



Name: Olukayode Olakunle Kuloyo, PhD

Position: Scientist and Commercial Lead:
Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)

Affiliation: Shell

Location: Houston, TX, USA

Pronouns: He/Him

Please briefly describe your current role in your position

Provide technical expertise in biosciences and manage commercial aspects of product development to deliver solutions for CO₂ sequestration and GHG emissions avoidance in natural ecosystems.

What is your terminal and/or current position in academia?

PhD

How did you hear about your current position? Was it a career option that you were aware about during your educational process?

I discovered my job through LinkedIn and the Shell careers webpage. I knew there were opportunities for scientists seeking to work in industry. During my university education, I worked on various research projects that focused on hydrocarbon bioremediation, bioethanol and renewable natural gas production, and environmental monitoring of subsurface methane leaks. Furthermore, after completing my MSc, I gained valuable experience working on projects involving the biogeochemistry of extreme environments. After obtaining my Ph.D., I decided to transition to an industry role where I could concentrate on the commercial and environmental applications of my background expertise.

How did you end up working at your current affiliation?

Shell advertised a Researcher position at its Technology Center in Houston, Texas. The role required expertise in microbial ecology and bioprocesses for low-carbon fuels. I applied and secured the job following a successful interview.

How long have you been working at your current affiliation?

3+ years

What type of position is your current job?

Hybrid (In-person + Remote)

Is your role more a managerial or individual contributor role?

Individual Contributor

What are your day to day tasks that you perform in your position?

My roles include designing and delivering experimental components of the R&D program in biosciences and for Shell's NBS programs globally. I collaborate with colleagues in agriculture, forestry, remote sensing, GIS, LCA modeling, ecosystem services, environmental regulations, and policy. I also focus on commercial and intellectual property aspects of product development targets. Furthermore, I guide and support the NBS Business and Shell Ventures in screening third-party technologies, companies, and investment opportunities.



What are your day to day tasks that you perform in your position?

I meet with the business and R&D teams of NBS to ensure alignment and delivery of strategic objectives in decarbonization and maintain regular engagements with academic and technology partners to progress our collaborative NBS projects. Also, I liaise with scientists and patent agents on IP related to biofuels and biotechnology programs and provide technical due diligence for accessing new project opportunities.

What do you like best about your job?

The opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint and deliver value through biotechnology and nature-based approaches is rewarding.

What do you dislike about your job?

I love my job!

If your job is outside of academia, what is similar and what is different about your current job and your terminal position in academia?

In my current role, I am responsible for overseeing a significant research component with a broad engagement of various entities in academia, the public sector, and regulatory agencies.

How did your microbial ecology education prepare you for your current position?

My background in microbial ecology, biogeochemistry, and biotechnology prepared me for developing R&D programs and engaging stakeholders in nature-based solutions product development.

What skills do you wish you learned during your educational process that would better prepare you for your current role (e.g. machine learning, management skills, etc.)?

I would have benefitted from more training in project management and the stage gate process during my education. Fortunately, I acquired these skills post-graduation, which proved extremely valuable in my industry roles. Scientists sometimes focus on technical knowledge and less on application-based technology development. Academic institutions should devote more attention to equipping future scientists with these additional tools for success in their respective fields.

Do you have any recommendation and/or tips for early career microbial ecologists looking for jobs similar to yours?

Our ability to develop and implement bio-based technologies and strategies to reduce our net carbon footprint relies on the understanding and application of microbial ecology. If you are interested in this field, it is crucial to have clear goals and work towards them. Stay curious and maintain professional networks in both academia and industry.