

How to apply to take part in MuEuCAP training workshops including field-based studies (how to write a CV and a 'Motivation letter')

Staff from the Universities of Mandalay, Mawlamyine and Myeik are invited to submit applications to be part of a Myanmar team who will receive specialist training from staff of the Universities of Göttingen (Germany), Extremadura (Spain) and BOKU (Austria).

Typically, Myanmar staff will be from the Departments of Botany, English, Geography, Geology, Marine Science and Zoology. They will:

- be an Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, or Assistant Professor (other ranks, above and below, may be considered if essential for the project)
- have an interest in one or more of the following topics: environmental science, biodiversity research and conservation, forestry, environmental law, outreach, communicating science to the public, or other related subjects
- be committed to learn new techniques, skills, and approaches to teaching.

To be selected, they must submit to Dr Swen Renner by email (swen.renner@boku.ac.at) by 23.00 hours on 11 November, the following:

- a CV (one page)
- a 'Motivation letter' (one page)
- a list of courses taught
- a publication list (if relevant).

All applications will reviewed by the Steering Committee, comprising representatives of all 3 Myanmar and all 3 European universities + a representative of MBNS.

Writing a CV and Motivation letter

We realise not everyone has experience in writing a CV or 'motivation letter'. Therefore, please read below for some useful suggestions.

Writing a CV

There is no one correct way to write a good CV. However, the Steering Committee will need the following information:

- title, gender and name of applicant
- date of birth
- address (department and university is fine – we do not need residential address)
- current position in the university
- qualifications (include [where relevant] BSc, MSc, M-Res, PhD)
- current courses taught
- a list of skills that you think may be important for MuEuCAP (ITC skills, field skills, laboratory skills, language skills, skills with working with the media, project management skills....)
- publications – if you have authored/co-authored some relevant papers and/or book chapters.

In addition, it would be interesting to know about your research experience (if relevant), for example:

- the topics and titles of MSc and/or PhD theses
- the topic and aim of your current research, if you are undertaking such studies.

Please try to keep your CV short but informative and wherever possible to one page. As we are kind(!), we have included an example CV at the end of this document for a Dr Khin Mie Mie of the University of Myeik (she is an example only and is NOT a real person!!).

Writing a 'motivation letter'

As with the CV above, please note, there is no one correct way to write a 'motivation letter' and the internet gives many contrasting approaches and examples.

However, it is a chance, in the form of a letter, to prove that you are the most suitable and motivated person to be chosen for the programme – in this case MuEuCAP. It is a chance to tell the Steering Committee some relevant and interesting information about yourself. It is NOT another CV but a personal document that tells MuEuCAP about the real you.

Content

The motivation letter could (and possibly should) include information on:

- background to your career (how did you become interested in your subject – i.e. botany, geography, English language, zoology, or marine science...)
- your current teaching and research career – what went well, what you would like to improve
- your career/teaching/research goals for the future
- what you would like to contribute to MuEuCAP (i.e. in science and/or outreach and/or communicating to the public)
- what you hope you can learn from being part of the MuEuCAP training programme and why this is valuable to you, your university, Myanmar!

Below (as with the CV), I have included one example of a motivation letter. It tells of how Dr Khin Mie Mie (remember she is invented by me!!) became interested in nature/wildlife as a child and how she developed this interest and now sees MuEuCAP as a perfect way to develop it further. She wants to learn new techniques and methods not just for herself but so that she can help her students and environmental protection in Myanmar.

From this motivation letter (see below), we can learn certain things –

(1) she has a genuine commitment to the subject since

- she has been interested in nature for many years (since she was a child) and has maintained this interest
- she wishes to protect Myanmar's environment for future generations and has already studied an aspect of environmental protection - pollution/wildlife

(2) she is motivated, has goals but is also realistic since

- she is the first person in her family to go to university (an excellent achievement) and now has a PhD and is a lecturer in a university
- she knows her current skills need improving, she is willing to learn and her goal is to publish in international journals
- she is willing to improve her statistical knowledge, even though she knows it will be difficult to learn 'R'

(3) she is a leader but also a team player since

- as a leader, she has undertaken her own ecological research; as a team player, she wishes to share the successes of her research and that of her students by writing collaborative papers published in international journals
- (4) she says how she thinks she can contribute to the MuEuCAP project
- ‘I think I can contribute most to the MuEuCAP project through my understanding of bird ecology and statistics and I am familiar with some of the literature on water pollution’ (this section could be longer and more detailed, if you like)
- (5) she has enthusiasm
- this cannot be learnt but is one of the most important qualities for success – her enthusiasm for the subject can be felt in each line of the letter. The letter sounds genuine and she says she is ‘excited’ by the possibilities of the project. To me, she sounds like she is going to be sitting at the front of the class with notebook and pencil – not yawning at the back!!

From this, you can see the motivation letter is very personal and individual. You use it to show that you are different from the rest of the applicants and that your qualities, skills and enthusiasm make you suitable for participating in the programme.

Although it might be helpful to read other examples, do not just copy other letters you have seen. Try to be original. You are advertising yourself to us. Ideally, it needs to be eye-catching, have some style, informative, memorable (for good reasons!!), and a little bit clever – just like a very good advert in a magazine or on TV. It will not be easy but if you write from the heart and with passion, I promise you it will be perfect!

Style and Presentation – be professional and consistent

Style and presentation matter. They say something about the person. First impressions matter. Whether it is the way your letter looks, the way it is organised and structured in paragraphs, the font size, the length of the letter, or even the first paragraph, the first impression always counts!

Present your letter in a professional format, style, and grammar. Have it checked for spelling mistakes and be consistent (e.g. use the same font, the same abbreviations throughout the letter, etc.). Why not use the same style, font, photograph for your CV and motivation letter? It will give the impression that you care about your work and have high standards. Just the kind of person MuEuCAP would like to be part of their team. GOOD LUCK!!

Paul Bates
Project Coordinator
BOKU, Austria

20 October, 2018

For more information, see many websites. Some of the ideas outlined above were based on: <https://www.mastersportal.com/articles/406/write-a-successful-motivation-letter-for-your-masters.htmlv>.

CV: Dr (Ms) Khin Mie Mie

Address: Department of Zoology, Myeik University, Myeik, Myanmar

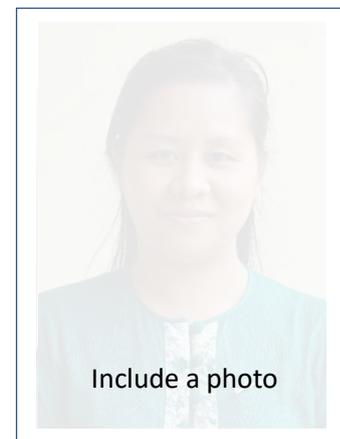
Mobile telephone No.: + 95-973162271

Email: (e.g. khinmm12@gmail.com)

Date of Birth: 26 January, 1980

Current Position (2015 – until now)

Lecturer of Department of Zoology, Myeik University, Myanmar



Qualifications

- (e.g. 2010-2015 PhD (Zoology), Mandalay University; 2006- M.Res (Zoology), Mandalay University; 2004- MSc (Zoology), University of East Yangon)

Title of postgraduate theses

- PhD thesis title: (e.g. *The impact of water pollution on the breeding success of...*)
- MSc thesis title: (e.g. *A study of migratory of wetland birds at Peleik Inn, Mandalay Division, Myanmar*)

Current teaching

My primary interests are ecology and pollution. I teach 10 hours per week; my classes are:

- ZS-013: Terrestrial ecosystems (credits 4: lectures 4 hours/week)
- ZS-019: Biostatistics and analysis (credits 4: lectures 4 hours/week)
- ZS-201: Environmental education and ethics (credits 2: lectures 2 hours/week)

Relevant skills

- Competent in the use of SPSS software (attended several training workshops, 2007-20012)
- Introduction Arc View (GIS software) (two training course by Smithsonian Institute, 2010)
- Proposal Writing, Project Management, Networking with NGOs and INGOs (two day course sponsored by WCS in 2009)
- Attended two MBNS, three-day courses on bird identification, bird ecology and conservation in 2012 and 2016
- Attended field training courses in bird ecology at University of Mandalay, led by Dr Swen Renner in 2010 and 2015
- Computer skills competent in Word, Excel and Powerpoint
- Moderate/Good reading and writing skills in English

Selected Research

- 2015- present: I am part of a team led by MBNS carrying out wetland surveys in and around Myeik environs and elsewhere in Tanintharyi Division
- 2010-2015: For my PhD study, I researched population levels of 3 species of dabbling ducks in response to the availability of aquatic plants, impacted by water pollution
- 2004- 2006: A study of migratory birds in the Myanmar IBA/KBA, Peleik Inn (as part of my MSc thesis); particular interest in waterfowl, especially Ferruginous Duck and the endangered Baer's pochard

Media Experience

- 2013: Dialogue "Wetland conservation in Myanmar" at MRTV4 channel

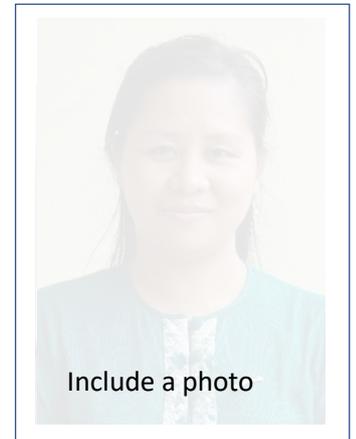
Motivation letter of Dr (Ms) Khin Mie Mie

Address: (e.g. Department of Zoology, Myeik University, Myeik, Myanmar)

Mobile telephone No.: (e.g.+ 95-973162271)

Email: (e.g. khinmm12@gmail.com)

Current Postiion: Lecturer of Department of Zoology, Myeik University, Myanmar



19 October, 2018

Dear Dr Swen Renner

I would like to apply to participate in the staff training workshops (WP2.6, WP2.8) for the year 2018-2019.

Since the age of 12 I have been interested in all aspects of nature. This interest was encouraged by my parents, although they had little academic schooling. Fortunately, I had the chance to work hard at school and was the first person from my close family to attend university. I chose Zoology because of my interest in animals and particularly birds. Although my first set of binoculars were very poor, I loved to use them to watch birds on Mandalay Hill (my family was based in the city for many years).

When it came to choosing topics for my MSc and PhD, I naturally chose aspects of bird research. Mandalay has many wetland habitats, so my supervisor, Dr....., suggested that I should focus on these and especially on dabbling ducks that visit the area each winter on migration.

I have now attended 2 MuEuCAP workshops (the March kick-off meeting at Myeik University and the needs assessment in Mawlamyine University) and I am really keen to expand my knowledge and learn new research techniques. Much of my ecological research to date, although interesting has lacked a strong scientific structure. Now I feel I have a chance to learn this and through my teaching and supervision to communicate this knowledge to a new generation of young Myanmar students. It is very exciting!!

I have some basic knowledge in statistics for science BUT I know there is so much more to learn. Although the thought of learning 'R' seems quite hard, I am determined to try. For me, it is a dream to work with my MSc and PhD students and produce ecological papers that are published in good international journals.

As a Myanmar citizen, I am worried about the changes that I see in the environment. I want to protect our animals and their habitats for future generations. Therefore, even for my PhD, I looked at the impact of pollution on birds. This MuEuCAP project, which focuses on 'Environmental Protection' is therefore particularly interesting.

I think I can contribute most to the MuEuCAPproject through my understanding of bird ecology and statistics and I am familiar with some of the literature on water pollution. I am willing to adopt new ideas, learn new soft and hard skills and incorporate these new techniques into my topics, courses and teaching. I will always work hard and feel committed to this great opportunity. Please consider me for a place in the MuEuCAP training programme.

Yours sincerely

Dr Khin Mie Mie (Lecturer)