

**QES – AS – West Africa
Initial Narrative work-plan**

The initial workplan for the QES-AS West Africa project covers program activities up to March 31, 2024.

General information

Name of Canadian university:	Western University
Title of QES project:	“Achieving Research and Knowledge Translation Capacity for Climate Change Resilience, Food Security and Sustainable Livelihoods in West Africa”
Name of person completing the workplan:	Melanie Katsivo
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Canadian partner institution if applicable:

Name of Canadian partner institution and contact information (name, title, email)
University of Waterloo

International Partner institution that you will be working with during the period ending March 31, 2022. Add as many rows as required.

Name of international partner institution (no acronyms please)	Country
University of Benin (Universitaire d'Abomey-Calavi)	Benin
University of Cape Coast	Ghana
S.D Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies	Ghana
University of Liberia	Liberia
University of Ibadan	Nigeria
Cheikh Anta Diop University	Senegal

Number of forecasted QEScholars between now and March 31, 2022 (the number of researchers who will *begin* their award during this time)

Program component	Total number of scholars to be funded by this project (ending Dec 2024) – as per the project proposal and contribution agreement	Forecasted number of scholars to begin their award between now and March 31, 2022
Awards to support Canadian researchers	11 Scholars: 2 Phd to Ghana 2 PhD and 1 Postdoc to Benin 1 Phd, 1 Postdoc to Liberia 2 PhD to Senegal 2 PhD to Nigeria	Jan-Mar 22 = 2 (1 Post Doc to UBenin; 1 PhD to UIbadan)
	11 Scholars 2 ECR Ghana to Canada	Oct – Dec 21 = 2: (1 PhD UIbadan; 1 ECR USenegal)

Awards to support West African researchers	2 PhD, 1 ECR Benin to Canada 2 ECR Liberia to Canada 2 PhD, 1 ECR Senegal to Canada 1 PhD Nigeria to Canada	Jan-Mar 22 = 2: (1 ECR ULiberia; 1 ECR UBenin)
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Canada to WA

Jan-Mar 22 = 2: (1 Post Doc to UBenin; 1 PhD to UIbadan)

April – Jun 22 = 2: (1 PhD to USenegal; 1 PhD to ULiberia)

Oct – Dec = 2: (1 PhD to UBenin; 1 PhD to D.S Dombo)

Jan – Mar 23 = 2: (1 Postdoc to ULiberia; 1 PhD to UIbadan)

Apr – Jun 23 = 3: (1 PhD to S.D Dombo; 1 UBenin; 1 PhD to Senegal)

West Africa to Canada

Oct – Dec 21 = 2: (PhD UIbadan; 1 ECR USenegal)

Jan-Mar 22 = 2: (1 ECR ULiberia; 1 ECR UBenin)

Jul– Sept 22 = 2: (1 ECR S.D Dombo; 1 ECR ULiberia)

Jan – Mar 23 = 2: (1 PhD USenegal; 1 PhD UBenin)

Apr – Jun 23 = 3: (1 ECR S.D Dombo; 1 PhD USenegal; 1 PhD UBenin)

Project Objectives

1. Please provide a summary of the objectives of your Project. (Recommended maximum 250 words)

Under the management of the Africa Institute at Western University, the goal of this Queen Elizabeth Advanced Scholars West Africa (QE-AS-WA) project is to achieve research capacity in five West African countries (Ghana, Benin, Liberia, Senegal and Nigeria) by training advanced QES scholars (QEScholars) in five thematic areas:

1) climate change knowledge creation; 2) developing strategies for sustainable agriculture; 3) inclusive resource governance and community outreach strategies; 4) using public participatory geographic information systems (PPGIS) for sustainable resource management; 5) using Open Source Remote Sensing for environmental change monitoring. To strengthen the research and knowledge exchange capacity of the partner institutions in West Africa, research focusing on these five thematic areas and with an added focus on empowerment of disadvantaged groups and health will feed into course offerings at all the participating institutions, including guiding the nature and quality of extra/co-curricular activities. A major goal of this project is to address SDG #5 (gender equality), hence the project will ensure that at least 60% of the QEScholars are women. The 22 QEScholars that will be trained will create a critical mass of researchers and practitioners who will address climate change resilience, food security, and sustainable livelihoods in West Africa, Canada and globally; and they will form a strong network of scholars for future long-term collaborations and partnerships. This project will ensure that all QEScholars develop networks and partnerships by linking them with our academic, non-academic partners in Canada and West Africa and with QES alumni. Through the mentorship by the project team members and QES alumni, all the QEScholars will be expected to engage in knowledge mobilization and exchange activities including presenting at seminars, conferences, community forums, Western University Africa Research Day, events organized by our West African partner institutions, writing policy briefs and publications in peer reviewed journals.

2. Please provide information on the key activities and expected results planned for the first year (to March 31, 2022). The activities must contribute to achieving expected results outlines in your project proposal. Clearly identify key activities and include specific and detailed information on each of the following (recommended maximum: 250 words per item):

NOTE: In order to lighten the presentation and allow for quicker identification of activities, we encourage the use of bullet form to answer the following questions:

a) Describe your gender strategy with a focus on identifying barriers faced by female researchers and your mitigation strategy to help overcome those barriers.

Fifty percent of the applicants in this project are women, and we will ensure that at least 60% of the 22 scholars recruited for this project are women. As demonstrated by his current and past training programs, more than 50% of the project leader's (Luginaah) graduate trainees to-date are women (four of whom have been QEScholars) and he will endeavor to use his tested recruitment model for this project. Historically, more Canadian women than men tend to participate in international development projects, although attaining a high recruitment ratio for women might present challenges for some of our partner countries. Western will try to give women scholars from our partner countries flexibility in terms of when they will be able to come to Canada. Furthermore, all efforts will be made to collaboratively address the recruitment barriers. Furthermore, given the multiple assigned and acquired roles that women perform, West African women scholars might not be able to leave their countries and homes for prolonged time-periods. In such cases, decision- making processes might have to include other members of the family, and mentors might have a role in facilitating these processes as needed and/or appropriate. Importantly, the University of Liberia does not have PhD programs because many of their institutions were ravaged by the war, therefore we will be recruiting two female early career researchers from Liberia.

b) Recruitment and selection of scholars

A notice announcing QES II Scholarship opportunities will be distributed widely across all the participating universities. Among others, the call will specify the thematic areas to be addressed and that 60% of the candidates to be selected will be women. An administrative review will be conducted by the Africa Institute and only those applications fulfilling the criteria will be forwarded to the selection committee at Western for final selection of approved scholars in collaboration with our partners. Western has established a mechanism for ensuring that all hiring of faculty members takes EDI considerations into account. The mechanism is not currently used for students and trainees, but we will use the model for this project. The selection committees at all the locations will comprise of a minimum of 50% women. Women committee members will be drawn from participating research programs, non-academic partner organizations, the Not-for- Profit partner organizations, as well as from administrative units at the universities. Committees will have women co-chairs and women and men members will play an equal role in the selection process and their votes will carry equal weight.

c) Pre-departure briefing

Outbound QEScholars will complete Pre-Departure requirements of Western's safety abroad policy. These include health & wellness; travel; risk management; intercultural engagement; gender norms & sexual violence; critical & ethical global engagement and academic preparation. They will also receive program- related training prior to departing. Inbound QEScholars will be supported by Western International with pre-arrival information and workshops and they will participate in an orientation session. Topics include orientation to campus and the City of London, money matters, academic integrity, the Canadian classroom, health and wellness, Graduate Peer Mentoring program and English Conversation Program. They will receive a weekly International Network email summarizing programs, services and activities happening across campus.

d) Leadership development activities

Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies provides various programs and workshops such as the Leadership "Own Your Future" (<https://www.uwo.ca/ownyourfuture/>) to PhD students. These programs focus on proposal development skills, thesis writing retreats and steps to successful publication and leadership development. All QEScholars will be required to take these workshops in order to enhance their leadership skills and knowledge based on issues related to EDI and academic development. At the start of the QES II AS WA project, all scholars will complete Western's Own Your Future Self Assessment – a personalized assessment that facilitates reflection on one's leadership and professional abilities as a scholar. The assessment will help identify the candidate's strengths and areas for improvement to create a personalized development plan. Inbound QEScholars will be required to take the online courses on EDI issues through Western Equity & Human Rights Services (<https://www.uwo.ca/equity/diversity/index.html>) and Western Research (<https://www.uwo.ca/research/services/resources/edi.html>). Western Research has excellent EDI staff resources that scholars can access. Both Outbound and Inbound QEScholars will be required to complete the on-line CIHR training module on sex and gender in research and any other courses that may be available at our partner institutions.

e) Networking activities – predeparture, during award as well as post-award

QEScholars participating in this project will be expected to participate on the QEScholars #QEScholars tagboard on the Universities Canada website: [univcan.ca/programs-and-scholarships/queen-elizabethscholars/# a_3](http://univcan.ca/programs-and-scholarships/queen-elizabethscholars/#a_3)
Inbound and Outbound Scholars will participate at Western's Africa Institute in-person and virtual networking activities over the duration of the project – and beyond. These networking activities will include field excursions (e.g., to First Nations communities including Walpole Island and Six Nations communities, Upper Thames Conservation Authority, Western's WinDEE Research Institute <https://www.eng.uwo.ca/windeee/>), cultural excursions (e.g. to Niagara Falls, Hockey game) and luncheons.

Alumni QEScholars will play an integral role in pre-departure training for newly recruited QEScholars. Alumni will share their international experience and provide recommendations and tips for preparation. These meetings will facilitate connections among the QEScholars who participate in the program, historically.

The QEScholars (alumni and current) will attend the seminar series held by the Africa Institute, and NEST –including the Western-Africa Research Day. The activities will bring the QEScholars together and expose them to researchers, government end users and people in industry who study natural disaster resiliency.

Social media platforms including a Facebook group and group Twitter and WhatsApp accounts will provide online continuous connectivity among the QEScholars (alumni and current).

f) Non-academic research placement partner (identification of placement, development of training plan)

Inbound and Outbound QEScholars will be required to complete non-academic placement activities, over the 6-12-month period during which they are participating in the scholarship program. The minimum volunteer duration they will be required to complete is 20 hours. Inbound QEScholars will complete structured experiential learning with community organizations in London and Southwestern Ontario including iDE Canada, Rotary International, London Environmental Network, First Nations communities and various African diaspora organizations in London and surrounding Area (e.g. Carrefour Communautaire Francophone de London; Ghana Association of London and Middlesex Area; Nigeria Association of London; Liberia Association of London). QEScholars will volunteer in student chapter NGOs on campus including Western Rotaract and EnviroWestern.

The Africa Institute at Western will place scholars with non-academic partners, manage relations and monitor progress.

Through the Africa Institute, team members will work with non-academic partners on objectives of the placement, accountabilities and also clarify support systems in place for the QEScholars, community and industry partners.

Outbound QEScholars will be partnered with our WA non-academic partners (e.g., RACINES – Benin, Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD) – Ghana, iDE Ghana).. Applicants will commit to this requirement upon their application for a QES scholarship. QEScholars will complete their non-academic placement activities in their country of placement in order to enhance their cross-cultural skills and to gain a better understanding of the local landscape, but they will also be able to complete this requirement in their countries of origin as plan B. In each of the partner countries, participating institutions and the project supervisors and mentors will connect QEScholars with non-academic partners.

g) Community engagement activities

For both inbound and outbound QEScholars, their community engagement activities will be focused on increasing their global knowledge base, strengthening their leadership and professional skills through public speaking at seminars and virtual and in-person conferences (if possible). QEScholars will also be required to join the QES alumni groups for networking, problem-

solving, and other leadership activities. At the various destinations, QEScholars will be expected to participate in community events, such as roundtables, fora and panel discussions, and giving presentations to local to institutions and organizations.

3. Your project is part of a much larger group of projects managed by Canadian universities, involving partner institutions around the world. Other QES projects may be active in the same countries as you are or may be in the same/similar area of focus, but in different countries.

IDRC would like to see networking done between QES projects (both current and new projects) to share best practices, lessons learned, to jointly look at how QES funded researchers can network, possibly participate in virtual activities such as presentations of research results and webinars.

Please describe how you would network with other QES projects and what types of exchanges you would like to suggest for:

Researchers:

Hold annual virtual Conferences, symposia and workshops funded by the QES Program, to share experiences across projects. Create a medium to share results and best practices – for example an e-journal. Create a QES caucus to share research ideas.

Principle Investigators:

Create consortia by bringing together PIs from the other QES WA projects to collaborate in research and training.

African partner institutions:

Engage African partner institutions in collaborative research and institutional capacity building. Respond jointly to calls for proposals – for example, this QES project has already generated a successful LOI to an IDRC OneHealth Call.

Engage African partner institutions in as many project –related activities as possible (if not all) and support them to access internet services.

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