



African Forest Forum
A platform for stakeholders in Forestry



School of Agricultural,
Forest and Food Sciences HAFL

AFF-HAFL Scholarship Programme Call – second edition

Background

In response to the challenges and impacts of climate change in Africa, and more specifically to the forestry sector, the African Forest Forum (AFF) based in Nairobi, Kenya, and the School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL) at Bern University of Applied Sciences in Zollikofen, Switzerland, established a partnership that supports a scholarship for capacity building of African scientists to enhance the role of forests and forestry in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

The African Forest Forum is a pan-African institution is an association of individuals with a commitment to the sustainable management, wise use and conservation of Africa's forest and tree resources for the socio-economic well-being of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment. AFF provides independent analysis and advice to national, regional and international institutions and actors, on how economic, food security and environmental issues can be addressed through sustainable management of forests and trees.

The School of Agriculture, Forest and Food Sciences (HAFL) in Zollikofen, Switzerland belongs to the Bern University of Applied Sciences. It offers master's degree programs in applied agricultural and forestry sciences, which are taught in English. Graduates of the major in International Forest Industries will gain the necessary know-how to tackle the complex questions of forest management under conditions of a changing climate, forest industry development and trade in forest products. They are best prepared for specialised positions in international organisations, management positions in private sector organisations, internationally-oriented civil society organisations and research institutions. Members of the private sector, civil society and academia are regularly invited to the classes to enable networking between students and players in the international forest development context. The first four fellows of the first edition of the AFF-HAFL scholarship programme (2014-2015) will complete their master's degree in September 2015.

Objectives

The aim of the AFF-HAFL Scholarship Programme is to strengthen the African Forest Forum, and more specifically to build African capacity in forest-related policy and management in African countries by providing opportunities for young professionals from Africa to undertake master's degree studies at HAFL. People benefiting from the scholarship are expected to become the future champions in spreading knowledge and wisdom through AFF and related institutions and networks in the long run.

Four full scholarships covering all expenses including the research project costs will be granted in the period 2016-2017. The scholarships will be awarded to young professionals who possess the highest ability and potential, and already present an interesting research idea for their master's thesis (not made on the basis of financial need).

The deadline for scholarship applications is 6th of September, 2015. Awards will be granted by the end of December 2015. Students should commence their studies at HAFL in mid-February in the spring term 2016.

Fields of Study

Scholarship holders coming to study at HAFL will acquire expertise regarding key issues of current climate change and its impact on land use emphasizing interrelated aspects of water resource management, agricultural production, rural development, economic and sociocultural welfare, policy making and governance.

The master's programme is aligned to obtain a master's degree in international forestry. It will be composed of a selection of modules tailored to the fellow's specific needs in the first term and of compulsory modules in the second term. The third term is devoted to the master's thesis research.



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Individual research project ideas should already be available when applying to the programme. Research projects should be carried out in the student's home country. The study focus and the topic of the master's thesis shall be on one of the following three thematic areas:

- a) Vulnerability to climate change and application of promising adaptation measures pertinent to AFOLU
- b) Policies and practices that integrate mitigation and adaptation in AFOLU
- c) Private sector in African forestry to address climate change challenges
- d) Resilience of social, economic, cultural and biological systems to climate change

Required qualification

The applicant should meet the following qualifications and skills:

- University degree in forestry or environmental and related sciences
- Excellent knowledge of forest ecosystems, governance, institutions and livelihoods
- Understanding of climate change
- Proficiency in English and/or French, but good English skills are necessary
- Interest in multidisciplinary and multicultural research

Application procedure

Applications will undergo a two-level selection process. AFF-HAFL scientific experts will assess the applications in a first review followed by Skype interviews. The AFF-HAFL Steering Committee will then review the applications and make a final selection of candidates that will receive the awards.

Applications for scholarships should be made on the application form. The full application contains:

1. Completed application form
2. 1-page motivational letter (including personal contact data)
3. CV (including information on academic career and study course specialisation, professional record, former scholarships or awards, knowledge of foreign languages)
4. Copy of diploma/degree
5. Letter of recommendation by a previous academic supervisor
6. Drafted research idea/ draft of research proposal, including work and time schedule

Please convey your documents only in electronic form, as one document, latest by 6th of September 2015 to Martina Wiedemar (Project assistant) at: martina.wiedemar@bfh.ch with CC: Yonas Yemshaw at: y.yemshaw@cgiar.org

Announcement of results

The candidates selected for an award will be notified individually in autumn 2015. The results will be made public at a later date.

To obtain more information, please email:

Martina Wiedemar martina.wiedemar@bfh.ch
Yonas Yemshaw y.yemshaw@cgiar.org