

The **Wyss Academy for Nature** at the University of Bern brings together scientists, business leaders, policymakers, and communities to co-design innovative solutions to pressing, interconnected problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss, land use change, and rising inequality. Our vision is to achieve a just and sustainable world in which nature conservation and human well-being reinforce each other. Our Research and Innovation group *Environmental Governance and Global Development* under the lead of Professor Quynh Nguyen is now welcoming applications for a

## PhD Student in Environmental Governance and Global Development

**Start Date:** 1 July 2025 or by agreement

**Contract:** 4 Years (PhD)

**Location:** Wyss Academy for Nature (Kochergasse 4, Bern) in Switzerland

**Apply by:** 4 May 2025

### Your Mission

The aim of the Research and Innovation Team on Environmental Governance and Global Development is to identify and analyze levers and innovative governance arrangements for sustainable solutions to global environmental and social problems. The team's work is centered around the three focus areas *Solutions for natural resource governance, Climate change adaptation and Political dynamics in sustainability transitions*.

With their work and research, the successful candidate will contribute to advancing the understanding of today's most pressing environmental challenges and evaluate the viability and effectiveness of possible solutions to these problems using state-of-the-art quantitative and qualitative social science research methods.

We invite applications for a PhD position exploring the effectiveness of community-based conservation (CBC) approaches, preferably with a focus on forest conservation. However, we are also open to other types of CBCs. The research will examine the inclusiveness of CBC initiatives, as well as the conditions under which they can generate a positive impact on socio-economic and nature-based outcomes. A key focus will be assessing whether these approaches deliver ecological and socio-economic co-benefits and identifying factors that influence their success across different regional or global contexts. The candidate will contribute to a growing body of work on conservation governance and sustainability transitions.

While employed by the University of Bern, the successful candidate will be part of the Wyss Academy for Nature which focuses on translating science into actionable insights and implementing them in our Regional Stewardship Hub regions (Europe, South America, East Africa, and Southeast Asia). Thus, this position offers a unique blend of traditional research methodologies and hands-on implementation. As part of the role, you'll delve into theoretical frameworks and conduct research to expand our understanding of the subject matter. It's an exciting opportunity that bridges the gap between theory and practice, ultimately making meaningful contributions to the field.

### Main Tasks:

- Active contribution to the implementation of ongoing research projects of the research team.
- Conduct research relevant to the dissertation
- Dissemination of ongoing work at conferences and workshops
- Publication of work in leading academic journals
- Potential support for the professorship, e.g., administrative support, teaching (but no formal teaching requirement)

## **Your Profile**

We seek a doctoral researcher with expertise in political science or related fields and a strong background in environmental and sustainability governance, international relations, development studies, comparative politics, and/or policy studies. The ideal candidate is creative, a team player, and passionate about transforming knowledge into action for people and nature. They should be comfortable working independently in a dynamic environment, demonstrate a high degree of professionalism, integrity, and respect in dealing with diverse groups of people and cultures, and be motivated to contribute to the Wyss Academy for Nature's mission. Fieldwork experience in our Hub regions or environmental topics is a plus, and an interest in conducting fieldwork is essential.

Qualifications in detail:

- Master's degree in political science, environmental science, or related fields like economics, data science, or sustainable development
- Proficient in basic quantitative methods of data gathering and data analysis commonly applied in social sciences
- Basic skills in R, Python, or a similar statistical software
- Excellent communication skills and fluency in written and spoken English; knowledge of German and Spanish is an asset
- Experience with GIS is an asset but not required

## **Application**

Please submit:

- A cover letter specifying research interests, motivations, and specific qualifications
- A CV containing the names of two academic references
- Transcripts of completed academic training
- A research proposal (in English, no more than 3 pages, excluding the bibliography), outlining:
  - The topic of your research and its relevance
  - A brief outline of the academic and conceptual debate(s) that inform your project
  - A research question, problem, or puzzle
  - Proposed methodology: How you intend to conduct your research
  - Possible project contributions to literature and/or policymaking

## **We Offer**

- The chance to be part of an organization that develops, tests, and scales innovative solutions to the most urgent problems of our times, exploring new modes of collaboration
- A stimulating multidisciplinary, international, and intercultural working environment with a modern collaborative culture across four world regions
- Employment conditions and remuneration in accordance with the standards of the University of Bern, Switzerland
- Flexible working hours and opportunities for innovative approaches and creative thinking
- Different regions of engagement and implementation: Our evolving institution – comprising four Regional Stewardship Hubs in Europe, South America, East Africa and Southeast Asia – connects creative minds to jointly research, develop, implement, and empower technical, social, economic, institutional, and policy innovations at the interface of nature and people.

For more information about this vacancy, please write to Prof. Quynh Nguyen at [hr@wyssacademy.org](mailto:hr@wyssacademy.org). We are looking forward to receiving your application via the [Online Portal](#).