

# EiTTA: EMERGING INTERDISCIPLINARY TWINNED TALENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

## Context

Climate variability and change pose a huge risk to all of us, impacting all aspects of life. The challenges this will bring will have a devastating effect on developing societies, and responding to them requires an integrated, interdisciplinary approach. The long-term stability and success of societies depends on the management of a range of risks and threats, which include climate change, ecological degradation, state fragility, conflict, migration, rapid population growth and social inequality. Understanding these issues, along with the complex connections and interdependence of communities, the economy and the environment, requires the generation and integration of new knowledge that occupies the spaces found between traditional academic disciplines.

## Objective

The only real long-term way to move the needle on climate change, and its threats to society, is to develop the next generation of scientists. It is crucial that this next generation are not purely scientists, but are scientists grounded in the real world, with the skills and the experience to translate this science into meaningful action.

## The Walker Institute

The Walker Institute (Walker) carries out global interdisciplinary research, innovation and capacity building to advance knowledge and deliver a better understanding of future climate, its impacts, and consequences. Our vision is a world in which all people, organisations, meteorological agencies, and governments are better able to cope with the changing and often unpredictable demands of the climate and environment, turning challenges into opportunities. We work towards this through our understanding of the complex interactions between climate, land use, water availability, health, energy security, nutrition, and livelihoods as well as infrastructure and governance. Building the enabling environment for climate resilient societies and disaster risk reduction is at the heart of our work. Our geographical focus is in Africa and Asia, but our knowledge, skills and approach are globally applicable.

## The Project

In response to a growing need to tackle key global challenges and to simultaneously develop the complex skill set needed to build a career in this crucial field, Walker has established an **Emerging Interdisciplinary Twinned Talent PhD Scholarship programme (EiTTA)**, to run in parallel with the Walker Academy ([www.walker.ac.uk/academy](http://www.walker.ac.uk/academy)). We know there is a pool of international and UK students – the ‘rising stars’ of interdisciplinary scholarship to take up these unique opportunities.

There are 3 defining features of EiTTA:

1. **Interdisciplinary research** that brings together primary science and “real world” field-based evidence and testing. The scholars will address the complex problems of climate change and society, through systems-based approaches that explore and address underlying causes and support interdisciplinary solutions, focusing on the role of data and technological solutions (with machine learning and AI implicit) in addressing our major planetary challenges.
2. **Triplicate training:** a 3 pronged approach which consists of; a) the synthesis and interpretation of information to strengthen resilience and reduce the risk of extreme events e.g. food production and food security; b) interactive field-based training harnessing and strengthening our international partnerships c) immersive policy placements to gain first hand insight into the challenges of translating synthesised knowledge into evidence-based practice.
3. **Twinned PhD partnerships** with every UK student paired with Global South Scholars, aiming for gender parity across the programme. Bringing in Global South Scholars ensures that the scholars and their research are grounded in and exchanging ideas on, not just big tech but also, critically, context appropriate, 'small is beautiful' tech.

*Together these create the EiTTA environment - scholars engaged in real world challenges, working at the edge of research to inform practical solutions addressing the major planetary challenges embracing people, nature and the planet.*

We hope you will partner further with the Walker Institute and the University of Reading on EITTA. Funding support to EITTA twinned scholars will make a major contribution to the development of climate-resilient societies. For more information: contact Elena Saggioro at [elena.saggioro@reading.ac.uk](mailto:elena.saggioro@reading.ac.uk)