

Job Opening

Two Research Assistants in Economics (Political Economy and Applied Econometrics)

Start date: Between 1 of June and 1 September 2024

Duration: open-ended contract, with revision of tasks after one year

Location: Kochergasse 4, Bern, Switzerland

Apply by: 26 May 2024

Interviews: On a rolling basis

We are seeking two highly skilled and motivated full time research assistants to join the research team of [Political Economy and Sustainable Development](#) under the lead of Prof. Dr. Kai Gehring for at least one year (e.g. as a pre-doc period prior to a PhD).

The Wyss Academy for Nature at the University of Bern is a place of co-creation, engagement, and innovation where scientists, policymakers, the business sector, and local communities come together to develop, experiment, and implement innovative solutions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, land use change, and rising inequality. Our initiatives, rooted in scientific and other knowledge, stakeholder engagement, and the implementation of co-designed solutions, unfold within four regional stewardship hubs, strategically positioned in East Africa (Kenya), South America (Peru), Southeast Asia (Laos), and Europe (Switzerland). Our vision is to achieve a just and sustainable world in which nature conservation and human wellbeing reinforce each other.

The successful candidates will be deeply involved in cutting-edge research in political economy and development economics. Our research addresses socially and politically pressing topics ranging from climate change and the environment, to sustainable resource production, conflict, ICT and media. We employ quasi-experimental and experimental methods, and strongly rely on working with data sources like text and remote-sensing data, for which we employ state-of-the-art Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing techniques. Our team is integrated in the interdisciplinary Wyss Academy for Nature, offering many chances for interesting interactions and developing new skills, but also linked to the department of economics at the University of Bern. This position is an ideal step towards a future PhD in economics or a related discipline, and there is the option for participate in selected courses and seminars.

Who we're looking for

The ideal candidates show a strong interest in learning new skills and methodologies, and applying them to challenging questions. They have some prior experience working as research assistants and/or their own empirical BA or MA thesis. Some prior experience with coding and working with data is necessary, but we are seeking in particular individuals who want to constantly improve beyond their current level and are able to independently expand their skills. They should be interested in learning about a variety of topics and have a deep intrinsic interest in topics related to political economy and development.

The candidates we are looking for are culturally sensitive, used to working and delivering under tight deadlines, well-structured, and motivated to work in a fast-changing environment.

Your tasks

- Data cleaning and processing
- Data analysis
- Conducting econometric analysis

- Creating graphs and tables for publications
- Literature review
- Support with administrative and teaching tasks

Your qualifications

- Master in Economics or a related discipline (data science, statistics, political science,...)
- Demonstrated research experience, either conducting own empirical thesis or prior work as research assistant
- Very good knowledge in at least one of STATA, R or Python
- Good understanding of econometric methods, including but not limited to Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), Instrumental Variables (IV), Difference-in-Differences (Diff-in-Diff) analysis and regression continuity designs (RDD)
- Solid foundations in mathematics and statistics

Desirable

- Proven experience in Python, especially with Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- Proven experience in R and QGIS/ArcGIS working with spatial data
- Experience doing field research, like data collection or assisting with Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)

What we offer

- Inclusion into an agile organization that develops, tests, and scales up innovative solutions to the most urgent problems of our times, exploring new modes of collaboration between science, policy, and practice
- Growth opportunities in a stimulating intercultural, international, multidisciplinary environment with a modern culture of collaboration across four world regions and the space for innovative approaches and creative thinking
- Opportunities to increase your network and grow personally and professionally
- Employment contract with a private foundation and remuneration under conditions in accordance with the standards of the University of Bern, Switzerland
- Flexible working hours

For more information about this position, please write to Prof. Dr. Kai Gering at hr@wyssacademy.org.

We look forward to receiving your application via the online portal no later than 26 May 2024.

Applications must be written in English and include the following elements:

- Curriculum vitae, incl. Bachelor and Master grades (with a detailed explanations how to interpret those grades, e.g. relative to class or relative to other countries)
- one or two reference letters and contact details of the professional referees
- a writing sample (class project, seminar paper, BA or MA thesis)
- a 1-page cover letter explaining your personal motivation to join the Wyss Academy for Nature.

The Wyss Academy for Nature values diversity and equal opportunity. We welcome all applications from qualified individuals who meet the required criteria. Dossiers submitted through employment agencies will not be considered.