

Rural Water Finance in Africa *(Supervisor: Professor Rob Hope)*

Outline

Performance-based models for rural water services are emerging in Africa in response to unsatisfactory progress in delivering reliable and safe water to rural people to meet the SDG. Pioneer social enterprises are making progress, but at the margin, as there are still 300 million rural Africans without basic drinking water. Sustainable finance and institutional design are key elements to blending government, donor and consumer funds for universal delivery of safe drinking water to communities, schools, and clinics.

A critical gap is understanding ways to create value to influence the payment behaviours of rural consumers and facilities in order to attract non-traditional funding. This field-based study will examine policy and governance issues informing how rural consumers pay for water across service delivery models, payment methods, and political spaces using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The ideal DPhil student will have a passion for field-work working with rural people, social enterprises, and local government, fluency in French and English, and a strong quantitative background to model and evaluate interventions at multiple scales. Interests and expertise in behavioural economics, econometrics, institutional economics and water governance would be welcome.

The fieldwork proposed is in partnership with [UDUMA in Mali](#) as part of an ambitious and exciting new model to deliver high quality water services in 30 municipalities for 15 years. Staff at UDUMA in Mali and France will be central partners in the research where the results are anticipated to provide significant value to the evaluation of the programme and support global knowledge on performance-based rural models. The researcher will be an enthusiastic member of this public-private sector collaboration which will provide a unique context for the study. We strongly encourage applications from women and candidates with experience living and working in West Africa.

Essential skills

- Fluency in writing and speaking in French and English
- Proven skills in executing empirical research in rural contexts delivering concrete outputs
- Strong quantitative skills with an emphasis on econometrics, finance and statistics
- Examples of high-quality written work, such as a journal paper or equivalent
- A passion to understand and evaluate rural water interventions to benefit the poor
- Outstanding interpersonal skills to work with multiple stakeholders

This post is one of 15 fully-funded early career researchers as part of a Marie Curie International Training Network on the Future of Water Governance – [NEWAVE](#) – funded by the EU (2019-23) led by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and a global consortium of academic and practitioner partners. The successful applicant must be available to start with a programme-level training workshop planned for Summer 2020 in Amsterdam, completing their studies in September 2023.

Suitably qualified candidates wishing to apply for this studentship should submit a CV with details identifying the fit and motivation for the role to Professor Robert Hope (robert.hope@ouce.ox.ac.uk) before making a formal Oxford University application.

Applications must be submitted to the University of Oxford before 12pm/GMT on 15th

November: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/dphil-geography-and-environment?wssl=1>

Prospective applicants should review the eligibility criteria stipulated here: https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/sites/mariecurie2/files/msca-itn-fellows-note_en_v2.pdf
