

Open PhD position

Woody invasive alien species in East Africa: assessing the benefits of management on biodiversity and rural livelihoods

Background: In a recently approved international research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), we aim to help mitigate the effects of woody invasive alien species (IAS) on biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being in case study areas in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. To achieve this goal, we will generate and share knowledge on invasion processes and on context-dependent effects of woody IAS. Also, we will elaborate sustainable control measures and develop and document Sustainable Land Management (SLM) strategies that mitigate the negative effects of woody IAS in East Africa.

PhD Position: Within this project, an exciting PhD position is available at CABI in Kenya (Nairobi) (<http://www.cabi.org/about-cabi/cabi-centres/kenya/>). The PhD aims to improve our understanding of the effects of IAS control measures, including habitat restoration practices, and the costs of their implementation and subsequent benefits in terms of increased biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services in eastern Africa. Specific goals of the study include: (1) conducting field trials to assess costs and benefits of different combinations of IAS control and habitat restoration measures, targeting selected woody IAS (*Prosopis juliflora* and hybrids, *Lantana camara*), (2) reviewing past projects on management of terrestrial invasive alien species in East Africa, and c) developing guidance documents summarizing best practices for sustainable management of land invaded by selected woody IAS. The results from this study will be combined with those from remote sensing studies to model the effect of management interventions on future invasion processes of woody IAS in East Africa.

The student will be based at the CABI Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, and registered at a Kenyan University. Extended fieldwork will be conducted in the Baringo District (Kenya) and possibly in other regions in East Africa.

Required competences

- Master in natural science or related fields, preferably with a background in the ecology and management of biological invasions
- Good skills in statistical analysis
- High social competences in interacting with stakeholders at different levels
- Excellent skills in oral and written communications (English)
- Great interest in working with an interdisciplinary and international team
- Willingness to travel to remote sites and work in the field
- Highly dedicated and motivated student

What the research project offers

- Work in a strong international team
- Training in inter- and transdisciplinary research
- PhD allowance according to Kenyan University guidelines for 3 years (subject to approval of project's second phase in September 2017)
- Field expenses, travel allowances

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CABI

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- Close collaboration with project partners, including the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), Switzerland, the Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology (CIB), South Africa, and partners in Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

Application: Please send a CV, academic transcript, contact details for at least two academic references and a brief outline of research interests to Dr Arne Witt (a.witt@cabi.org) by 31 August 2017. Informal inquiries are welcome. Review of applications will begin immediately, and short-listed candidates will be interviewed. The envisaged start date for the PhD thesis is December 2017.

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