

# WISER Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Regional Climate Services Co-production Call for Applications

## 1. Purpose of the Fellowship

The Climate System Analysis Group (CSAG), based in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science at the University of Cape Town (UCT), invites applications for two Postdoctoral Research Fellowships to act as regional co-production champions embedded within the Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa (WISER) Southern Africa programme. The fellowships are funded through the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Africa Regional Climate and Nature (ARCAN) programme, which are managed by the UK Met Office.

The purpose of these Postdoctoral Research Fellowships is to provide early-career researchers with the opportunity to play a key role in advancing co-production practices, working in collaboration with local and regional organisations to enhance climate services and support the goals of the WISER programme in Southern Africa, under the mentorship of researchers within the WISER network and at UCT.

## 2. Call for Applications

Suitably qualified candidates are invited to apply for one of two full-time Postdoctoral Research Fellowships to be hosted at CSAG, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa.

The successful fellows will act as co-production champions within the WISER Southern Africa programme and work closely with CSAG researchers, regional organisations, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs), and other stakeholders.

*Postdoctoral Research Fellows at UCT are not employees of the University.* Fellows are awarded research fellowships and are expected to pursue independent research under the guidance of a Host/Principal Investigator, in accordance with UCT and SARS postdoctoral policies.

## 3. Background to the WISER Programme

The Weather and Climate Information Services (WISER) programme is managed by the UK Met Office on behalf of the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). WISER seeks to support communities and individuals disproportionately affected by extreme weather, seasonal variability, and climate

change by increasing the uptake and use of co-produced weather and climate information services.

WISER Southern Africa currently works in: Angola, Botswana, the Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

#### 4. Research Activities and Responsibilities

While each fellow will have scope to shape their own research and engagement activities, the fellowships are expected to focus on:

- Providing co-production expertise in the Southern Africa region, including support to regional organisations and NMHS-led co-production processes (e.g. Climate Outlook Forums).
- Engaging with regional stakeholders to co-design priorities that can inform future climate-focused development funding.
- Conducting independent postdoctoral research on climate services-related topics, including co-production, risk communication, stakeholder engagement, science–policy interaction, or local knowledge systems.
- Contributing to learning, capacity development, and knowledge exchange within CSAG and the wider WISER Africa programme.

The fellowship is intended for research and professional development. No service is required in return for the award of the fellowship.

#### 5. Conditions of Award (General)

These Postdoctoral Research Fellowships are awarded in accordance with the University of Cape Town Postdoctoral Definition and the SARS Binding Class Ruling (2020). Accordingly:

- Fellowships are only available to individuals who have obtained their PhD within the past five (5) years.
- Applicants may not previously have held full-time permanent academic or professional posts.
- The fellowship does not include employee benefits (e.g. medical aid, pension, leave).
- The fellowship holders may, as part of their professional development, undertake postgraduate co-supervision and contribute a lecture to a course, by agreement.
- The successful fellows must comply with all relevant UCT policies, procedures, and practices governing postdoctoral research fellows.

## 6. Value and Tenure

- Value of fellowship: Each fellowship will be awarded at ZAR 500,000 per annum.
- The fellowship value is tax-exempt, in accordance with SARS regulations.
- Tenure: The fellowship is tenable on a full-time basis until 31 March 2028, subject to satisfactory academic progress and continued funding availability.
- A start date is required as soon as possible.

Research-related travel and workshop costs will be supported separately.

## 7. Academic Criteria

### *Essential Criteria*

Applicants must demonstrate:

1. A PhD degree in a field relevant to climate, environmental, or sustainability science, awarded within the past five years.
2. Evidence of academic interest in co-production relevant to climate services, with a good knowledge of approaches, theories and participatory methodologies applicable to climate services co-development.
3. Evidence of a good understanding of the climate services landscape, including opportunities and challenges for developing climate services.
4. Evidence of a good understanding of the physical science behind climate variability and climate change.
5. Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively using a range of methods (e.g., written reports, presentations) to explain complex scientific information to different audiences.
6. Ability to work effectively with a range of actors across the science-society interface with knowledge of equity, diversity and inclusion considerations required to incorporate different expertise and knowledge in producing decision-relevant outcomes.
7. Demonstrated capacity to contribute original ideas and approaches, with the initiative and independence to pursue self-directed research or creative work.
8. Fluency in spoken and written English.

### *Desirable Criteria*

- Ability to fluently speak a second language (particularly a language that is widely spoken in the region applicable to the application).
- Experience and knowledge of policy development and/or sector expertise e.g. energy, water, health, agriculture and food security, disaster risk reduction.
- Experience in social science and/or qualitative research.

- A well-established network in the region amongst the academic, policy and climate service actor communities.

## 8. Eligibility and Right to Work

Applicants must:

- Be South African citizens or in possession of a valid South African work visa permitting research activity.
- Be nationals of one of the WISER-eligible Southern African countries (see above).
- Have the right to reside and work in South Africa for the full duration of the fellowship (UCT cannot sponsor research/work visas for these positions).

## 9. Application Requirements

Applications must include:

1. A letter of motivation/statement of suitability (max. 1,000 words) outlining research interests, relevant experience, and alignment with the fellowship.
2. A curriculum vitae, including a list of publications.
3. The names and contact details of at least two academic referees.

Applications and enquiries should be sent to:

Alice McClure at the Climate System Analysis Group (CSAG)

Email: [alice@csag.uct.ac.za](mailto:alice@csag.uct.ac.za)

## 10. Closing Date and Selection Process

There is no fixed closing date. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis and the positions will remain open until filled.

Eligible applications will be reviewed in accordance with UCT policies. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to a virtual interview.

## 11. Equity Statement and Indemnity

UCT is committed to the pursuit of excellence, diversity, and redress in achieving its equity targets in accordance with its Employment Equity Plan. Preference may be given to candidates from underrepresented designated groups.

The University of Cape Town reserves the right to disqualify ineligible or incomplete applications, to change the conditions of award, or to make no award at all.