Job Description

This form summarises the purpose of the job and lists its key tasks. It is not a definitive list of all the tasks to be undertaken as those can be varied from time to time at the discretion of the School, in consultation with the postholder.

Job title: Research Officer (Conservation and Development)

Department/Centre/Institute: Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment
Accountable to: Professor Declan Conway

Job Summary

The programme in GRI is focused on the Grande Mayumba area in southern Gabon and comprises four key research areas:
- Conservation finance for sustainable development through monetising ecosystem services, led by Dr Luca Taschini;
- Managing Natural Capital through measurement and management to support the preservation of total economic (as opposed to financial) value, led by Prof Giles Atkinson;
- Conservation and Development to assess natural resource management from the perspective of local communities, led by Prof Declan Conway and Dr Kate Gannon;
- Behaviours and Attitudes to understand perspectives towards nature conservation of local people in Grande Mayumba and more widely in Gabon and internationally, led by Dr Ganga Shreedhar.

Grande Mayumba is home to local people and communities whose livelihoods and cultures depend on the natural environment. This position is with the Conservation and Development research strand and will study natural resource management from the perspective of these communities. We are interested in the interplay between environmental and development outcomes and the translation of conservation strategies to on-the-ground conservation activities. We seek to explore issues such as conservation development planning and adaptive management in the face of climate change, within the Grand Mayumba landscape.

The successful candidate will first collaborate with the wider Conservation and Development and Behaviours and Attitudes research teams to co-design and implement a baseline survey in Grande Mayumba. This survey will assess socio-economic outcomes and stakeholder perspectives around the long-term impact of development and nature conservation on local communities, as well as attitudes and behaviour of people associated with Grand Mayumba, including workers, neighbouring communities and visitors. This phase of research will focus on areas such as investigating the status of, and changes in, community structures, attitudes toward conservation and development and eco-tourism and visitor preferences. The successful candidate will then build on this scoping phase of research to design and lead a focused piece of fieldwork-based research to support the Conservation and Development agenda within the ForestLAB.

Grand Mayumba is a remote location of Gabon and the position is likely to involve extended periods of time working in the field. As such, French language skills and a willingness to travel within this setting will be essential.

The aim of the Forest Lab is to study and create a world class model of natural ecosystems management, which is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. The Lab will stimulate academic debate, inspire conservation and development practitioners and make a tangible contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The main counterpart for the ForestLAB at LSE is the GRI, drawing on expertise in the economics and social sciences of sustainable development from across LSE, particularly the Departments of Geography and the Environment, and Methodology. The successful applicant will work in collaboration with Professor Declan Conway, Dr Kate Gannon, Dr Ganga Shreedhar and Dr Anomitro Chatterjee.

The Forest LAB also includes a team based at the University of Stirling led by Prof Kate Abernethy.

The ForestLAB is funded for an initial three-year period, with the prospect of further extensions.

The position is based within the GRI, at the LSE. GRI's interdisciplinary research examines environment and climate change, and aims to inform policy and academic debate. GRI has around 45 members of staff working on research and policy, and the communications and running of the Institute. GRI also includes PhD students, visiting researchers and research associates.

LSE is a world-class centre of learning, recognised for its concentration of teaching and research across the full range of the social, political and economic sciences. From its foundation in 1895, LSE has been a place where ideas are developed, analysed, evaluated and disseminated around the globe. LSE is consistently ranked in the top five global institutions for the social sciences. The 2014 Research Excellence Framework confirmed the School's position as a world-leading research university, with LSE ranked as the top university in the UK based on its production of 'world leading' (4*) research.

Duties and Responsibilities

Range of Research Activities and Responsibilities

The successful applicant will join GRI's Sustainable Development team led by Professor Declan Conway.

Specific responsibilities under the project will include:
- Developing an area of original research, reflecting on existing research experience and expertise, within the ForestLAB research agenda.
- Analysing and researching complex ideas, concepts or theories and applying appropriate methodologies.
- Designing and overseeing the implementation of surveys and experiments both in the field (via in-person surveys) and online
- Conducting multiple extended (up to four months duration) overseas fieldwork trips in French and English in Gabon and possibly other travel for shorter durations.
- Working in parallel with the wider Conservation and Development and Behavioural Economics teams, to co-design and run a baseline survey in Grande Mayumba, to assess socio-economic outcomes and stakeholder perspectives around the long-term impact of nature conservation on local communities.
- Interpreting and analysing patterns or trends in qualitative and possibly quantitative data and linking these with stakeholder contexts and perspectives.
- Participating in, and organising, as appropriate, internal and external meetings, brainstorm sessions, technical/policy workshops, information sessions, and conferences.

- Leading on writing and publishing academic papers and contributing to other outputs, such as Policy Briefs and Working Papers
- Presenting research papers at conferences.
- Organising meetings, seminars and workshops.
- Contributing creative solutions to research challenges.
- Liaising closely with complementary ForestLab collaborative projects

Activities relating to administration and management and/or School service may include:
- Playing a constructive role in the life of the ForestLAB/Institute/Department.
- Managing the activities of research assistants on a day-to-day basis.

All of the above are subject to the contractual obligations imposed by the external funding agency and with the agreement of the grant-holder, Principal Investigator and/or Head of Centre.

Flexibility
To deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility may be required in the duties performed in order to meet the exigencies of service. Job roles may also naturally develop over time and ongoing substantial changes to a role will be discussed between line managers and their staff, with job descriptions updated as and when appropriate.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
LSE is committed to building a diverse, equitable and truly inclusive university. All posts (and post holders) will seek to ensure diversity and inclusion, while opposing all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, or social and economic background.

Ethics Code
Posts (and post holders) are assumed to have a responsibility to act in accordance with the School's Ethics Code and to promote the principles and values that the Code enshrines. The Ethics Code clearly states that the whole LSE community, including all staff, students, and governors of LSE, are expected to act in accordance with the principles which are set out in the Code. As such you are required to read and familiarise yourself with it. The School's Effective Behaviours Framework is designed to support this Code. It sets out examples for the six behaviours that all staff are expected to demonstrate, these can be found on the following link: click here

Environmental Sustainability
The post holder is required to minimise environmental impact in the performance of the role, and actively contribute to the delivery of the LSE Environmental Policy.