



**NILE BASIN RESEARCH PROGRAMME:
SPRING 2009 WORKING GROUP ON BIODIVERSITY**

TEN SALARIED RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS are available for ecologists from institutions in the Nile Basin countries (Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo) to participate in the Nile Basin Research Programme Spring 2009 working group on Biodiversity at the University of Bergen, Norway. This working group will bring together excellent scientists from the Nile Basin countries with shared interests in biodiversity science to conduct collaborative research focusing on one or more of the following themes: (i) patterns of species richness along climate gradients such as temperature-elevation gradients and/or rainfall gradients, and (ii) biodiversity conservation along a human impact gradient.*

We seek scholars and/or researchers holding positions at institutions in the Nile Basin Region who have a research background and interests in biodiversity science. During the fellowship period in Bergen, the researchers in the working group will collaborate to identify critical research questions of relevance to the general themes of the working group, identify and collate relevant biodiversity data, analyse the data and publish the results as co-authored papers in the international peer-review literature. The success of the working group depends critically on good knowledge of the existing data and literature from the region, and we therefore seek fellows having good knowledge of, and access to, existing biodiversity data and literature that can be utilised by the working group for analyses and meta-analyses. Data can either be own research data, institutional data or from national databases.

The fellowships are for five months, starting on January 12 2009, and the working group will



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be located at UNIFOB Global (www.global.uib.no), where the working group has excellent working facilities including administrative support, office space, computers with internet access, and access to research facilities such as software, databases and the University of Bergen Library.

The working group will be scientifically affiliated to the Ecological and Environmental Change Research Group (www.eecrg.uib.no) at the Department of Biology, University of Bergen, Norway. The EECRG consists of 12 senior scientist and more than 20 Postdocs and PhD students with research interests focusing on biodiversity patterns and processes, effects of climatic and environmental change, cultural landscapes and invasive species, and quantitative methods. Many of the basic and applied ecological questions the EECRG seeks to address in Norway, are also relevant in Nile Basin countries, where biodiversity is often far higher than it is in Northern Europe. The EECRG therefore collaborates with local scientists in countries such as Sudan, Egypt, Uganda, Nepal, Kina and Tibet to undertake basic ecological research. For instance the Matrix project investigates the influence of space and the surrounding vegetation on species richness in Ugandan forest fragments. The project 'Biodiversity in Himalaya' used published data to explore biodiversity and climate relationships along elevation gradients

(www.uib.no/people/nboov/biodiv.htm).

As a host for the Nile Basin Research Programme Spring 2009 working group on Biodiversity, the EECRG will offer opportunities to participate in biweekly research seminars and journal clubs, as well as specialised research courses (including basic and advanced statistical training). Members of the EECRG will actively participate in the Working Group, offering statistical and GIS support, expertise in biodiversity theory, and opportunities to collaborate with ongoing EECRG research projects.



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The Nile Basin Research Programme will sponsor workshops with international guest lecturers, and offer opportunities for applying for additional funding for attending relevant international conferences.

The successful applicants will be offered a salary as a Senior Researcher at the University of Bergen (currently about 6700 USD a month before taxation), one economy class return airfare between their home institution and Bergen, medical insurance and work permit. Female researchers are especially encouraged to apply.

Application deadline is 1st October 2008.

Further information about the programme and application procedure, eligibility, selection process, etc., please refer to:

www.nile.uib.no/vacancies.php

*Relevant literature:

Bhagwat, S.A., Willis, K.J., Birks, H.J.B. and Robert J. Whittaker, R.J. 2008 Agroforestry: a refuge for tropical biodiversity? *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 23, 261-267.

Vetaas, O.R. 2006. Biological relativity to water-energy dynamics: a potential unifying theory? *Journal of Biogeography* 33: 1866-1867.

Parmentier et al. 2007. The odd man out? Might climate explain the lower tree α -diversity of African rain forests relative to Amazonian rain forests? *Journal of Ecology* 95, 1058-1071.

Nile Basin Research Programme
P.O.Box 7800
NO-5020 Bergen
NORWAY

Telephone: +47 55 58 93 00
Telefax: +47 55 58 98 92
E-mail: nile@uib.no
<http://nile.uib.no>