

Job Opening

The Wyss Academy for Nature is a Swiss foundation that co-designs and assesses innovative development pathways and conservation approaches. Our initiatives, rooted in scientific and other types of knowledge, stakeholder engagement, and the implementation of creative solutions, unfold within four regional stewardship hubs. These hubs are strategically positioned in East Africa (Kenya and Madagascar), South America (Peru), Southeast Asia (Thailand and Laos), and Europe (Switzerland). Our vision is to achieve a just and sustainable world in which nature conservation and human wellbeing reinforce each other.

At the Wyss Academy for Nature, we bring researchers, businesses, policymakers, and communities together to develop solutions to interconnected challenges—climate change, biodiversity loss, land-use change, and rising inequality. We invite applications for a colleague who will advance the Academy’s strategy through rigorous, implementation-relevant research on the nature–people nexus, with a focus on valuing and valorizing nature stewardship.

The Wyss Academy for Nature is seeking to appoint a:

Senior Researcher *Economics of Nature Valuation and Stewardship* (80-100%)

Contract duration: immediately or by agreement

Location: Koehergasse 4, 3011 Bern, Switzerland

Contract terms: 2-3 Years, UNIBE contract, with possibility of extension

Apply by: 26 July 2026

Interviews: The first round of interviews is scheduled for the week of August 31. The second round of interviews is scheduled for the week of September 7.

About the role

A core task of the position is to generate actionable evidence for the Wyss Academy’s Regional Stewardship Hubs on the design, assessment, and adaptation of systemic and context-sensitive approaches to recognizing and rewarding nature stewardship, including mechanisms that move beyond conventional Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) and standard compensation models.

At the same time, the position offers scope to pursue a broader research agenda in economics and related fields on the conditions under which economic systems, institutions, and incentive structures enable or constrain pathways of system transformation toward just and sustainable nature–people relations. We are particularly interested in candidates whose research engages, in a systematic and analytically rigorous way, with the limits of prevailing economic arrangements in delivering conservation and livelihood outcomes, and whose work strives to contribute to developing analytically robust and empirically grounded alternatives. The expected contribution is not only critical diagnosis, but also the development and empirical assessment of approaches that can inform implementation and advance more just and sustainable human–nature relations. The role requires close collaboration with colleagues in the Regional Stewardship Hubs to identify emerging research needs and knowledge gaps from implementation, and to ensure that evidence systematically informs project design, adaptation, and scaling.

Tasks and Responsibilities

Reporting to the Professor for Governance Innovation, your tasks include:

- Develop and lead a research agenda on the economics of the nature–people nexus aligned with the Wyss Academy’s vision, mission, and strategy.

- Generate actionable research supporting the Wyss Academy's Regional Stewardship Hubs, including on:
 - valuation and valorization of nature;
 - innovative stewardship mechanisms beyond conventional PES;
 - the design and evaluation of instruments that support restoration, resilience, and nature–people co-benefits;
 - the economic dimensions of nature-positive interventions in the Wyss Academy's Solutionscapes.
- Produce high-quality academic outputs that contribute to broader debates in environmental and related economics on valuation, externalities, institutions, and system transformation.
- Pursue an independent research agenda on how economic systems, incentive structures, and institutional arrangements shape the prospects for durable nature–people co-benefits, including innovative approaches to stewardship, valuation, and sustainable development.
- Provide mentoring and supervision to junior researchers and project staff, and contribute to selected project and team management tasks.

Your Profile

The successful candidate combines analytical rigor with intellectual curiosity and a genuine interest in advancing just and sustainable nature–people relations. They enjoy working collaboratively across disciplines and cultures, translate complex ideas into formats accessible for diverse audiences, and bring strong interpersonal skills—including clear communication, constructive stakeholder engagement, and a collegial, solution-oriented mindset—to implementation-relevant research partnerships.

The profile is complemented by the following qualifications and experience:

- PhD in environmental economics, ecological economics, development economics, political economy, or a closely related discipline.
- Strong research record on one or more of the following topics: valuation of nature; institutions and sustainability; common-pool resources and collective action; local livelihoods and development in environmental contexts; nature–people co-benefits.
- Strong command of empirical methods in economics and adjacent social sciences (e.g., econometrics, causal inference, experimental or quasi-experimental design), ideally complemented by familiarity with scenario modelling and ex ante analytical approaches for policy and institutional design.
- Demonstrated interest in linking implementation-relevant work on stewardship and valorization with broader debates on sustainable development, institutional change, and innovative economic approaches to human–nature relations.
- Proven ability to work in interdisciplinary, intercultural, and implementation-oriented settings, including close collaboration with regional partners and stakeholders, ideally with experience in low- and middle-income country contexts.

What We Offer

- Integration into an institution that develops, tests, and applies innovative solutions for the pressing challenges of our time
- Work in an intercultural, multidisciplinary, and highly stimulating environment
- Employment at the University of Bern
- A modern workplace located in the heart of Bern's Old Town
- Attractive employment conditions – including flexible working hours and home-office options

For more information, please contact Prof. Quynh Nguyen at hr@wyssacademy.org. Please submit your application in English, including a CV, publication list and cover letter (max. 1 page) via our online portal **by 26 July 2026**.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to receiving your application!

The Wyss Academy for Nature values diversity and equal opportunity. We therefore welcome applications from all qualified individuals who meet the required criteria.

Applications submitted through recruitment agencies will not be considered.