

3 MSc thesis opportunities

The Working [Group of Environmental Social Sciences/Environmental Economics at the Institute for Environmental Sciences \(IES\) of the University of Kaiserslautern-Landau](#) (RPTU) offers an opportunity to carry out a MSc thesis on:

Evaluation of the social-ecological resilience and overcoming of tipping points in rural households of the MAP Amazon region

Background

Land use- and cover change is particularly acute in the MAP (Madre de Dios-Peru, Acre-Brazil, Pando-Bolivia) Amazon region. Ecosystem degradation, selective logging, farmland expansion, illegal mining, etc. are causes and consequences of these changes in land use. This constellation endangers seriously the provision of ecosystem services and the well-being of its inhabitants, mostly rural and depending on the surrounding for their livelihoods. The project *PRODIGY soil biodiversity governing tipping points in the Amazon* (<http://www.prodigy-biotip.org>), tackles this challenge on several scales: soil functional biodiversity, household economic well-being, institutional setting appropriateness, etc. The evaluation of the social-ecological resilience of rural households lies in the cross-roads of these.

Hence three opportunities to do a MSc thesis are offered to investigate the functioning of the rural household social-ecological systems of the MAP region. Potential studies may relate to natural-resources management: ranching, farming, agroforestry (methodologically open); immigration, governance and other determinants (spatial analyses may be key); food and nutritional security (interview, measurement-based approaches); and/or behavioral determinants of land-use, organization, culture and politics (behavioral games may be key). It is expected that the MSc topic will be co-defined with the appointee(s).

Requirements

- Background on natural or social sciences, intermingled or related discipline
- Being enrolled in a Master's program in a German university
- Disposition to learn, develop and implement multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches and methods
- Proficiency in field data collection
- Proficiency in general data processing and analyses
- Proficiency in scientific reporting and drafting
- Fluency in English language and good knowledge of Spanish and/or Portuguese language
- Field experience in developing countries and working in not easy conditions
- Being a team player, adaptive and proactive

Terms

The time frame for the whole assignment is 9 to 12 months divided in three phases: (i) Formulation of a detailed research proposal (about 3 months); (ii) Field work in Brazil, Bolivia and/or Peru (about 3 months); and (iii) Analysis and reporting of findings in scientific standards (about 3 months). The appointed candidate will be tutored and supervised by a senior scientist along the whole process. Logistically, travel and research costs will be covered, logistic support in the field will be provided. The appointee will receive a student assistant position with a monthly remuneration of ca. 500 Euros for 6 months (during the phases ii and iii). The appointment is planned to start in the first months of 2023. In Germany, the working stations may ideally be Bonn or Landau, but we are open to flexible arrangements.

How to apply

Send an email with: i) motivation letter, ii) sketch research proposal (1 page), and iii) a detailed CV and in a single PDF file to Daniel Callo-Concha (d.callo-concha@uni-bonn.de and callo-concha@uni-landau.de) with the subject: "PRODIGY MSc". The application deadline is January 31st 2023.

Disclaimer

The University of Kaiserslautern-Landau is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications from female candidates and minorities. International students are encouraged to apply.