



## POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

### UFS-QQ Risk & Vulnerability Science Centre / Afromontane Research Unit

#### ***Towards Water Security & Sustainable Rangelands in Phuthaditjhaba (Free State, South Africa): The Biodiversity Value of the QwaQwa Malotis***

The [Afromontane Research Unit](#) (ARU) is a Strategic Research Hub in the University of the Free State (UFS), and is the flagship research group of the Qwaqwa Campus (UFS-QQ). The vision of the ARU is to become 'A Continental Leader in African Mountain Research, with an immediate focus on the sustainable development of the Maloti-Drakensberg'.

The Maloti-Drakensberg is the principal water tower for southern Africa, supplying some 30 million people in 3 countries with freshwater. Water provision from the Maloti-Drakensberg includes to the city of Phuthaditjhaba (eastern Free State), via catchments on the QwaQwa Malotis. The QwaQwa Malotis (Sentinel Peak to Monontsa) form part of the western edge of the Maloti-Drakensberg – i.e. the Western Malotis. The Western Malotis remain some of the least-studied and least conserved parts of the Maloti-Drakensberg.

Through its Risk & Vulnerability Science Centre (RVSC), the ARU seeks to better understand the value of the QwaQwa Malotis to the city of Phuthaditjhaba, from an ecosystem services perspective, particularly in terms of water provision and water security under global change. This includes the biodiversity value and rangeland health of the QwaQwa Malotis as indicators of ecosystem health.

The ARU is seeking a self-led, physically fit, Post-Doctoral Fellow to coordinate a programme of multi-taxa biodiversity surveys of the Witsieshoek Community Conservation Area (WCCA), with potential to expand along the QwaQwa Malotis (i.e. to Monontsa). This will entail engaging with biodiversity specialists, local communities and key stakeholders, as well as organising the logistics of field surveys, data analyses, organizing workshops, fund-raising and writing popular and scientific publications from the results. The WCCA is an important part of the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Programme, and is managed by Transfrontier Park Destinations on behalf of the local Batlokoa Traditional Authority.

In addition to the above, the Fellow will also have the opportunity to be exposed to and contribute to the wide range of world-class mountain-related activities being driven by the ARU.

#### **FELLOWSHIP DETAILS**

- One year with the option of renewing for a second year, depending on performance.
- The Fellowship is valued at ZAR220,000.00 for one year (12 months) with R50,000.00 for running costs.

#### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- Applicants should have obtained their Doctoral degree within five (5) years, or can show proof of pending graduation in 2021.
- Applications from South African and international candidates are welcomed.
- Candidates may not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the award.
- The following intellectual/experience background will be preferred:
  - a. Basic taxonomic knowledge and nomenclatural understanding.

- b. A background in biogeography.
  - c. A passion for mountain biodiversity.
  - d. Able to manage & manipulate large datasets.
  - e. Excellent data analysis and writing skills.
  - f. Comfortable and competent to work in rugged and remote mountain environments.
  - g. Valid passport (as this is a transboundary area).
- It is recommended that the Fellow has a valid drivers' license.

#### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Motivation Letter.
- Full Curriculum Vitae (CV) (including a list of academic outputs to date).
- Full transcripts of academic record.
- Copy of degree certificates.
- Copy of South African identity document or Passport (international candidates).
- Signed letters of recommendation from three academic references.

The appointment will reflect the UFS's equity and diversity imperatives, including those for gender, racial/cultural and intellectual diversity. A Fellowship is currently available for this position, and will be awarded on a competitive basis, taking into account the applicants' academic achievements and research potential.

## **Application Deadline: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

#### **Contact Person:**

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