

MOTIVATION LETTER

I am Phidju Marrin Sagala, and I am currently pursuing a master's degree at the University of Goettingen with an expected completion date of September 2026. Previously, I worked as a Research Consultant for 3 years in the Sustainable Wetland Adaptation and Mitigation Program (SWAMP) based in Bogor, Indonesia. My goal is to forge a robust connection between scientific research and the community, contributing significantly to the conservation of the natural environment. My aspiration is to become an adept and precise science communicator for both the local community and other related stakeholders, and I am also motivated to play my part in ensuring conservation of the environment by improving understanding of the values they have.

Being born in a very remote island in the Indian Ocean in Indonesia, the Mentawai Islands have actually trained me to survive and increased my curiosity of land-climate interactions. My very peak attention on this was on the rainy and stormy night in 2010, when I was climbing the higher ground when the 7.2 SR earthquakes triggered a 15-meter tsunami and claimed more than 400 lives. These unavoidable memories and experiences led me to conclude my bachelor's thesis that mangroves in Silabu Village protected the local people there by reducing the amount of waves attacking the village and giving more time for people to evacuate. This is also one of my journey reasons, I put a step closer to climate studies, forestry, and environmental science. My past experience has made me aware of the natural resources surrounding me and dealing with further decisions for environmental justice.

At this moment, I joined the Forest Inventory and Remote Sensing group at the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Forest Ecology at the University of Goettingen to conduct my master's thesis. I have a big interest in research, particularly on land-climate interactions and the role of terrestrial ecosystems in the global carbon cycle. While I am currently studying in Germany, I still investigate the ecosystem carbon stock and modelling in the mangrove ecosystem in Indonesia, particularly in Banyuwangi, East Java. Pursuing advanced studies through the Junior Scientist Program excites me to think beyond scientific curiosity. I have a great enthusiasm for this program since it will develop complementary research projects and interdisciplinary collaborations. As I also want to strengthen my expertise, interests, and experience in computational and spatial analysis, I believe this project offers the opportunity to conduct research that can inform policy strategies and create a positive impact on society. This will also allow me to integrate my background in climate science and forestry to tackle a problem of global importance. I also believe that this program will lead me to improve my leadership skills, science communication, as well as forestry-agricultural research, through the platform (CapSha Accelerator, Tropentag) as well as partner (ATSAF, German academics and university), which match the needs for future employment in international development.

Finally, my academic journey and professional engagements have been inherently international and interdisciplinary. I have worked with diverse teams and stakeholders in Indonesia and abroad, which has enhanced my capacity to collaborate across disciplines and cultures. I believe that I am the best candidate for this Junior Scientist position to translate research findings into insights that can support policy decisions and community-based solutions wherever possible. These experiences have prepared me to contribute meaningfully to the CGIAR++ and University of Goettingen, where I hope to continue bridging the gap between scientific research, policy development, and societal impact. I am confident that the insights I gain will significantly contribute to advancing research and policy development within the European Union and Indonesia, and fostering international collaboration in the times ahead. Thank you very much for considering my application.

