Call for an MSc student in Environmental Studies 2020-21

Research context: Nature-based solutions have been proposed as a key tool to address urban challenges through the restoration and rehabilitation of (peri)urban ecosystems to promote the (re)connection of natural and social processes between places to advance towards more liveable, resilient and inclusive cities. Nature-based solutions (NBS) are particularly suitable for tackling the recovery of degraded, damaged, or destroyed ecosystems, utilizing nature to address societal challenges, build resilience and provide environmental, social and economic benefits (European Commission 2015). NBS effectiveness in this context relies on a transdisciplinary collaboration of actors to develop, maintain and monitor locally appropriate solutions and enable diverse societal actors to participate in co-production, while strengthening their relationship with nature. There is the need to take into account the needs of all social groups and ensuring that negative effects do not disproportionately affect already vulnerable populations; and to highlight the ability of restorative NBS to sustainably contribute to human health, social inclusivity, well-being and employment. Innovative forms of inclusive participation will optimise the collection of available knowledge and experiences and the co-production of governance instruments and tools for restorative NBS.

Description and objectives of the MSc thesis: The MSc thesis will rely on the H2020 INTERLACE project. The student will conduct field work in the city of Granollers (Catalonia, Spain) to collect primary data to:

(1) Identify core stakeholders in restorative NBS in the city of Granollers and conduct a stakeholder network analysis to examine the roles and relationships of different actors (Hauck et al., 2015; 2016; Schiffer and Hauck, 2010).

(2) Conduct semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in order to examine core challenges, perceptions and preferences of NBS by different actors in the network.

(3) Support the design and implementation of an online stakeholder workshop to explain, discuss and improve existing stakeholder networks.

Requisites of the student: The candidate should be a student of the Master in Interdisciplinary Studies in Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability (MEISAES, ICTA-UAB). She/he must be fluent in Catalan and English.

Technical details: The thesis will be supervised by Dr Sara Maestre Andrés (ICTA) and Dr Johannes Langemeyer (ICTA) and will have David Camacho (ICTA) as a tutor. We expect that a revised version of the MSc Thesis could be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication.

If you are interested on writing your MSc thesis on this topic, please contact
sara.maestre@uab.cat; johannes.langemeyer@uab.cat

Literature:

European Commission, DG Research & Innovation (2015). Towards an EU research and innovation agenda policy agenda for nature-based solutions & re-naturing cities: Final report of the Horizon 2020 expert group 'Nature-based solutions and re-naturing cities'.

Hauck, J., Schmidt, J., Werner, A. (2016). Using social network analysis to identify key stakeholders in agricultural biodiversity governance and related land-use decisions at regional and local level. Ecol. Soc. 21 (2), Art. 49

Hauck, J., Stein, C., Schiffer, E., Vandewalle, M. (2015). Seeing the forest and the trees: Facilitating participatory network planning in environmental governance. Glob. Environ. Change 35 , 400 – 410

Schiffer, E., Hauck, J. (2010). Net-Map: collecting social network data and facilitating network learning through participatory influence network mapping. Field Methods 22 (3), 231 – 249.