

Namibia Job Descriptions for Grinnell Fellows

Location and Context

The Fellows will be based at the Gobabeb Training and Research Centre (Gobabeb), a field station located in the Namib Desert 120km from the town of Walvis Bay. Although Gobabeb was founded as a research station in 1962, the Centre itself was established in 1998 as a joint venture between the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN) and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). The Centre focuses specifically on training and research encompassed by the objectives of three United Nations conventions: the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Bio-diversity, and the Convention on Global Climate Change. In order to achieve this, researchers from around the world undertake projects ranging from geomorphology to biology to sociology and climatology. Gobabeb has been designated by the Southern African Development Community-Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector (SADC-FANR) as the centre covering training, research and networking on behalf of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) for the SADC region. Additionally, Namibia has designated Gobabeb as their official Long Term Environmental Observatories Network node (Na-EON) affiliated to the SADC and international LTER systems (ELTOSA and ILTER, respectively). School, university and community groups from Namibia, other SADC countries, Europe, USA and elsewhere take advantage of Gobabeb's training facilities. The Centre is currently undergoing institutional and infrastructural changes, with a goal of achieving financial self-sustainability.

Currently, a major challenge for Gobabeb is the lack of permanent staff. Both Fellows, in addition to their specific jobs listed below, will be active in general station duties, helping support the current staff as needed. Station duties may include driving and running errands on supply trips, attending outside meetings and guest lectures, chairing staff meetings on a rotational basis, and helping out with visitors (sometimes on the weekends or in the evenings).

Research and Information Technology Support Services (RITS)

Areas of Responsibility

RITS fellows will be responsible for achieving results in the following four areas: IT, research, Gobabeb In-Service Training internships, and general station support.

I. IT

The Grinnell RITS fellow will be the main provider of IT support on the station and will work closely with the research director on IT matters:

- Keep centre's computer and IT infrastructure in working order: RITS fellows will be responsible for maintaining computers at Gobabeb, as well as ensuring that the network functions as it should. This will include both hardware and software maintenance to a reasonable degree, and will require that fellows gain some familiarity with Linux, the server's operating system. Most training can be acquired on the job. The fellows will be responsible for sourcing and purchasing new computer equipment as it is needed. The fellow will also be responsible for building computer literacy at the station.
- RITS fellows are responsible for keeping the Centre's website working and up-to-date, with new items (pictures, news) added at least monthly.

II. Research

Depending on a fellow's interests and background, as well as the needs of researchers on the station, assisting with data collection and analysis can form a large part of the fellow's job. RITS fellows may be asked to accompany researchers to their study sites. Some projects may require the RITS fellow to be a technician in the field, collect data in the researchers' absence, and address small technical & administrative problems on-site. Research may occur in a diverse range of fields possibly including (but not limited to): long-term ecological monitoring, hydrology, appropriate technology, sustainable agriculture, and ecological restoration.

The RITS fellow will also supervise interns throughout the year who are working on projects related to the RITS' research responsibilities.

III. Gobabeb Training & Research Internship Programme (GTRIP) Course

GTRIP course is a long-term training program for Namibian students designed to empower young adults and build their capacity for sustainable management of Namibia's natural resources. The program runs from January to June, and involves 4-5 interns. Some are in-service training students from the Polytechnic of Namibia (PoN) and others are recent graduates of either the PoN or the University of Namibia (UNAM). Interns often have focused their studies in fields such as Land Management, Agriculture, Nature Conservation, Geography, and Biology.

The RITS & TAOS fellows are key to the proper running of the program, and are the main coordinators responsible for all interns, lesson plans, lectures, and semester structure throughout the course of the year. This will require working with lecturers at the Polytechnic, outside scientists, and other Gobabeb staff.

- Satisfy Gobabeb and Polytechnic of Namibia expectations: Fellows are responsible for ensuring that in any given session, the GTRIP program continues in a smooth fashion, and that participants and stakeholders feel that GTRIP is improving students skills in a number of areas: writing, presentation, research planning, data analysis, statistics, GIS, and others.
- During the off-season (July to December), fellows will also have to plan for the next session, meeting with lecturers from the appropriate department, soliciting and selecting participants in a competitive process. This may require that fellows also help with finding funding for future sessions. Fellows also should use this time to develop course teaching materials.

IV. General Support

Gobabeb operates like a family, and all staff are expected to support the station in multiple and often unexpected ways. This can range from the writing of promotional materials to assisting with training group to helping train researchers in GIS and differential GPS use. The fellow is also responsible for easing their successors' transitions into life and work at Gobabeb with an in-depth hand-over.

Training and Outreach Support Services (TAOS)

Training and Workshops

The main thrust of the Fellow's training duties will involve active leadership in the design, development, logistics and implementation of training activities, materials and documentation for a wide range of training and workshop groups. Participants come from a number of countries, walks of life and backgrounds.

Main aims of training at Gobabeb:

- Imparting knowledge on desert ecology and desert sensitivity
- Differentiation between deserts and desertification processes
- Fieldwork to demonstrate the scientific method
- Promotion of sustainable living through use of appropriate technology

Main duties of TAOS:

- Communicating with educational institutions or intern students to offer established courses or designing individualized programs
 - Courses are targeted at a wide range of levels including lower and upper primary, secondary, tertiary, Master's and community members
 - Includes basic programs for independent workshops and conferences
- Organizing staff involved and program setup
 - As most courses are too large for one individual to hold, this position organizes and delegates responsibility to other staff members or interns
 - Includes budgeting to purchase necessary equipment and supplies
- Leading courses or organizing, advising or assisting another leader
- Marketing of future courses
 - Promotion of Gobabeb training, including publicity materials or traveling presentations
 - Goals of expansion include hosting science fair projects, increased interaction with coastal primary and secondary schools, field courses with various Polytechnic of Namibia and University of Namibia departments

Modules of Education at Gobabeb (MEG)

While conducting training, the TAOS fellow will document all courses and compile new training materials and modules for future use at the Centre. The Finnish Embassy in Windhoek is subsidizing a three-year project at Gobabeb to develop and test twelve comprehensive training modules on topics related to arid ecology and sustainable living. The project runs through the end of 2008, but material compilation should remain a major aspect of this Fellowship.

Community Outreach

Some of the training workshops will take the form of community outreach working with the local Topnaar community who live along the Kuiseb River (where Gobabeb is located) and in the nearby town of Walvis Bay. For example, Gobabeb holds sustainable agriculture workshops to share knowledge on arid farming techniques or participates in training community tour guides. Gobabeb was recently the SADC secretariat for the UN International Year of Deserts and Desertification and is continuing such active awareness campaigns in various ways, for example the Centenary of the Namib-Naukluft Park, where Gobabeb is located.

Other Duties

- In addition to these main tasks, the Fellow will have secondary duties such as intern supervision and developing materials, grants and publications, as projects require.

Training and Outreach Support Services (TAOS)

The TAOS Fellow will be responsible for achieving results in the following areas:

Training programmes and materials, GTRIP (Gobabeb's Training and Research Internship Programme), Outreach Activities, and General Support.

I. Training and Workshops

The TAOS Fellow is responsible for the development, coordination, and implementation of training activities, materials and documentation for a wide range of training and workshop groups. Gobabeb defines training as the use of teaching tools to improve sustainable natural resource management through enhanced knowledge and decision-making.

Training at Gobabeb is intended to:

- Impart knowledge on desert ecology and desert sensitivity
- Develop knowledge of the scientific method and teach fieldwork skills
- Promote sustainable living through use of appropriate technology

Main duties of TAOS:

- Coordinate with educational institutions to design courses on arid ecology, the scientific method, appropriate technology, and other subjects.
 - Gobabeb's training department provides services for a wide range of learners, including lower and upper primary, secondary, tertiary, MSc students, and community members
 - Includes basic programs for independent workshops and conferences
- Organize staff involvement and programme setup by
 - Leading or delegating responsibility to other staff members or interns
 - Managing a budget to purchase necessary equipment and supplies
- Market future courses
 - Promote Gobabeb training, by developing publicity materials or doing traveling presentations
 - Goals of expansion include hosting science fair projects, increased interaction with coastal primary and secondary schools, field courses with various Polytechnic of Namibia and University of Namibia departments
- Coordinate the development, review, and storage of Gobabeb's training materials, which are developed and tested with a local focus, largely through the Modules of Education at Gobabeb (MEG) project. The TAOS Fellow is also responsible for implementing training with these materials.

II. Gobabeb's Training and Research Internship Programme (GTRIP)

The TAOS fellow is responsible for coordinating the work-based internship programme (GTRIP Placements) and co-coordinating the course-based internship programme (GTRIP Course).

- GTRIP Placements:

This programme is intended to provide practical training for Namibian, SADC, and international interns while providing the station with support for its research and training activities. TAOS duties include:

- Updating and advertising the list of available positions, based upon station needs.
- Corresponding with applicants and supervising their application process.
- Coordinating the selection process, intern arrival, and orientation.
- Monitoring the success of the supervision structure.
- Supervising interns when relevant.

•GTRIP Course:

This programme is a long-term training opportunity for Namibian students designed to empower young adults and build their capacity for sustainable management of Namibia's natural resources. There is a single yearly session, January-June, that will be co-ordinated with the RITS Fellow.

TAOS responsibilities include:

- Designing the course theme, syllabus, lesson plans, and general structure.
- Assisting with intern selection, arrival, and project supervision.
- Increasing student skills in writing, research planning, data analysis, etc.

III. Outreach

The TAOS Fellow will assist the Outreach Coordinator in promoting knowledge and awareness of Gobabeb and environmental issues outside of the station. This may include coordinating article writing and involvement with multi-organization projects. Some outreach may also include working with the local Topnaar community who live along the Kuiseb River (where Gobabeb is located) and in the nearby town of Walvis Bay.

VI. General Support

In addition to these main tasks, the TAOS fellow will assist with other projects and activities as required by the station. This may include designing English skills workshops, grant writing, copy-editing, etc.