

Call for an MSc student in Environmental Studies 2022-23

Title: Conducting a meta-evaluation of an assessment framework for nature-based solutions

Specialisation to which it is directed: Global change and Ecological economics

Research context: restorative Nature-based Solutions (NbS) 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. NbS therefore provide environmental, social and economic benefits (European Commission 2015). The Horizon 2020 INTERLACE project has developed an assessment framework to support cities in their processes of decision-making regarding NBS design, implementation and monitoring. This assessment framework is currently being implemented in each of the six INTERLACE cities, being Granollers, the Metropolitan Area of Krakow, Portoviejo, Chemnitz, the Corredor Biológico Interurbano María Aguilar (CBIMA) in the Metropolitan Area of San Jose in Costa Rica, and Envigado. To systematically extract lessons learned from the implementation of this assessment framework in the six cities, a meta-evaluation will be conducted.

Description and objectives of the MSc thesis: The MSc thesis will rely on the H2020 INTERLACE project. The student will support the meta-evaluation of the implementation of the assessment framework by focusing in a specific INTERLACE city. Several methods will be used to conduct this evaluation process which will consist of: 1) a protocol to systematically describe the different steps and processes of implementation of the assessment system focusing on tracking the what, how, who and when; 2) semi-structured interviews conducted to members of the City Focal Points with the aim to have a subjective evaluation of the processes and steps of co-designing the assessment system focusing on what worked and what did not and why certain decisions were made; 3) semi-structured interviews with members of the H2020 project Connexus to get external feedback on the assessment framework.

The objectives of the MSc thesis are:

- a) To systematically extract lessons learned from the implementation of the tailored-assessment systems in INTERLACE cities to improve the general assessment framework.
- b) Explore to what extent and how the INTERLACE assessment framework contributes to transformative change in social-ecological systems.

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 Spanish and English.

Technical details: The thesis will be supervised by Dr Sara Maestre Andrés (ICTA) and Dr Johannes Langemeyer (ICTA). 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'.