



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. The description of the duties and responsibilities reflect the post at the time it was drawn up, the details of which may change over time without changing the general character and purpose of the post or the level of responsibility encompassed.

Job title: Assistant Professorial Research Fellow (Conservation Finance)

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

Job Summary

The ForestLAB is a new joint programme between the African Conservation Development Group (ACDG), the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (GRI) at the London School of Economics (LSE) and the University of Stirling. The programme 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](#) and the appointed Assistant Professorial Research Fellow.
- 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](#).

The Conservation Finance strand will advance the research on investment mechanisms that promote conservation and protection of forests and biodiversity. At the same time, study how ecosystems can help societies to address a variety of environmental and economic challenges in a sustainable way.

Advances in big data cloud processing, and applied ML/AI mean that huge amounts of data can be processed and analysed to support the monitoring, reporting and verification of forest conservation projects, and lower barriers to project development and delivery.

The successful candidate will explore the use of processed geospatial information (e.g. time series of national land cover classifications) from the public and partner private sector companies to inform the development of sustainability and financial products. This work should be then applied to the design of conservation finance products.

The possibilities provided by the large scale analysis of remote-sensing data should facilitate the development of performance-based products, including existing activities for forestry e.g. under REDD+, but also new activities proposed under the banner of Nature Based Solutions/ Natural Climate Solutions, ultimately helping investors monitor a broad range of sustainability concerns. The definition of appropriate performance criteria will be informed, inter alia, by the insights of the Managing Natural Capital research strand.



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

The programme is creating a vibrant and diverse community of researchers who share a passion for the natural environment clustered around the following core areas: conservation finance, sustainability economics, conservation and development and behavioural economics.

The programme has a key focus on the Grande Mayumba area in southern Gabon, set within a broader context of national and international research and debates on the above four topics. 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.

Range of Academic Activities and Responsibilities at Assistant Professor Level at LSE

Research

- Develop and carry forward a coherent research strategy on conservation finance, which has national and international impact and fits with the research agenda of the ForestLAB and wider institute.
- Conducting substantive research into complex problems, ideas, concepts or theories and applying appropriate methodologies.
- Developing a body of outstanding quality publications in well recognised peer reviewed outlets.
- Presenting research and giving invited papers at national and international conferences.
- Acting as a reviewer for academic journals.
- Providing academic leadership at conferences and raising the profile of ForestLAB, Grantham and LSE research.
- Providing expert opinion and commentary to external audiences and organisations.

Knowledge engagement and impact

- Contribute actively to the policy engagement activities of the institute, including formulating accessible policy documents, providing expert opinion and commentary and engaging actively with policy makers
- Actively developing strategies to ensure that research outputs have demonstrable impact and inform the public debate.
- Engaging with non-academic audiences.

Management and leadership of research projects

- Leading Conservation Finance research and co-ordinating the work of others in the ForestLAB Team.
- Training and supervising the work of research assistants and of research officers.



Contributing to the development of teams, through supervision and peer support.

- Formulate academic and/or philanthropic funding bids which develop and enhance research support for their research area and achieve success in attracting such funding

Activities relating to centre/institute/departmental/School management and administration

- Fostering collegiality and fulfilling responsibilities as set out by the Head of Department or Centre/Institute Director.
- Attending and participating in Centre/Department/Institute meetings and contributing towards the intellectual life of the unit.
- Contributing to the development of individuals, through mentoring of junior research staff.
- Support centre/institute/department recruitment activity of research staff, including membership of relevant search committees.

Other responsibilities may include

- Contributing to strategic deliberations and making decisions at Institutional level, e.g. through membership of School committees
- Supervising Masters' students.

Precise duties are subject to the opportunities available, the contractual obligations imposed by the external funding agency and with the agreement of the grant-holder, Principal Investigator, Centre/Institute Director and/or Head of Department, in accordance with established line management arrangements and commensurate with the post.

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.