



Regional Partnership on Water and Environment in Central and West Africa (PREE)



Terms of reference

for the identification of students enrolled at master or doctorate level to benefit from financial support for their fieldwork in the Niger, Volta, Mono and Lake Chad basins and the Fouta Djallon Massif

I. Context/general introduction

In Central and West Africa, natural ecosystems and their resources are undergoing continuous degradation, aggravated by the negative impacts of human activities and climate change. This situation is detrimental to the goods and services that these ecosystems provide to populations. To curb this phenomenon, countries, basin organizations and regional integration institutions are developing initiatives, but their impacts are still insufficient in relation to the challenges.

Faced with this observation, IUCN and its strategic partners in Central and West Africa have conducted a reflection that has led to the identification of a large-scale project entitled "Regional Partnership on Water and the Environment in Central and West Africa (PREE)".

The objectives, results and planned activities of the PREE address several concrete concerns related to water and environmental management in the two African sub-regions concerned and are part of several global, sub-regional, national and even local initiatives in the concerned river basins. Among the initiatives in which the project is involved, we can mention:

- the UN Security Council motion adopted in 2017 on "the negative effects of climate change and environmental changes, among other factors, on the stability of the region, including water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity".
- The IWRM approach adapted by the states of the West and Central African sub-regions as a mechanism for strengthening the governance of water and associated ecosystems which are characterized by conflicts of use, resource degradation and overexploitation, among others.

Specifically, the PREE is justified by :

- The need to consolidate and scale up the achievements of previous SIDA-funded and IUCN-implemented initiatives in the region: PAGEV, PREMI and PAGE;
- The need to continue to maintain and increase the coherence, operationality and adaptability of the governance frameworks so that they are in harmony with the growing diversity and complexity of environmental governance issues and challenges;

- The need to support regional institutions in their efforts to respond to the challenge of vulnerability and climate change.

The overall objective of the project is to: "**strengthen the resilience of natural ecosystems and local communities in the river and lake basins of West and Central Africa**". Specifically, it aims to "strengthen the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and the resilience of communities and ecosystems in order to prevent and manage conflicts over the use of natural resources in the Niger, Volta, Mono and Lake Chad basins and the Fouta Djallon Massif" through interventions that will be articulated essentially around five axes:

- capacity building of regional institutions;
- the operationalization of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in the basins
- taking into account the risks and opportunities of conflict sensitivity in the basins;
- restoration of specific degraded ecosystems; and
- increasing the adaptive capacity of local communities to climate change and building ecosystem resilience.

Under the first focus area of the PREE (capacity building of regional institutions), IUCN in collaboration with WASCAL plans to support Masters or PhD students working in one of the following basins: Niger, Volta, Mono, Lake Chad and the Fouta Djallon Massif.

II.Overall objective

The overall objective of this activity is to support the production and use of relevant scientific data that will be needed for the restoration of degraded ecosystems and to support the development of policies/strategies for sustainable watershed management.

Specific objectives

Specifically, it aims to:

- Support PhD and Masters students in their fieldwork for data collection at the level of the concerned basins.
- Generate relevant scientific data at the level of the basins;
- To set up a platform for sharing the data resulting from the work of the supported students, which will be made available to the basin authorities.

Expected results of this activity: Five students, one per basin (Niger, Mono, Volta, Lake Chad, Fouta Djallon) have benefited from the support of the project for data collection in the framework of their research work.

Deliverables: Summary report of data collection by students. A database of data collected by the students and an online data sharing platform.

Conditions to benefit from the support

To benefit from this financial support, students will have to meet the following criteria:

- Be a national of a member country of the different basin authorities concerned;
- Be regularly enrolled in a Master or PhD program and have already completed the theoretical courses (for Master students);
- Have a research topic related to the watersheds concerned by the PREE project (Niger, Mono, Volta, Lake Chad, Fouta Djallon);

- Have a thesis supervisor (master's and doctorate) from a university or research center who agrees to supervise the data collection;
- Be suggested preferably by an authority from one of the basins concerned by a letter of recommendation if possible;
- Agree to make the data collected in the field available to the project team, especially to WASCAL Competence Centre;
- Agree that the data will be uploaded to the online platform that will be set up.

III. Budget allocated per student

The selected students will receive a financial support of 3000 euros each for the fieldwork. A detailed financial report will be requested at the end of the work.

Each supervisor (one per student) will also receive a lump sum of 500 euro for supervision. The supervisor's travel costs to guide the student in the field will also be covered up to a maximum of 500 euro for the duration of the work. For transport costs, supporting documents must be provided at the end of the work.

IV. Composition and deadline for applications

Applications including the elements below are due no later than 20 May 2021 at secretariat_cc@wascal.org with a mandatory copy to neya.o@wascal.org:

- Proof of enrolment in a university or a research institution in the member countries of the Niger, Volta, Mono, Lake Chad and Fouta Djallon Basin Authorities;
- The research theme highlighting the basin of your choice and the relevant scientific data needed for the restoration of degraded ecosystems;
- A letter of recommendation from your thesis supervisor (master or PhD) indicating that he/she agrees to supervise the data collection;
- A letter of support from the relevant basin or massif authority confirming the relevance of the topic, the data to be collected and the site(s) for their institution.

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