



## Open Call for a PhD Fellowship in “Institutions and institutional change for innovative and traditional land-use measures in rangelands (C6)”

The Regional Centre for Sustainable Adaptation to Global Change in the Middle East (SAGE), hosted at the Scientific Centers at An-Najah National University, invites applications from outstanding candidates for a PhD fellowship within its Research School on Climate Change Studies.

SAGE is one of four Global Centres for Climate and Environment funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) with funds from the German Federal Foreign Office. It is coordinated by An-Najah National University (Nablus, Palestine) and the University of Tübingen (Germany).

The SAGE Centre aims to empower societies in the Middle East to develop science-based solutions for the adaptive and sustainable management of natural resources under conditions of global change. Based in the Jordan River region, SAGE supports interdisciplinary research, regional capacity building, and the generation of scientific knowledge addressing climate change impacts on agriculture, water resources, biodiversity, and food security.

**Within this framework, SAGE announces a PhD research opportunity focused on:**

### **Institutions and institutional change for innovative and traditional land-use measures in rangelands (C6)**

Rangelands are experiencing rapid ecological, socio-economic, and institutional change driven by recurrent drought, climate variability, land-use pressures, and evolving governance systems. Although innovative interventions, such as nature-based solutions, restoration activities, rainwater harvesting, and improved grazing management, are increasingly promoted, their long-term success depends on the institutions that shape how communities access, use, and manage rangeland resources. These institutions include formal rules, informal norms, customary arrangements, and organisational structures that govern collective action, authority, land-use decisions, and responses to climate-related stress. Understanding how drought and climate change trigger institutional adaptation, and how such changes influence community behaviour, is essential for sustainable rangeland management and directly complements the ecological and economic components of the wider research programme.

This project aims to examine the structure, function, and dynamics of institutions in pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, with specific attention to how climate-related pressures shape institutional change and influence the adoption of both innovative and traditional land-use measures. Rangeland, where government regulations and community norms intersect, will serve as key governance arenas shaping access rights, compliance, stewardship responsibilities, and the legitimacy of management interventions. The project will integrate institutional, social, and economic assessment with spatial evidence from maps, aerial or satellite imagery, and participatory mapping to link governance change with community livelihoods, perceived costs and benefits, resource-use patterns, and observable rangeland conditions.

**Deliverables:** This project will deliver an analytical study detailing how formal and informal institutions influence rangeland management decisions and outcomes under drought and



climate stress. It will provide an evidence-based assessment of the institutional, social, and economic factors that enable or hinder the adoption of innovative versus traditional land-use measures. The project will also generate spatially informed insights through maps, imagery-based interpretation, and community-based mapping of resource use and governance interfaces. A governance guidance study will provide practical, policy-oriented recommendations for designing socially legitimate, economically realistic, and climate-responsive rangeland management systems, alongside institutional frameworks and diagnostic tools that support integrated rangeland planning and align with ecological and economic research outputs within the broader programme.

### General Requirements

Applicants should meet the following criteria:

1. MSc. with a focus on socio-economics, rural sociology, environmental governance, anthropology, geography, development studies, or related fields, and interest in community-based resource management, institutional theory, climate adaptation, and rangeland governance.
2. Demonstrate excellent communication skills in English and Arabic.
3. Show strong motivation, creativity, organization skills, and scientific curiosity.
4. Possess a critical and analytical mindset.
5. Have experience or strong interest in interdisciplinary and international research collaboration.

We expect applicants to prepare their motivation letters and application materials independently and without the use of AI-generated content. If AI tools have been used for limited support purposes (e.g., spelling or grammar checks), this must be clearly indicated.

### Application Instructions

A complete application must include:

1. Motivation letter
2. Complete Curriculum Vitae (CV)
3. Academic transcripts (Bachelor's and Master's degrees)
4. Two letters of recommendation

Applications should be submitted as a single PDF document to: [application-sage@biologie.uni-tuebingen.de](mailto:application-sage@biologie.uni-tuebingen.de) no later than: **19/06/2026**

Please ensure that recommendation letters are sent directly by the referees to the email address above.

We are committed to diversity and equal opportunity and strongly encourage applications from female scientists and other underrepresented groups.