Vacant position for a project assistant

A project assistant position is available at the Department of Forest Genetics (Federal Forest Research Centre for Forest, BFW) in Vienna (Austria), funded in the framework of a REDD Project “Fighting climate change in Burkina Faso through technical cooperation and knowledge transfer in the agroforestry sector”

Background

Burkina Faso is a landlocked country in Western Africa located between latitudes 9° and 15°N, and longitudes 6°W and 3°E, and characterized by relatively flat terrain. The country is among the poorest and least developed countries of the world. Recurrent dry periods often cause famine in the Burkinabe population. Self-sufficient farming is the main income for 92% of the population. Burkina Faso is one of the target countries of the Austrian Development Cooperation.

Climate change poses a serious threat to development. In sub-Saharan Africa food supply is at its limits and projected climate change during the first half of the 21st century will make this situation even worse. In Burkina Faso, agroforestry plays an important role. Parklands are found throughout most of the country with exception of the extreme north, east, and parts of the south and southwest where human population density is low. The parklands are characterized by scattered mature trees occurring on cultivated fields.

Objectives of the project

The overall objective of the project is the development of improved land management concepts in the parklands of Burkina Faso. It aims at improved agroforestry to diminish negative climate change impact to support the national government, as well as local and regional communities of Burkina Faso. This will be achieved through capacity building, scientific work, and technical aid to local communities.

Thus, the project has following actions: (1) scientific work in *Prosopis africana* (spatial genetic pattern in Burkina Faso and neighboring countries, quantitative genetic studies on drought tolerance, conservation guidelines, seed zonation) and (2) supporting Burkinabe institutions targeting at local communities disseminating technical guidelines and training, (3) liaising with Burkinabe stakeholders.

There are the following target groups/ beneficiaries:

(1) Results on the proper use of forest genetic resources, recommendations for management and the supply of appropriate plant material for afforestation will be aimed at rural communities in Burkina Faso.

(2) Information on technical seed zonation guidelines for *Prosopis africana* will be aimed at policy makers and land managers at the national and sub-national levels.

(3) Burkinabe students (PhD and Master level) will be provided with extensive training in tree ecology, tree improvement and molecular population genetics both in Burkina Faso as well as in Austria.
Skills and responsibilities

Candidates should have a university degree in biology, forestry or in a related field. We are looking for candidates with good project management skills. The successful candidate will significantly support the project leader. However, we also expect from the person to support us in our training activities (preparation of training material, organization of the workshops, etc) and the supervision of Burkinabe students.

Hence, knowledge in population genetics and tree improvement is also desired. Scientific writing skills are beneficial but are not mandatory. The person must have good communications skills and must be fluent in French and English (oral and written). The person will be stationed in Vienna. Some trips to Burkina Faso are mandatory.

Duration

The project duration is 3 years.

Salary

The salary will depend on seniority and experience. Working time is up to 30 hours per week with full social and health insurance.

Start

The project will very probably start in July / August 2013

How to apply

Please send a letter of motivation, a CV including a list of publications on your earliest convenience to the department head Thomas Geburek [BFW-Department of Forest Genetics, Hauptstr. 7, A-1140 Vienna, Austria (thomas.geburek@bfw.gv.at)]. Reviewing of the applications will start on the 1st of August, but later applications will be considered until the position is filled.