

PhD position in Tropical Agroecology

Biodiversity and biological pest control in East African farmland systems

Background: Agricultural intensification in sub-Saharan Africa is environmentally costly, unsustainable, and poorly adapted to low-income farming. Concomitantly, it threatens regional biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as natural pest control, and has low adaptive capacity to ongoing climate change. Nature-based solutions that harness the benefits of biodiversity and the environment for productive, low-input and climate-resilient agriculture are valuable avenues for sustainable intensification of agriculture in Africa.

In the EU project UPSCALE, an interdisciplinary team conducts research in five East African countries on push-pull systems as a promising alternative to conventional agriculture. In a joint design local and landscape scale effects of push-pull systems along gradients in landscape complexity and climate will be studied to explore how agroecological practices impact biodiversity (pest insects, natural enemies, birds), pest control, crop yields and interactions with near-natural habitats.

Requirements: We are seeking a highly motivated PhD student with strong interest and expertise in insect ecology, tropical ecology or agroecology. Applicants should have a MSc. or Diploma degree in ecology or related disciplines and skills in several of the following areas: experimental field research (e.g. plant-insect interactions, biological pest control), practical skills in insect identification (ideally also bird identification), use of GIS and statistical data analysis (preferably in R), and scientific writing in English. A driver license, physical fitness and very good language skills in English are required. The candidate is expected to work both individually and in close collaboration with European and African partners in an interdisciplinary and international project with field work in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ruanda or Ethiopia. Experience with participatory research approaches is a preferred skill, as well as a general openness to doing participatory research with smallholder farmers. The PhD position will be located in the Department of Animal Ecology and Tropical Biology (<http://www.zoo3.biozentrum.uni-wuerzburg.de/en/>) at University of Würzburg. For further information please contact:

Prof. Dr. Ingolf Steffan-Dewenter (ingolf.steffan@uni-wuerzburg.de) or PD Dr. Marcell Peters (marcell.peters@uni-wuerzburg.de)

Salary and conditions: Salary and benefits are according to public service positions in Germany (TV-L, 65%). Start date: **1st April 2020**. The planned duration of the project is three years. We offer the membership in an international research team, modern facilities and a structured graduate training program. Würzburg University is an equal opportunities employer and places particular emphasis on fostering career opportunities for women. Qualified women are therefore strongly encouraged to apply. Disabled persons with equivalent aptitude will be favored.

Applications: Please send your application as **one single pdf file** per email to michaela.jaeger@uni-wuerzburg.de latest until **21 January 2021**. Applications should include a cover letter, a short summary of research interests, CV, complete certificates, and the names (with email addresses) of two potential referees.