

FULL-TIME ACADEMIC POSITION IN SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL DYNAMICS

FACULTY OF SCIENCES

Department for Geosciences, Environment and Society

Reference : 2024/A024

Application deadline: April 15th, 2024

Start date: October 1st, 2024

Job description

Institutional Environment :

The Socio-Environmental Dynamics research group (SONYA) (<https://sonya.sciences.ulb.be/>) of the Environmental Management and Land-use Institute (IGEAT) of the Department for Geosciences, Environment and Society (DGES) (<https://sciences.ulb.be/departement-geosciences-environnement-et-societe>) is looking for a colleague specialised in ***"Socio-Environmental Dynamics"*** to reinforce our competences in the field of ***"Sustainability Studies"***. The appointed colleague should be striving to operationalise with his/her research and teaching activities a systemic analysis oriented towards strong sustainability principles. Preferably, methods and approaches should associate inter- and/or trans-disciplinarity when investigating socio-environmental interdependencies between micro-meso-macro dimensions of our societies. Anchored in the field of "Environmental Humanities", the colleague develops a social sciences and humanities (SSH) perspective to study objects and problems in the socio-ecological and socio-environmental realms.

S/he will be fully integrated into SONYA, a research unit grouping currently competences in Ecological Economics (Prof. Tom Bauler) and in Analysis and Management of environmental Impacts (Prof. Wouter Achten). Our research unit is composed of +20 post-doc or doctoral researchers developing either mono-personal research mandates or are part of wider Belgian or European research consortia and projects. We develop our teaching essentially within the Master for Environmental Management and Sciences (<https://www.ulb.be/fr/programme/m-envig>), which we do also coordinate. Members of SONYA are generally also part of the interfaculty institute for Socio-ecological Transformations (iiTSE) (<https://iitse.ulb.be/fr>) which provides a space for exchange and co-construction to +50 researchers. At the moment of recruiting, SONYA will have joined the USET research hub (<https://urbanstudies.brussels/research/research-initiatives/uset-research-hub>) on a freshly re-developed urban campus dedicated to sustainability with our partner university VUB.

Research domain and field :

The profile is oriented to recruit a colleague with a research experience situated in the understanding of citizens/individuals/consumers/activists as actors in societal, sustainability-oriented transition and transformation processes, be the latter wanted, imagined, governed or forced upon actors.

The candidate should demonstrate research activities in the strong sustainability domain centered on the analyses at micro-levels (individuals, consumers, citizens, activists) or meso-levels (collectives, movements, groups, initiatives, networks), while in the same time being able to link these to developments at macro-levels, for instance by questioning institutional or societal structures, or developing governance aspects. Research foci such as on behavioural change and their relation to perceptions or discourse, coproduction of imaginaries, reaction to the deployment of policy instruments and tools, adhesion to social movements or contestation, alternative practice dynamics, citizen science processes would be – among many others – lines of investigations which fulfil perfectly well the intended direction. The profile excludes any mono-disciplinary approaches, and calls for candidates who anchor their work in approaches lend from the social and human sciences (in the wider sense) in order to investigate conditions or characteristics of strong sustainability by deploying pedagogical and research competences that are resolutely inter- and/or transdisciplinary. A focus on European societies, possibly in their urban contexts, would facilitate the candidate's future relation to existing in-house competences and fields of investigation, and could help to address the micro/meso systemics. Conversely, a focus on socio-ecological interdependencies and system's transformation would complement our existing competences in economic-environmental systems.

Research objectives :

It is expected from the candidate to pursue an original research activity within her/his field of expertise, enriching his/her competences and networks and following her/his centres of interest. A direct interest in societal questions and socio-political evolutions is equally expected, be it to tackle emerging and persistent environmental problems and evolutions, or to address the voiced needs of our contemporary societies to envision the wider transitions and transformations. The candidate should be ready to consolidate his/her base in existing international or European research networks and collaborations. S.he should equally be ready to acquire a series of research projects with the main financing authorities (Belgian-FNRS, Belgian-federal BELSPO, Brussels-regional Innoviris, European DG RTD...). These research activities and wider collaborative efforts are meant to contribute actively to shape the future development of our collective research unit SONYA in collaboration with the unit's co-pilots (Profs. Achten & Bauler).

Teaching objectives :

The candidate will participate to the teaching, organisation, configuration and administration of the Master in Environmental Management & Sciences (<https://www.ulb.be/fr/programme/m-envig>), which underwent recently a reorientation towards strong sustainability and active teaching methods. Teaching seeks to be fully respectful to students specificities and is partly codeveloped with them. The global yearly teaching load should not exceed 100hours.

The candidate will assume the following teaching activities (subject to adaptations) :

- As sole lecturer : s.he will be the lecturer of the Master1 course on “*Socio-Environmental Dynamics*” (ENVI-F-403) (theory; 36 hours; +100 students) (<https://www.ulb.be/en/programme/2024-envi-f403>) for a multi-disciplinary cohort of students. The current content and pedagogical approach can of course be adapted to the candidate's own pedagogical competences and fields of expertise.
- As coordinator : s.he will be coordinating – with a post-doc level teaching assistant – a course on processes of scientific enquiry and methods as a preparatory course to the students' Master

thesis. “*Méthodes qualitatives pour une analyse interdisciplinaire*” (ENVI-F-422) (MA1) (<https://www.ulb.be/fr/programme/envi-f422>) includes an excursion and/or territorial cases studies co-organised with other lecturers.

- As Master thesis promotor/director : s.he will be coordinating and directing a series of master theses/dissertations (+15 per year), which follow original interdisciplinary research questions and methods along the lines of investigation and expertise of our future colleague
- As a co-lecturer : s.he will animate a research seminar “Socio-environmental Dynamics” at Master 2 level within the seminar-course “*Questions approfondies de gestion d’environnement*” (ENVI-F-5001) (+15 students) (<https://www.ulb.be/fr/programme/envi-f5001>), for a small group of dedicated students along the lines of investigation of the candidate.
- As a co-lecturer : s.he will participate to a “project-based learning” course “*Projet interdisciplinaire*” (ENVI-F-501) (<https://www.ulb.be/fr/programme/envi-f501>), which involves to animate a limited number of student groups throughout their case studies. Together with Prof. Achten and Bauler, the candidate will guide students to address their very own action research cases in order to provide a reply to real-live research questions from local authorities, activists, administration, private actors.
- As an expert : s.he will be invited to participate with Prof. Achten and Bauler to distil 2 short intensive seminar-courses. The course/seminar “*La vie des chiffres*” (<https://www.ulb.be/fr/programme/envi-f003>) helps students to make sense of numbers, evaluations, assessments in society and policy. “*Action pour changement*” (<https://www.ulb.be/fr/programme/envi-f004>) confronts participants to ways to generate, analyse and make sense of multiple modes of socio-ecological transformations. Both courses are organised under the form of 2 hackathon-weeks (bloc-teaching) right at the start of the academic year.

Qualifications required :

The candidate will have obtained with success a PhD-thesis. The position does explicitly not privilege a specific disciplinary orientation; the PhD diploma could indeed originate from disciplines of social sciences, natural sciences, applied sciences or any other. The thesis and research activities should however be grounded in or linked to the wider domain of environmental humanities and/or be dedicated to understand socio-environmental dynamics. It should be anchored theory-wise or show marks of approaches and/or methods from social and human sciences in the wider sense, including for instance sociology, anthropology, philosophy, political sciences, economics, psychology and others.

Skills required :

- You have strong feelings about forging teaching- and research-activities for a world in transformation.
- You are convinced that academic endeavours call for collaborative efforts.
- You have a good capacity to manage your own research priorities and deadlines within the wider engagements with colleagues’ and students’ agendas.
- Applicants should have at least 4 years of research experience at the time of their recruitment.
- Post-doctoral experience and an excellent scientific record are a plus.
- Exchange periods outside of the applicants’ home institution (during or after their PhD) will be taken into consideration when evaluating applications.
- Applicants who do not speak French (level B2) may be granted a period of adaptation, but they must be able to teach in French and interact with different authorities (university or exterior) in French at the end of the third year following their appointment.

Interested ?

For more information, please contact Tom Bauler and/or Wouter Achten (telephone: +32 2 650.49.24 or 43.22 – E-mails: tom.bauler@ulb.be or wouter.achten@ulb.be).

Applications must be sent by e-mail to the rectorate of the Université Libre de Bruxelles (rectrice@ulb.be) and to the faculty deanship (aff.acad.sciences@ulb.be).

They must include the following :

- an application letter
- a Curriculum vitae including a list of publications :
if you want you can complete a standard form via our website at <https://www.ulb.be/fr/documents-officiels/completer-votre-cv-en-ligne>. Once completed, it must be downloaded and attached to the application file.
- a 7,000-character report (4 pages) presenting the applicant's research activities and a research project, including how these will integrate into ULB's research teams
- a teaching dossier including a 7,000-character report (4 pages) on the applicant's previous teaching activities and a teaching project for the first five years in this position; these must be relevant to the faculty and to the teaching profiles for the programmes to which the applicant is to contribute
- the names and e-mail addresses of five referees (respecting the gender balance) who may be contacted by those in charge of evaluating applications. These referees should not have conflicts of interest because of family or emotional ties.

Interviews and public lesson : week of Mai 13th, 2024

The appointment to the academic staff of ULB is made at "Chargé de Cours" level. As of their appointment, members of academic staff are authorised to use the honorary title of "Professeur".

Equal opportunities policy

ULB's personnel management policy is geared towards diversity and equal opportunities.

We recruit candidates on the basis of their skills, irrespective of age, gender, sexual orientation, origin, nationality, beliefs, disability, etc.

Would you like to be provided with reasonable accommodation in the selection procedure because of a disability, disorder, or illness? Please contact Marie Botty, the person in charge of diversity aspects for the academic and scientific staff (marie.botty@ulb.be). Be assured of the confidentiality of this information.

More details on the ULB gender and diversity policy are available at [Diversity at ULB - ULB](#).

You will find all the regulations relating to academic careers on our site at <http://www.ulb.ac.be/emploi/academique.html>.