests Project in the coastal areas of Kenya
2. WP 2 - Chyulu Hills Conservation Trust project
3. WP 3 - Northern Kenya Carbon Project
4. WP 4 - Cross cutting - carbon governance and accrued benefits from the sale of carbon credits

E. Scholarship Benefits:

The scholarship will cover field expenses, living costs, and data collection to a maximum of 20,000DKK. It will also cover costs associated with publishing of the findings in scientific journals as agreed with the project team. However, it does NOT cover tuition fees but will provide modest field expenses based on approved budget.

F. Eligibility Criteria:

Eligible candidates must:

- Be registered for an MSc/MA at the University of Nairobi and have completed the first year of study in either environmental studies, development studies, environmental planning and governance, geography, or a related field.
- Demonstrate excellent research skills and interpersonal skills.
- Possess excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Have the ability to work well independently and as part of a group.
- Preference will be given to candidates with (a) field experience working with communities, (b) climate change carbon discourse, but it is not mandatory.
- Be willing to volunteer and support JUCAN project activities during the scholarship period.
- Committed to their master's work timeline
- Be full-time or flexible work arrangement students for the duration of the scholarship.
- Applicant for the project areas are highly encouraged to apply
- Female students are encouraged to apply

G. Selection process /Application Process:

Interested candidates should submit the following documents in a single PDF format to WP Lead person at University of Nairobi with "**Masters Field Scholarship**" as the subject line, by **5.00 p.m. Kenyan time on 9th July 2025**:

1. Detailed Curriculum Vitae (not more than 4 pages) with the names and contact details of two referees (one should from academic).
2. A motivation letter highlighting: a) Interest in nature and carbon governance and longer-term career ambitions; b) Technical skills such as research skills, data collection, and analysis; c) Experience (if any) in conducting fieldwork;

H. Submission protocol,

Please note carefully the unit where you are supposed to submit your documents or for any inquiries.

- a) WP 1 - Blue Forests Project in the coastal areas of Kenya –
Institute for Development Studies

Submission - E-mail:- rahmahassan@uonbi.ac.ke

- b) WP 2 - Chyulu Hills Conservation Trust project
Department of Geography, Population and Environmental Studies

Submission - E-mail:- martin.marani@uonbi.ac.ke

- c) WP 3 - Northern Kenya Carbon Project
Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies

Submission- Email:- janemm@uonbi.ac.ke

- d) WP 4 - Cross cutting - carbon governance and accrued benefits from the sale of carbon credits

Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies

Submission- Email:- tthenya@uonbi.ac.ke

Note: Hard copies will **NOT** be accepted, and incomplete applications will not be considered. Suitable candidates will be contacted after the closing date for interviews.