

## **Information on Postgraduate Research Scholarship - Ref: FES-FLF-01-2021**

<b>Faculty:</b>	Engineering and Science	<b>Department:</b>	Natural Resources Institute
<b>Lead Supervisor:</b>	Dr Uche Okpara		
<b>Project Title:</b> Conflict and Environment Observatory for Enhanced Decision Making on Connected Climate, Peace and Prosperity Agendas with Impact Stories from the Lake Chad Region			

### **Project Description:**

**Are you an aspiring PhD candidate looking for your next challenge? Are you passionate about delivering innovative research in a field of growing importance to the world? A fully funded three-year PhD scholarship is available to a highly ambitious PhD student interested in building expertise and becoming a leader in conflict, climate, peace and development studies.**

Insurgent struggles and environmental hazards are major challenges for sustainable development, impacting social cohesion and livelihood performance, particularly in water-limited environments that are increasingly a global focus of climate security concerns. While the 2030 global agenda identifies peace, justice and poverty reduction as relevant elements of the sustainable development goals, little is known about how these can be achieved in tandem with improvements in environmental stewardship, community reconstruction and livelihood rehabilitation in times of social and environmental disasters. This PhD project will address this knowledge gap by focusing on the Lake Chad basin region where there is a long standing, and recently revived, state of insecurity driven by insurgent conflict, socio-economic stresses and climate change. Violence in this region has created unprecedented challenges for decision makers and development actors who are being asked to make many varied and complex peace-conducive and climate-friendly decisions in quick succession. The range and urgency of evidence they require is continuously growing – and it is not easily accessible. This presents another challenge in developing/implementing needs-based interventions to help vulnerable communities through the severe and widespread impacts of social and environmental disasters.

We are seeking a highly motivated and curious PhD candidate to carry out this project which is linked to a UKRI funded Future Leaders Fellowship awarded to Dr Uche Okpara. The PhD project will be structured around some combination of the following objectives: (i) track and assess the emergence and spread of violent conflict in the Lake Chad basin region (e.g. from 2009 to date) and evaluate its impacts on the environment – land, water and natural vegetation; (ii) document and assess the lived experiences of communities and provide insight into the policy landscape on regional stabilisation; (iii) investigate how countries in the region are helping each other leverage data, statistics or evidence for the SDGs related to prosperity, climate and peace, including assessment of how strong the relations between the different groups working on these issues are; (iv) compile and examine how climate security is perceived locally, including how it is being officially communicated and responded to; (v) identify, assess and promote interventions that support both peace-conducive and climate-compatible development; and (vi) document and provide peace impact stories from the Lake Chad region, and the potential transferability to the Lake Chad context of other countries' interventions.

We envisage that the successful candidate will advance new ways of data generation, knowledge mobilisation and forward prediction of conflict diffusion and escalation, demonstrating how to limit the severity of conflict and environmental harm. Data sources can be wide ranging, covering, for example, administrative records, citizen-generated data, mobile phone interviews and satellite imagery, including use of collective intelligence methods drawing on data and evidence generated from our network of researchers already located in the Lake Chad region.

The successful candidate will have a solid background in environmental social science, agricultural economics, conflict and peace studies or social anthropology, but applications from candidates with other backgrounds involving strong knowledge of mixed methods research approaches will be considered. The candidate will become part of NRI's own vibrant and international PhD student body researching topics in climate change, development studies, food systems, conflict, environment and agriculture. He/she should have a passion in bringing data and evidence together and supporting an enabling environment for the integration and use of traditional and non-traditional data sources, including a passion for conducting complex socio-ecological data analyses.

We would expect research proposals to cover the Lake Chad basin region. Preference will be given to candidates able to support and co-manage a new Lake Chad Conflict and Environment Observatory at NRI<sup>1</sup> with a high degree of independence, including willingness to liaise with national and regional policy makers, and ability to communicate in French and other national languages. Very good spoken and written English language skills are required as well both for the reading and writing of scientific papers, and presentation of results at local and international conferences and workshops.

**Duration:** 3 years, Full-Time Study

**Bursary available (subject to satisfactory performance):**

Year 1: £15,609      Year 2: In line with RCUK rate      Year 3: In line with RCUK rate

The successful candidate will receive a waiver for tuition fees for the duration of their three-year scholarship.

**Person Specification of Essential (E) or Desirable (D) requirements:**

<b>Criteria:</b>	<b>E or D</b>
<b>Education and Training:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>st</sup> Class or 2<sup>nd</sup> class, First Division (Upper Second Class) Honours Degree or a taught Master's degree with a minimum average of 60% in all areas of assessment (UK or UK equivalent) in a relevant area to the proposed research project</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For those whose first language is not English and/or if from a country where English is not the majority spoken language (as recognised by the UKBA), a language proficiency score of at least IELTS 6.5 (in all elements of the test) or an equivalent UK VISA and Immigration secure English Language Test is required, unless the degree above was taught in English <u>and</u> obtained in a majority English speaking country, e.g. UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, etc, as recognised by the UKBA.</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<b>Experience &amp; Skills:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous experience of undertaking research (e.g. undergraduate or taught masters dissertation)</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding and experience of mixed methods research approaches in the environmental social sciences</li> </ul>	<b>E</b>

• Knowledge of conflict, peace and sustainable development issues in dryland regions of Africa, including the Lake Chad region	<b>E</b>
• High level of practical and logistical ability to plan and implement independent research in challenging areas of developing countries, including ability to work with, manage and analyse large datasets	<b>D</b>
• Fluency in French and any other language spoken in the Lake Chad basin countries	<b>D</b>
<b>Personal Attributes:</b>	
• Understands the fundamental differences between a taught degree and a research degree in terms of approach and personal discipline/motivation	<b>E</b>
• Able to, under guidance, complete independent work successfully	<b>E</b>
• Personal resilience and good cross-cultural communication skills	<b>E</b>
<b>Other Requirements:</b>	
• This scholarship may require Academic Technology Approval Scheme approval for the successful candidate if from outside of the EU/EEA	<b>E</b>
• A PhD project research proposal that is related to the research area	<b>E</b>
• The scholarship must commence by February 2022	<b>E</b>

**Closing date for applications: *midnight UTC on 01 December 2021***

**For further information contact: *Dr Uche Okpara*    *E-mail: u.t.okpara@greenwich.ac.uk***

#### **Making an application:**

Please read this information before making an application. Information on the application process is available at: <https://www.gre.ac.uk/research/study/apply/application-process>. Applications need to be made online via this link. **No other form of application will be considered.**

All applications **must include** the following information. **Applications not containing these documents will not be considered.**

- In the first part of the application select the following: **Development Studies (MPhil/PhD)**
- **Scholarship Reference Number (FES-FLF-01-2021)** should be included in the personal statement section together with your personal statement as to why you are applying
- **a research proposal on how you would address the research topic/area \***
- **a CV including 2 referees \***
- **academic qualification certificates/transcripts and IELTS/English Language certificate if you are an international applicant or if English is not your first language or you are from a country where English is not the majority spoken language as defined by the UK Border Agency \***

*\*Upload to the qualification section of the application form. Attachments must be in a PDF format.*

Before submitting your application, you are encouraged to liaise with the Lead Supervisor (Dr Uche Okpara) on the details above.