



SUSTAINABLE FOREST TRANSITIONS



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UK Research
and Innovation

Three PhD studentships on the social and environmental outcomes of reforestation processes.

Deadline: 5 January 2023 Midnight (GMT)

Interviews: 26 and 27 January 2023

Studentship Funding

The Sustainable Forest Transition (SFT) Project is recruiting three full-time PhD students at the Global Development Institute (University of Manchester) from September 2023. The project seeks to advance social and environmental outcomes of reforestation globally. These positions are fully-funded for four years, covering academic fees, an annual maintenance stipend of £17,668 (TBC for 2023) and research travel. You will be part of a multidisciplinary research team led by Dr Johan Oldekop, including post-doctoral researchers, case-country partners (initially Mexico, Brazil, India, and Nepal), and affiliated researchers.

Supervisory team

Dr Johan Oldekop (Lead) with Dr Polyanna da Conceição Bispo, Dr Upasak Das, Dr Tim Foster and Dr Rose Pritchard.

Project Description

Scholars have devoted much attention to deforestation, yet processes driving the reverse phenomenon, *reforestation*, and their socio-economic implications are poorly understood. SFT will conduct ground-breaking research to better understand how reforestation drivers (e.g., changes in migration, livelihoods or forest governance) affect forests and the communities that depend on them. SFT is a five-year, £1.7 million project funded by a UKRI Research Frontier grant based within the Global Development Institute in the School of Environment, Education and Development.

The project will study the changing nature of forest cover and human development at unprecedented scale and detail in Mexico, Brazil, India, and Nepal and possibly expand to other countries.

The three PhD students will develop a collective programme of impactful and world-leading research to support communities, governments, and practitioners achieve simultaneous improvements in forest cover and human development. Your research will help overcome existing conceptual, methodological and data limitations by combining public socioeconomic (e.g., national census) and environmental data (satellite-derived forest data) with statistical approaches that increase the causal inference of analyses by emulating randomized experiments (quasi-experimental methods). Where applicable, your work will complement these quantitative methods with analyses of secondary qualitative data and targeted key informant interviews, in particular to explore the wider political economy of reforestation.

Person specification

Candidates must have strong quantitative skills and experience of handling and analysing datasets from diverse sources (e.g., remote sensing data and/or representative household surveys), acquired through relevant postgraduate training (e.g., in political science, economics, or geography). Additional research training will be available to support further development and expertise in key analytical elements (e.g., econometrics, spatial statistics and/or remote sensing). Experience of working in one or more of the case countries and relevant language skills (e.g., Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi and/or Nepali) would be very beneficial but not essential.

Eligibility criteria

Academic:

In the majority of cases, eligible candidates will have undertaken an undergraduate course and/or Master's course at a recognised higher education institution and will have achieved a minimum of Bachelor's at 2.1 plus Master's at Merit.

English language:

Candidates whose first language is not English require one of the following:

- IELTS test
min. scores: 7 overall, 7 writing, 6 other sections
- TOEFL (internet based) test
min. scores: 100 overall, 25 writing, 22 other sections
- Pearson Test of English (PTE)
min. scores: 66 overall, 66 writing, 59 other sections

Application procedure

The deadline for applications will be 5 January 2023 Midnight (GMT). All supporting documents must be received by the deadline and sent as a zip file to pgr-seedfunding@manchester.ac.uk, using 'Sustainable Forest Transitions (PhD)' as the email subject.

The application must include:

- Full CV, including a breakdown of your grades to date.
- Personal statement of maximum 700 words indicating why you would like to undertake this studentship and explaining how your focus, experience, and skills link to the research outlined above.
- Example of a piece of academic writing produced by the applicant of up to 5,000 words (applicants may consider submitting two shorter pieces if these deal separately with conceptual and empirical analyses). This may be an academic essay or chapter(s) from a dissertation, in which case, an abstract or introduction outlining the context/aims/research questions of the study must also be included.
- Names and contact details of two academic referees who can comment on the applicant's suitability for PhD study and to undertake the advertised project.

Further information

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact Dr. Johan Oldekop (johan.oldekop@manchester.ac.uk)

Residential eligibility:

This scholarship is open to international students.

About the Global Development Institute

(<http://www.gdi.manchester.ac.uk/>)

The Global Development Institute plays a major role in supporting the University's commitment to addressing global inequality. It aims to create and share knowledge to inform and influence policy makers, organisations and corporations so that they can make positive and sustainable changes for people living in poverty. Promoting social justice is at the heart of GDI's ambition and is connected to our core values of inclusivity, responsibility, equity and sustainability. The Institute builds on the University of Manchester's world-leading reputation for Development Studies research that saw us ranked 1st for research environment in the UK Research Excellence Framework 2021.

GDI has approximately 60 academic staff, up to 100 PhD students and over 600 Master's students who form part of the largest provider of Development Studies research and postgraduate education within Europe. Within the Institute, the Rory and Elizabeth Brooks Doctoral College is the first doctoral college for the study of global development in the world.

GDI has a reputation for cutting edge research in numerous areas. Recent major funded research programmes have included the DFID-funded 'Effective States and Inclusive Development Research Centre'; the ESRC funded 'Rising Powers and Integrated Futures Programme'; and the DFID-funded 'Capturing the Gains' programme. GDI also hosts the Centre for Digital Development. Current major funding programmes at GDI include the UKRI-funded 'FutureDAMS' research consortium and the newly formed 'African Cities Research Consortium', which is funded by FCDO.

