

PhD Application Call

The call is for an 'industry PhD' to be employed by the Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) in Kathmandu and enrolled in the Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) at Uppsala.

The Department of Urban and Rural Development at SLU offers a strong social science research environment in the subjects of rural development, environmental communication, landscape architecture and agrarian history. The PhD candidate will be enrolled in the subject area of Rural Development. Rural Development draws on several social science disciplines with strong interdisciplinary elements. It focuses on the specific conditions of rural areas linked to regional, national and global change - and development processes. Important research areas are development and rural policy, natural resource and land use; social, political and economic relations; sustainability and migration.

The Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) is a Kathmandu based policy research institute which undertakes research to create state-of-the-art knowledge on environmental, socio-economic, and political issues in Nepal and the South Asian region and engage in policy challenges for sustainable development. Its research and policy engagements are focused on different issues related to natural resources management, disaster risk management and urban resilience, and decentralized local governance. For more details, please visit www.sias-southasia.org.

Employment and supervision:

Under the arrangement of 'industry PhD' the candidate will be employed by SIAS at Kathmandu, and PhD education will be offered by the Department of Urban and Rural Development at SLU supervised by Associate Professor Kristina Marquardt and Dr. Dil Khatri. The PhD education is part of SIAS research capacity building, and we are looking for a person with a long-term interest to work on forest policy in Nepal and be part of SIAS team.

Project Description:

The PhD study will contribute to the Swedish Research Council – VR funded research project **'Wild animals - biodiversity or pest? Creating local dialogues for dealing with farming-wildlife conflicts in rural Himalayan landscapes'**. It is an action research project that will investigate wildlife encroachments as an unintended negative local consequence of forest recovery and explore policy and practical measures to address this problem faced by Himalayan communities.

The research has its geographical focus in the Nepalese Himalaya, a region that is not only a key place for biodiversity and indigenous populations but also an area of poverty and marginality where livelihoods of smallholder farmers are already threatened by a changing climate. Over the past decades, local communities have invested remarkable labour and resources for community forestry, which have resulted into a recovery of once degraded mountain landscapes. Such forest recovery, however, has negative unintended consequences; farmers now face second generation problems with catastrophic impacts of the wildlife encroachment on their farmlands. Building on ongoing research on changes in rural livelihoods in Nepalese mountains, this research aims to investigate the new form of human-wildlife interactions by exploring dynamics and drivers of the growing wildlife encroachments and its long-term implications for farm-based livelihoods. We will conduct comprehensive research to deepen the understanding on scale, drivers and consequences of the problem and analyse the past and present wildlife and forest related policies. This will be combined with participatory action research focusing on testing practical measures and conducting dialogues among local communities, government officials and other stakeholders at different levels. We intend to contribute to co-produce knowledge and create space for constructive dialogues for policy and practical solutions that help sustain livelihoods and biodiversity conservation in the mountain landscapes.

The PhD candidate is expected to undertake research within the broader investigation of the linkages between farming-wildlife conflicts and the socio-economic dynamics of agricultural change and forest expansion in culturally diverse mountain communities in Nepal. Under these themes, he/she can focus on some of the following questions.

1. What is the nature/scale of wildlife encroachments, its impacts on subsistence livelihoods, and how are these differentiated in terms of position in landscape and social groups?
2. In what ways have socio-economic changes such as out-migration and shifting traditional land use practices (in farming and forest) contributed to increasing wildlife encroachment on subsistence farming systems?
3. How have wildlife and forest management policies (previous and existing) and cultural practices/beliefs influenced the increasing farming-wildlife conflicts?
4. How can the farm-based livelihoods, community-based forest management practices and wildlife diversity be reconciled better in rural mountain areas?

Qualification:

We are looking for an enthusiastic, highly motivated and creative candidate with a Master's degree and a strong background in a relevant social science subject (such as human geography, international or rural development, sociology, anthropology, or political science), as well as experience in theoretically grounded, qualitative research.

Additional considerations:

- Excellent English skills, both written and spoken, are essential.
- Experience with fieldwork, preferably across rural settings in Nepal.
- Interest in working at SIAS and willingness to contribute to Nepal's natural resources policy processes as a future team member of SIAS.

Place of work:

The PhD candidate will be employed by SIAS with duty station at the SIAS office at Kathmandu. The person is required to travel to Uppsala every year and spend at least six months per year in Sweden meeting course work and other PhD requirements.

Funding and employment arrangements:

Employment for 4 years in Nepal with at six months stay at the SLU (Uppsala) per year. The candidate will receive a monthly salary from SIAS and a living allowance while staying in Uppsala.

Starting date:

According to the agreement, but preferably January 2023.

Application:

Send your application with an updated CV, letter of motivation, brief research idea (concept notes no longer than 1500 words). Include English test result (IELTS or TOEFL). Send your application to career@sias-southasia.org (Ref-PhD application) by 14 December 2022.

Selection process:

The selection among the eligible applicants is based on: written application including curriculum vitae, master's thesis; personal references; written assessment and interview and English language proficiency. A written test and oral interview will be carried out to assess theoretical knowledge of resource governance and methodological experiences (familiarity with qualitative methods), experiences of data collection and analysis. The candidate will also be assessed for the knowledge of English (reading, writing, and speaking).

Please note that applicants invited to interview must submit attested copies of their degree certificate, a transcript of records from previous first and second-cycle studies at a university or higher education institution.

PhD at SLU:

To qualify for third-cycle (Doctoral) courses and study programmes, you must have a second-cycle (Master's) qualification. Alternatively, you must have conducted a minimum of four years of full-time study, of which a minimum of one year at second-cycle level.

Read about the PhD education at SLU at www.slu.se/en/education/programmes-courses/doctoral-studies/

The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) is a world-class international university with research, education and environmental assessment within the sciences for sustainable life. Its principal sites are in Alnarp, Umeå and Uppsala, but activities are also conducted at research stations, experimental parks and educational establishments throughout Sweden. We bring together people who have different perspectives, but they all have one and the same goal: to create the best conditions for a sustainable, thriving and better world.

SLU has just over 3,000 employees, 5,000 students and a turnover of SEK 3 billion. The university has invested heavily in a modern, attractive environment on its campuses.



Southasia Institute of
Advanced Studies (SIAS)



Swedish University of
Agricultural Sciences

Contact persons:

Dil Khatri

dil.khatri@slu.se

Kristina Marquardt

Kristina.Marquardt@slu.se