

NRF Communities of Practice in “Western Indian Ocean: Assessing the applicability of the ocean-accounts framework (OAF)”



Masters Bursary: Developing Ecosystem Asset and Condition Accounts for Algoa Bay

Background

The oceans are facing increasing anthropogenic pressures and with the oceans considered the next economic frontier, this is likely set to increase in coming years. This is apparent in the international discussions on the development of ocean economies or blue economies including such initiatives as the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, the Global Ocean Accounts Partnership and more locally the AU 2050 Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy and South Africa’s Oceans Phakisa Programme. South Africa is also one of five countries participating in the UN Natural Capital Accounting & Valuation of Ecosystem Services Project (led by Stats SA and SANBI nationally) which aims to assist the participating partner countries to advance the knowledge agenda on environmental and ecosystem accounting and initiate pilot testing of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (EEA), with a view to improving the management of natural biotic resources, ecosystems and their services at the national level as well as mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystems in national level policy, planning and implementation.

Within this, the Ocean Accounting component is still within development, and the newly established NRF Communities of Practice - ‘Western Indian Ocean: Assessing the applicability of the ocean-accounts framework’ aims to engage with these international programmes to develop oceans accounts in South Africa and contribute to the above mentioned initiatives.

The successful Masters candidate will have an opportunity to contribute to this developing field of ocean accounting within South Africa by contributing to the development and testing of the ocean accounting methodology to inform ocean governance.

The successful candidate’s research will focus on the development of spatial layers to assess the physical, chemical and biological components of the ecosystem condition and assets accounts and how this contributes to the overall ocean accounts framework. The candidate will be expected to work closely with the Communities of Practice for Marine Spatial Planning in Algoa Bay.

The bursary amount is R80 000 per year for two years, subject to progress. The bursary is inclusive of tuition fees.

Requirements

The candidate should have a strong GIS background, be comfortable with handling large datasets and willing to develop any necessary statistical or technical competencies. The candidate will be required to publish the findings in an international peer-reviewed journal. Familiarity with the concept of ecosystem services will be advantageous. An ability to communicate with stakeholders from different disciplines is essential.

Minimum Requirements

A Natural Science Honours Degree - Preference will be given to candidates with an Honours Degree in Oceanography, Environmental Science or Geographical Science.

Location and Duration

This position is full-time for 2 years. The successful candidate must register at a South African University and will work closely with the SAEON Elwandle and Egagasini Nodes, being based either in Port Elizabeth or Cape Town. The candidate must therefore be willing and able to relocate to these cities if needed, at their own cost.

The closing date is 25th May 2020 and appointments are to commence as soon as possible thereafter.

Applications

To apply, please submit your application consisting of your CV with contactable references, motivation letter, transcript and Honours project report to Ms Nicole du Plessis (samref@saeon.ac.za) by 25 May 2020, with the subject line - Masters Application: Developing Ecosystem Asset and Condition Accounts for Algoa Bay.

Please note that feedback will only be given to shortlisted candidates. The Project Leads retain the right not to make an appointment/re-advertise and to verify all information provided by candidates.