



## **PhD vacancy: Climate change and resilience amongst pastoralists in Morocco: Transhumant herders in the Central High Atlas**

Are you passionate about tackling climate-related challenges and empowering climate-affected communities in Africa? Do you aspire to complete academic research with a real-world impact? Join Climares, a groundbreaking research project that supports the climate resilience of at-risk populations in five African countries. For our work in Morocco, we are looking for a PhD candidate who will work with transhumant pastoralists and other stakeholders using innovative, participatory research methods. The position is initially for one year, with possible extensions to a maximum of five years, on a full-time basis. The position is based in Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II (IAV Hassan II), Morocco, with short periods in the Netherlands. If successful, the applicant will receive a double degree with Maastricht University in the Netherlands.

Preferred starting date: August 1, 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter.

### **Job description – what you will do?**

You will be part of an exciting new research project called Climares ([www.climares.nl](http://www.climares.nl)). Climares is a consortium of 7 African and 7 Dutch universities, along with societal partners, working in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Morocco, Senegal, and Uganda. Our mission is to support at-risk populations—smallholders, fisherfolk, urban outdoor workers, pastoralists, and displaced people—by transforming weather and climate data into actionable insights that enhance resilience and enable early adaptation. Climares uses participatory digital and in person research, co-created climate storylines and advocacy methods to ensure that weather and climate information becomes accurate and actionable and integrated with local knowledge systems.

Within the scope of the project, you are expected to develop your own PhD research focus and thematic interest, in close collaboration with your supervisors. The supervision team consists of African and Dutch academics with a range of research areas. You will also be part of an interdisciplinary group of eleven PhD researchers, who are recruited from the five African countries and who will be the core of the Climares project. The PhD researchers will work independently and in collaboration, by sharing knowledge, skills, and experiences.

This PhD project in Morocco centres around action-oriented research with communities of pastoralists and other stakeholders, such as civil society actors, private actors, and government representatives. The project aims to support the agency and resilience of communities by creating and supporting Knowledge∞Action (K∞A) networks. These networks are composed of all stakeholders that have an interest in the resilience of a population group, including affected communities. As a PhD researcher, you will be responsible for setting up and facilitating these networks over a five-year period, and for collecting data on the process. For the duration of the project, you will be part of the Climares Academy that meets online for one day per week for training, supervision and meetings with your peers.

Within Climares, this PhD project will focus on climate-related challenges and adaptation strategies of transhumant pastoral communities navigating changes in temperatures, pastoral resources (vegetation, water and soil), and extreme weather events and their impact on livelihoods.

### **Where you will work**

This PhD position is based in Morocco, with occasional stays in the Netherlands and brief travel to other countries for training purposes and consortium meetings.

The PhD trajectory will start with an intensive two-month training in the Netherlands. After this, you will return to Morocco to spend significant periods of time with transhumant pastoral communities and to start working on the Knowledge∞Action (K∞A) networks. During this period, you will attend online training and reflection meetings one day per week.

You will be a member of the Climares PhD school, called the Climares Academy. Training will include academic courses as well as training on skills and content required for Climares, and individual career development support. Training will be provided by members of the Climares consortium, including academic partners and societal partners such as the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, Deltares, and the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute. PhD candidates will receive cutting-edge teaching and mentoring from a diverse range of experts, combining theoretical knowledge with practical applications.

## **Supervision and degree**

The supervision team for this PhD project in Morocco consists of Soufiane El Aayadi and Abdelilah Araba of IAV Hassan II and Valentina Mazzucato of Maastricht University. With your supervisors, you will develop a detailed PhD project plan, including research activities and milestones. You will also jointly develop and regularly monitor your own career development plan.

You will be employed by and graduate from IAV Hassan II, as well as – through a double degree arrangement – from Maastricht University, the Netherlands.

## **Job requirements**

Across the five countries, we are looking for an interdisciplinary team of PhD researchers. We therefore invite candidates with various profiles to apply.

Required for all candidates:

- You have a master's degree or an equivalent diploma in pastoral sciences (pastoralism, pastoral livestock farming), social sciences, climate sciences, environmental sciences or a related field;
- You have experience with, and a strong affinity for, research related to climate change, climate resilience, climate change impacts, or climate vulnerability;
- You have excellent oral and written communication skills in French and English;
- You possess strong research skills, either qualitative or quantitative, and have experience working with communities, preferably using participatory methods;
- You are motivated to develop your methodological skills in both qualitative and quantitative research;
- You are a resident of Morocco, or have extensive experience working in Morocco, preferably with transhumant–pastoral groups. For participatory research with communities, it is important that you are familiar with local customs and that you speak Arabic and preferably also Amazigh.
- You are able to carry out your work independently and proactively, and you are also able to work well in a team. You support the idea of interdisciplinary teamwork and knowledge sharing.
- You have excellent academic skills (analytical thinking, scientific writing and presentation), evidenced for example by a good review of your master's thesis and potentially some scientific publications;
- You have excellent social skills that will allow you to work with communities, other stakeholders and other PhD candidates over a long period of time.

## **Employment conditions**

We offer you an interdisciplinary PhD position, where you will obtain academic skills with practical application, in an enthusiastic team of world-renowned scholars and organizations working on climate issues.

The start date of this position is August 1st, 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter, and you will be based in the Department of Animal Production and Biotechnology at IAV Hassan II.

We offer a competitive remuneration as well as research costs. The initial contract has a duration of one year (12 months), with the possibility of extension based on performance.

## **About the employer**

- **Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II**

This PhD project will be co-supervised by the IAV Hassan II in Morocco. Founded in 1966 and located in Rabat, IAV Hassan II is a leading institution in the fields of agronomy and veterinary medicine. It offers high-level training to engineers and veterinarians, thereby contributing to the development of the country's agricultural and rural sectors. IAV Hassan II has several specialized departments, including agronomy, veterinary medicine, rural engineering, agro-industry, geomatics, topographical engineering, as well as fisheries and aquaculture. These departments cover a wide range of disciplines related to the life and earth sciences. In terms of human resources, IAV Hassan II has 2200 students, 452 PhD students, 166 lecturer-researchers, and 268 administrative staff members ([iav.ac.ma](http://iav.ac.ma)).

This interdisciplinary PhD project will benefit from the expertise and supervision of several researchers from the Department of Animal Production and Biotechnology, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Department of Humanities. The researchers involved in this program work together on various topics related to natural resource management, sustainable livestock systems, and the analysis of socio-economic dynamics in rural areas. Their expertise particularly covers the adaptation of pastoral systems to climate change, the impact of livestock practices on ecosystems, as well as the interactions between local knowledge and technical innovations. This interdisciplinary framework offers opportunities for exchanges and collaborations for an integrated approach to issues related to agriculture and livestock in the context of environmental and socio-economic transitions.

## About the host university in the Netherlands

### Maastricht University

This PhD project will be co-supervised by Maastricht University in The Netherlands. With over 22,300 students and more than 5,000 employees from all over the world, UM offers a vibrant and inspiring international community. UM has six faculties. You can find more information [here](#).

The PhD on pastoral communities is interdisciplinary in nature and will be embedded in the Department of Society Studies at FASoS. This Department brings together scholars with knowledge and expertise in the interdisciplinary fields of Science, Technology and Society studies (STS) and Globalisation, Transnationalism and Development research. The PhD will also be a member of the Globalisation, Transnationalism, and Development (GTD) research group. Researchers in the GTD research programme work on the transnational production and circulation of knowledge, and transnational migration and mobilities. In both spaces, there is strong expertise in ethnographic methodologies and opportunities for cross-disciplinary exchange in a lively and supportive environment. You can find more information [here](#).

### Application process

The deadline for applications is May 2. You can apply by emailing your application at: [climares.umiav@gmail.com](mailto:climares.umiav@gmail.com)

Please clearly state the title of the PhD position you are applying for in the subject line of the email and include the following documents:

- A motivation letter (max two pages) clearly addressing the following three questions:
  - What are your motivations for doing a PhD?
  - How does this PhD position fit in with your previous experience and your aspirations?
  - How would you tailor the PhD theme (climate resilience of pastoralists) to your specific interests, networks, and skills?
- A curriculum vitae (CV)
- Names and contact details of two referents
- One writing sample (article, chapter from Master thesis)
- Copy of the Master's diploma

We allow applications in English and French.

After reviewing all applications, we will make a shortlist of candidates who are invited for an interview during the week of May 12. The interviews will be held in a hybrid format. There might be a second interview before a final selection is made.

**Further information**

For more information on Climares, please visit: [www.climares.nl](http://www.climares.nl)

For specific questions, please contact: [s.elaayadi@iav.ac.ma](mailto:s.elaayadi@iav.ac.ma)

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