



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

**African Climate & Development Initiative**

[acdi.uct.ac.za](http://acdi.uct.ac.za)



African Synthesis Centre for Climate Change,  
Environment and Development

[ascendclimate.org](http://ascendclimate.org)

## Call for Applications: ASCEND Postdoctoral Research Fellowship

### Unpacking Non-economic Loss and Damage in Africa (UNELD-Africa)

**Application Deadline: Sunday 23 February 2025 or until the position is filled**

#### Call for applications

The African Synthesis Centre For Climate Change, Environment and Development ([ASCEND](http://ascendclimate.org)) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) is seeking a Postdoctoral Research Fellow (PDRF) with expertise in climate change-related loss and damage.

This PDRF is a unique and excellent opportunity to expand your network with researchers and decision-makers, as well as deliver cutting-edge research to inform policy and practice. ASCEND provides specialized infrastructure for hosting collaborative synthesis teams that accelerate solutions-oriented research for climate action across Africa and globally.

#### Synthesis team project description

The PDRF will join the synthesis research team on Unpacking non-economic loss and damage in Africa (UNELD-Africa) hosted by ASCEND. The team has up to 15 members from research, policy, and practitioner backgrounds who will travel to ASCEND for up to four in-person working meetings over 2 years. The PDRF will be based full-time at ASCEND as a core member of the team, working closely with the team's co-leads to deliver actionable research.

This synthesis project aims to offer a comprehensive evidence-based assessment of non-economic loss and damage (NELD) by collating relevant information to generate actionable solutions for informed climate adaptation policy and practices in Africa. The research will explore NELD in three major development sectors as a matter of priority in Africa - (i) health, (ii) agriculture, and (iii) human mobility - by combining hazard/risk data with datasets from global, regional, and local scales in these sectors, along with demographic change. It will address the following questions:

1. How does loss and damage happen, and how is Africa being affected?
2. Who is already affected by loss and damage in Africa?
3. How is loss and damage likely to evolve over the coming decades?
4. What scale does loss and damage operate the most, and at what cost (and to whom)?

#### Roles and responsibilities of the Postdoctoral Research Fellow

The PDRF will be highly motivated to work as part of a transdisciplinary research team, grow their research expertise, engage with climate change researchers and decision-makers, and generate peer-reviewed publications.

The PDRF will be based at ASCEND at UCT and advised remotely by **Dr Edmond Totin** from Université Nationale d'Agriculture (Benin), **Dr. Joyce Kimutai** affiliated with Kenya Meteorological Services and Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London, and **Prof Emily Boyd** from Lund University (Sweden). ASCEND will also appoint a mentor to the PDRF based locally to provide

professional development support in consultation with the academic mentors at Université Nationale d'Agriculture (Benin), Imperial College London (UK) and Lund University (Sweden). ASCEND will support, when possible, travel for short visits to work with the academic mentors at their host institutions.

The PDRF will also be part of a larger cohort of PDRFs at ASCEND working on climate change and development-related topics with other synthesis teams. The PDRF will participate in career development activities organised by ASCEND for the wider cohort of ASCEND PDRFs to develop transdisciplinary skills, share knowledge on what works for actionable research, and foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

Other responsibilities of the PDRF will be discussed and assigned collectively with the UNELD-Africa synthesis team. It is expected that these responsibilities will result in specific outputs, such as policy briefs and toolkits.

### **Resources provided by ASCEND**

The PDRF will be given the necessary resources for their work, including:

- Desk and office space
- IT and communication infrastructure
- Career and professional development activities as part of a larger ASCEND PDRF cohort.

### **Value and tenure:**

- The value of the fellowship is ZAR 450,000 – 480,000 per year for up to 2 years, with a potential extension for a 3rd year based on performance and funding availability.
- Application for tax exemption of the fellowship stipend will be made by the University.

### **Academic / experience criteria:**

#### *Required*

- A PhD, awarded within the previous three years, in a related discipline (e.g., geography, climate and society, sustainability).
- Knowledge of loss and damage, climate variability and change in agriculture, disaster risk reduction, adaptation in human settlements, health–climate change nexus.
- Experience in synthesizing and managing large datasets.
- Experience in, and knowledgeable of econometric analysis methodologies and tools. The position involves collaborating on climate governance and justice within an interdisciplinary team.
- Excellent technical ability to code in *R* or *Python* and/or other statistical programming languages, ideally including analysis of socio-economic data, geophysical data, and/or other geospatial datasets.
- Experience in working in a virtual and interdisciplinary research team setting.
- Demonstrated ability to produce peer-reviewed research articles in international journals.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English.

#### *Desired*

- Familiarity with climate governance, including climate justice and non-economic loss and damage, with intangible losses like loss of identity, culture, traditions and networks.
- High interest and experience in econometric analysis.
- Creative science communication.
- Interest and experience in transdisciplinary collaborations, particularly engagement with decision-makers.

- Experience in giving international oral presentations and interest in public communication of science to an international audience.
- Excellent data visualization skills.

#### **Conditions of award:**

- Applicants may not previously have held a full-time permanent academic post.
- The successful applicant will be required to register as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Cape Town and will be expected to join the synthesis team at a mutually agreed date that is ideally **no later than early April 2025**.
- The successful applicant will be required to be a full participant in the UNELD-Africa synthesis research team.
- The successful applicant will be required to comply with the university's approved policies, procedures and practices for the postdoctoral sector.

#### **Application requirements:**

Applicants should submit as a single PDF: (i) an application letter no longer than 2 pages that includes a description of research interests, research expertise, and an explanation of how they can work as part of the transdisciplinary synthesis team in line with the project objectives described above; (ii) a CV including a publication list; (iii) copies of academic transcripts and/or certificates; (iv) an example of written work; (v) email addresses of two references who have been directly involved in their PhD and/or previous postdoctoral research.

**Applicants must submit the PDF application document to [ascend.info@uct.ac.za](mailto:ascend.info@uct.ac.za) . Please type "Baobab PDR Application: UNELD-Africa" as the subject line of the email.**

#### **Closing date**

**Midnight (GMT+2) on Sunday 23 February 2025 or until the position is filled.**

#### **Selection process**

Eligible and complete applications will be considered by ASCEND and we will communicate with short-listed applicants. ASCEND in consultation with the synthesis team academic mentors will conduct interviews of the short-listed applicants.

If you have not heard from ASCEND within two months of the deadline, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.

**Contact details for enquiries about the PDRF and ASCEND: [farai.kapfudzaruwa@uct.ac.za](mailto:farai.kapfudzaruwa@uct.ac.za)**

**Additional information on ASCEND can be found at: <https://ascendclimate.org/>**

*The University of Cape Town reserves the right to*

- *Disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications;*
- *Change the conditions of the award or to make no awards at all*