

Recruitment for 2 PhD positions

We are recruiting two PhD positions in collaboration with the Department of Urban and Rural Development at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala (SLU) and our collaborating institutions in South Asia (see below).

The PhDs will work under the supervision of Harry W. Fischer on the following projects:

1. [Building synergies between biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and rural prosperity through community forest governance](#)
2. [Can community forest governance improve rural prosperity and well-being from forest restoration?](#)

These two projects require different skills and backgrounds. *Please read the following text and the linked project descriptions carefully before you apply.*
The deadline is August 1, 2023.

Please contact Harry Fischer directly with any additional question:
harry.fischer@slu.se

PhD studies & employment terms:

The PhD positions will last for 4 years. They will be recruited through an arrangement where the student spends 50% of their time in Sweden at SLU and 50% of their time at one of our collaborating institutions in South Asia. The student will be formally employed in India or Nepal with a locally appropriate salary and a top-up to cover additional living expenses while in Sweden.

The student will receive doctoral training and their PhD degree from SLU. They will be based in [the Department of Urban and Rural Development](#), which provides an interdisciplinary environment with teaching and research on rural development and sustainability issues in many parts of the world. While at SLU, they will attend PhD courses, receive mentorship, be a part of the PhD community, and be immersed in the research environment.

While in South Asia, each student will help to undertake data collection on one of the projects, which will form the basis of their PhD thesis.

PhD Position 1: [Building synergies between biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and rural prosperity through community forest governance](#)

This project combines quantitative social science analysis of forest governance and rural livelihoods & natural science analysis of forest ecology. The main objective is to study how local involvement in forest governance influences long-term outcomes for human well-being, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity from forest restoration. The project is led by Harry Fischer (SLU) in collaboration with Meghna Agarwala (Ashoka University, New Delhi), Dil Khatri (South Asia Institute of Advanced Studies, Nepal), and Bill Schultz (Florida State University). It contains research sites in both Himachal Pradesh, India and Nepal.

The PhD will undertake social science research with a focus on forest governance processes, how rural resource users interact with and utilize biodiversity, and forests' contributions to economic and subjective well-being.

Given that this is primarily a quantitative study, we prefer to recruit someone with existing statistical and data management skills. The PhD will work in close collaboration with our broader project team, help to oversee data collection and management, and take an active role in developing his/her own research within the broader project themes.

PhD Position 2: [Can community forest governance improve rural prosperity and well-being from forest restoration?](#)

This is a qualitative social science project, which seeks to explore how decentralized and community-based forms of forest governance influence long-term outcomes for forest restoration. We aim to understand how and when more democratic participation in planning can help to advance a broader vision of human well-being. The project is led by Harry Fischer (SLU) in collaboration with Sudha Vasani (Delhi University) and Forrest Fleischman (University of Minnesota). The project contains sites in Himachal Pradesh, India.

The PhD will undertake qualitative social science research to better understand how local forest governance has influenced planning processes for tree planting, the ways that it has reshaped lived experiences of landscape, and its impacts on rural well-being.

Given that this is primarily a qualitative study, we prefer to recruit someone with existing experience with qualitative and/or ethnographic methodology. The PhD will help to synthesize different aspects of analysis undertaken by the project team, and will develop and undertake their own research project within the broader project themes.

Qualifications:

We are looking for highly motivated students with research interests in the area of these projects. Applicants must possess a master's degree, and have a background studying issues relating to rural development and forest policy & governance. The applicant must also have experience conducting fieldwork or working in rural areas of South Asia.

- *For Project 1:* The person hired for this PhD will play an important role in quantitative analysis and data management; therefore, prior experience with quantitative research and statistical analysis is a requirement. Additionally, experience and knowledge of qualitative methods is a merit, but not required.
- *For project 2:* The person hired for this PhD will undertake qualitative data collection; therefore existing experience with qualitative data collection methodologies are a requirement.

The student must be willing to split their time between Sweden and South Asia, spending approximately 50% of the time in each. When in South Asia, the students will be based in either India/Nepal (Project 1) or India (Project 2). The students must be willing to spend substantial time conducting fieldwork in our study areas.

Experience in applied work relating to forestry, development, and livelihoods is highly desirable, but not required.

The student must possess strong writing skills in English.

Starting date:

We would like to hire someone to start in the second half of 2023, as negotiated.

The PhD funding lasts for four years.

Application:

To apply, please send an updated CV, your master's thesis, contact information for 3 references, a letter of motivation (1-2 pages), and a brief research idea (1-2 pages). In the letter of motivation, please tell us why you think you would be an excellent candidate for this position (specifically how you fit qualifications listed above) and how it advances your career goals. For the research idea, please identify an interesting research question you could envision studying in relation to the project, and describe how knowledge gained could help to advance scientific debates in the field. If you are applying for Project 1, please also indicate the data analysis software with which you are familiar.

References will be contacted for shortlisted candidates.

Send your application to harry.fischer@slu.se by **August 1, 2023**. Please specify which project you are applying for, and include the following in the subject line: "PhD Application; Project 1" (or Project 2). Applicants who wish to apply for both positions must send a separate application for each position, detailing their qualifications for each position in separate motivation letters.

Selection process:

After an initial review of the candidates, we will invite shortlisted candidates to a remote interview in mid-August.

Candidates will give an oral interview as well as a written test to assess writing competence and analytical capacity within the area of research.

If selected, applicants must submit copies of their degree certificate, a transcript of records from previous first and second-cycle studies at a university or higher education institution.

Contact:

Harry Fischer (Project leader): harry.fischer@slu.se

Other collaborating researchers:

Project 1: Dil Khatri (in Nepal): dil@sias-southasia.org

Meghna Agarwala (in India): meghna.agarwala@ashoka.edu.in

Project 2: Sudha Vasan svasan@sociology.du.ac.in

Forrest Fleischman ffleisch@umn.edu