



**Jobbnorge ID:** 298178  
**Deadline:** 4/14/2026  
**Website:** <http://www.nmbu.no>  
**Scope:** Fulltime  
**Duration:** Fixed Term

3-year PhD position on 'Integrating local cultural values and practices into forest governance'

## PhD within International Environment and Development Studies

### About the position

The Department of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric), Faculty of Landscape and Society (LANDSAM) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) has a vacant 3-year PhD-position in International Environment and Development Studies with a focus on 'Integrating local cultural values and practices into forest governance'. The position forms part of the larger ERC-funded AFRI-FOR project (<https://afrifor.info/>).

In developing countries, reconciling nature protection and development goals (food security, poverty alleviation) make tropical forest conservation extremely challenging. Since the late 1990s, there has been an increasing interest in non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as wild foods, medicinal plants, firewood or construction materials and their commercialisation, as it is argued that NTFPs can help promote forest conservation and alleviate poverty. Recent work from the Amazon has highlighted such potential benefits. In African forests, though, the possibility for commercialisation of NTFPs to support forest conservation is limited due to poor understanding of-and a lack of data on- which species can be sustainably harvested, and under which conditions.

Maintaining tropical forests is not just key for local peoples' livelihoods, it is also crucial for stabilizing global warming to below the 2°C target of the Paris Climate Agreement. At the local level, carbon finance may be used as an incentive for forest conservation. To date, though, most carbon projects have implemented a precursory approach and prohibit the harvesting of NTFPs, causing 'carbonized exclusion' of local peoples. But is there always a trade-off between carbon storage and plant/wild meat harvesting?

To answer these knowledge gaps, the project AFRI-FOR will use a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, integrating the fields of ethnobotany (work package WP1), ecology (WP1, WP2), anthropology and political ecology (WP3), and conservation science and sustainability science (WP1, WP4).

It will gather data and knowledge from 20 socioecological forest contexts in four African countries (Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo and DR Congo), which will allow insights to transcend single sites and provide a much-needed general understanding.

As part of the AFRI-FOR project, this PhD position will develop an independent PhD project that contributes to the AFRI-FOR project WP3: Integrating local cultural practices into forest governance.

The aim of WP3 is to identify the main barriers/enablers for an increased integration of local values on Nature and related traditional institutions into formal forest conservation. As part of this work, the following tasks are envisaged: 1) Creating a standardised structured protocol for gathering information about values on Nature and traditional institutions (e.g. norms, taboos) and compliance towards them. 2) Collecting data in the field, combining e.g. focus-group discussions with local communities, and interviews with key informants such as park managers. 3) Comparative analysis of data collected across sites to identify which barriers and /enablers are context-specific and which can be abstracted or generalised.

The applicant is made aware that an application for a PhD position at NMBU is at the same time an application for admission to a PhD program at the institution. The documentation that is necessary to ensure that the admission requirements are met must be uploaded as an attachment.

You will be supervised by Aida Cuni-Sanchez, and possibly, by others at Noragric department, MINA or HH, as part of the Tropical Forest Arena <https://www.tropicalforestarena.org/>.

### Main tasks

The successful candidate is expected to enroll in the PhD programme in International Environment and Development Studies, and the work will be organized with the goal of completing a PhD degree during the period of employment.

- The PhD programme consists of mandatory and elective courses (30 ECTS) with written and oral examinations, and a major research component.
- The PhD candidate will develop a full research proposal aligned with the objectives of WP3 of AFRI-FOR and a progress plan for the PhD scholarship period during the first months of the appointment. Note that the target countries in Africa for the research cannot be modified by the appointed candidate.

The PhD candidate is expected to follow the transdisciplinary approach used in the AFRI-FOR project, which includes collaborating with local MSc students and e.g. preparing short non-academic reports for the communities and practitioners involved in the project.

## Competence:

To be eligible for the position, the candidate must meet the requirements for admission to the PhD programme at LANDSAM.

Required qualifications for this position are:

- A Master degree in International environmental studies, Ecology, Agronomy, Environmental Sciences, Development Studies, Conservation and Ethnobiology, or other relevant fields.
- Documented strong academic background from previous studies

(Master degree GPA: B or better; Master thesis B or better)

- Documented proficiency in English (written and oral)
- Prior fieldwork experience in tropical contexts, preferably in Africa
- Advanced knowledge of French
- Prior experience in using qualitative methods, including conducting interviews and/or focus-group discussions

For more detailed information on the admission criteria please see the [PhD Regulations](#) and the supplementary provisions for the faculty's [PhD programmes](#). If you are unsure whether your Bachelor and Master degrees qualify, please contact the PhD programme coordinator, see contact details below.

The following experiences and skills will be emphasized:

- Some botanical skills
- Willingness to travel to Africa every year
- Good communication skills (e.g. previous presentation at an international conference)
- Knowledge of statistical methods using R is highly desirable (if not the candidate will have to follow a course)
- Interest in cultural values
- Interest/experience in science outreach

Desirable personal skills:

- Excellent time management and organizational skills
- Ability to work independently as well as collaboratively within the research group
- Motivated to manage and complete a research project
- Enjoy interdisciplinary and collaborative work

## Remuneration and further information

The position is placed in position code 1017 PhD. Fellow (NOK 550800). This is a temporary position with a duration of three years. Seniority promotion in the position.

Admission to a PhD program is a prerequisite for appointment to the PhD scholarship position.

Employment is conducted according to national guidelines for University and Technical College PhD scholars, and in accordance with the Civil Servant Act, the Security Act, and the Export Control Act.

Interested in learning more about the position? We are happy to tell you more about life on campus.

For questions regarding the PhD program (eligibility for admission, structure of the program etc), please contact:

Programme coordinator Josie Teurlings, email: [josie.teurlings@nmbu.no](mailto:josie.teurlings@nmbu.no)

The successful applicant is expected to start in the position 1 September 2026 and be on campus on a daily basis (working remotely not allowed).

[Information for PhD applicants](#) and [general information to applicants](#)

## Application

Send application electronically via the link "Apply for this job" at the top of this page. This will route you to the University's Web Recruitment System, where you will need to register an account (if you have not already) and log in before completing the online application form.

**Application Deadline: 14.04.2026**

Your CV must be entered in Jobbnorge's CV form and not just included as an attachment. This is in order to be able to comply with the regulations to the Public Administration Act §15.

In the application, the candidate must confirm that information and documentation (in the form of attachments) submitted via the job application can also be used by NMBU in a possible admission process.

Applicants invited for an interview are expected to present original diplomas and certificates.

The following documents must be attached to the application:

- Motivation letter (maximum 1 page, clarifying how you meet the required and emphasized experiences and skills)
- Complete CV

- Certified copies of relevant academic diplomas and certificates. (i.e. Diploma, transcript. Diploma supplement for both bachelor and master). Diplomas, transcripts and diploma supplements that are not in Norwegian or English must be uploaded in the original language. An English translation of these documents must also be attached.
  - Applicants from universities outside Norway are kindly requested to send a diploma supplement, or a similar document, which describes in detail the study program and grading system.
  - Documentation of proficiency in written and oral English in accordance with the [Regulations for the PhD degree at the NMBU](#) (§5-2 (3))
  - Names and contact details for two references (no recommendation letters required at this stage)
- One writing sample, for example master thesis, academic paper or article, book chapter, or equivalent

Additional relevant documentation of professional knowledge (for example, list of scientific works). If it is difficult to judge the applicant's contribution for publications with multiple authors, a short description of the applicant's contribution must be included.

## About the Faculty of Landscape and Society

The Faculty of Landscape and Society is home to some of Norway's foremost academic environments within international environment and development studies, public health science, landscape architecture, landscape engineering, urban and regional planning, property development and property law. The Faculty has 1300 students and 180 employees divided into five departments and a Faculty administration. It offers popular, forward-focused Bachelor, Master's and PhD programmes. The Faculty is interdisciplinary and works with sustainable social development, both nationally and internationally.

## The Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)

NMBU will contribute to securing the future of life through outstanding research, education, communication and innovation. We have the country's most satisfied university students, who receive research-based education in a unique student environment. Our graduates gain a high level of competence in interdisciplinary collaboration and are popular in the labor market.

NMBU has internationally leading research environments in several subjects. Together with our partners in society and business, we contribute to solving some of the biggest societal challenges of our time. We focus on innovation, communication and entrepreneurship because we believe these challenges are best solved with joint efforts. We believe that a good working environment is characterized by diversity. If necessary, workplace adaptations will be made for persons with disabilities. More information about NMBU is available at [www.nmbu.no/en](http://www.nmbu.no/en)

## Additional information

### Contact person:

Josie Teurlings, Programme coordinator  
Phone: | E-mail: [josie.teurlings@nmbu.no](mailto:josie.teurlings@nmbu.no)

### Place of service:

Universitetstunet 3 1430 Ås (Ås Municipality)