



# GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

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This guide aims to provide practical information to potential applicants on how to apply, together with a description of the assessment procedure.

For further and up-to-date information, please visit the website [www.coupled-itn.eu](http://www.coupled-itn.eu).

## ABOUT ITN COUPLED

Supported and co-funded by the European Commission through the Horizon 2020 Marie Skłodowska Curie (MSCA) ITN Programme, the COUPLED European Training Network provides 15 PhD positions. The call is still open for **position ESR 09: Characterisation and visualisation of telecouplings in Large Scale Land Acquisitions** (Host: University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland)

The COUPLED European Training Network aims to attract international Early Stage Researchers (ESR) for high quality PhD training. The aim of the programme is to increase the international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary mobility of researchers. The students will be selected for a **3-year advanced multidisciplinary research training, preferably starting July 2018 (preferred)**.

### The research programme

Human consumption of food and agricultural products has a significant impact on the environment and the societies in the regions where agricultural goods are produced. Given Europe's large and growing land-use footprint abroad, Europe has a special responsibility to develop concepts and tools needed to achieve sustainability in an interconnected world. Different sectors, consumers, businesses and politicians are increasingly demanding more environmental and social sustainable land use both inside and outside Europe.

Yet, there is increasing recognition of the limitations of current research approaches to adequately understand and address the increasing complexity of land system dynamics, which are often characterised by strong non-linearity, feedback mechanisms, and local contexts, and where places of production, trade and consumption of land-based products are increasingly separated. Land systems are increasingly coupled across large distances via flows of biomass, capital, information and regulations. Given that distal couplings are often key in shaping how land is used, a new generation of scientists and entrepreneurs is needed.

The project **COUPLED. Operationalising Telecoupling for Solving Sustainability Challenges for Land Use** aims to put the telecoupling approach into practice and to train a new generation of young scientists in trans- and interdisciplinary concepts and methodologies. **The future doctoral students learn**

- to understand processes and actors that influence land use in an increasingly interconnected world
- to consider distant, unexpected feedback and spillover and to account for their social and environmental impact
- to foster new and enhanced governance measures that can shape land use couplings to deliver more sustainable outcomes of land use decisions

### Participating host organisations

Selected researchers will enroll in one of the 15 positions offered by the 10 host organisations participating in the COUPLED network.

1. Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Germany)
2. University of Bern (Switzerland)

3. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain)
4. University of Copenhagen (Denmark)
5. Alpen-Adria Universität, Institute of Social Ecology Vienna (Austria)
6. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
7. Leuphana University of Lüneburg (Germany)
8. Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium)
9. The Forest Trust (Switzerland)
10. Unilever U.K. (UK)

## CALL FOR APPLICANTS

### Why apply for a position in the COUPLED European Training Network?

ITNs are financially supported by the European Commission because they provide excellent research, training and career aspects. The benefits of being a PhD student in an ITN network:

- You will work in a **stimulating and creative learning environment** and in an **interdisciplinary** research training programme.
- You can already at a very early stage move forward with your **individual career** via training towards goals set in a Personal Career Development Plan.
- You will be engaged in **transdisciplinary experiences** with targeted secondments to practice communities, companies and NGOs.
- You will have the opportunity to acquire **lifetime skills** and optimum opportunities to build and extend your **international network** available to you throughout your professional career.
- You will have the opportunity to acquire outstanding **complementary training in transferable skills** (e.g. presentation techniques, networking, publishing, and outreach) as well as leadership, innovation and entrepreneurial skills.
- You will be advised by **excellent group leaders** – they are all outstanding in their research and trainings.

### Available positions

**ESR 12: Governance Institutions for Sustainability in Globally Telecoupled Systems**  
(Host: Leuphana University Lüneburg)

### Topic

Globally telecoupled systems such as commodity chains, long-range pollution or distant policy-driven effects present complex new challenges for sustainability governance. These are often beyond the capabilities of individual states and even multilateral institutions to regulate. At the same time, the policy and governance interventions of governments and other actors themselves often have a range of unforeseen consequences and knock-on effects. Taking European Union

(EU) environmental policy as its primary vantage point, this research will:

- Identify key institutions, networks of actors and instruments deployed to govern for sustainability in specific case studies of telecoupled systems (e.g. global trade and supply chains and networks), and
- Assess their impacts with particular attention to so-called 'policy-driven displacement' effects, policy spillovers and feed-backs (e.g. increased deforestation resulting from EU biofuels policy).
- On the basis of this analysis, the research will identify governance levers for effective intervention at multiple levels (from multilateral to local) and among different actors (e.g. governmental, private sector, civil society) to address policy-driven displacement effects.

In carrying out this work, the ESR will:

- Conduct interviews and documentary research to chart networks and key actors and structures associated with EU efforts to govern for sustainability in telecoupled systems (focusing on certain specific cases such as agricultural commodity chains or raw resource flows),
- Analyse and assess the effectiveness (success factors/barriers, social/environmental impacts) of different governance arrangements and their unintended policy-driven displacement effects, and
- Propose potential policy and governance interventions for increased sustainability in telecoupled systems. Potential secondment placements include the German Federal Environmental Ministry in Berlin (Germany) and the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium).

### Location

Leuphana University Lüneburg is a young university, focusing on sustainability, cultural and political science, education, and management and entrepreneurship, and has repeatedly been awarded for innovation. The Research Group on Governance, Participation and Sustainability, led by Prof. Dr Newig, is affiliated both with Leuphana's Faculty of Sustainability and with its Centre for the Study of Democracy. A multidisciplinary group of senior and early-career social scientists, it focuses on addressing the big challenges of governance in the context of environmental and sustainability politics.

### We seek

A candidate with an above-average MSc (or equivalent degree) in Political Science, Human Geography, Sustainability Science or cognate discipline. We expect a strong interest in environmental policy and governance. Excellent written and spoken English is essential, and experience with both qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g. Social Network Analysis) would be advantageous.

### Contact

Jens Newig, [newig@uni.leuphana.de](mailto:newig@uni.leuphana.de), <http://www.sustainability-governance.net/>

### Who can apply (eligibility criteria)?

- You have **completed a Master's degree** or equivalent at the time of recruitment.
- You are an **Early Stage Researcher**, meaning at the time of recruitment by the host organization you shall be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research

experience<sup>1</sup>) of your research career and have not been awarded a doctoral degree.

- The positions are open to all nationalities. However, your application complies with the European Commission's **mobility rule**, meaning at the time of recruitment by the host organization, you must not have resided or carried out your main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the host organization for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the reference date (start of the employment contract). Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account. For **position 5** and **14** this rule does not apply, however the appointed researcher shall not have spent more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the reference date in the same appointing organisation.
- You have excellent proficiency in **English** language.
- Only applications that are complete, in English and that have been submitted before the deadline will be considered eligible.

### Working conditions and salary

Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (MSCA) offer attractive salary and working conditions.

- Selected candidates will have a fulltime employment contract for the duration of **36 months**.
- Selected candidates will receive a salary in accordance with the MSCA regulations for Early Stage Researchers. The basic gross salary (living allowance) is **€ 3.110** per month. A correction factor will be applied per country (see Table 1); therefore, the exact gross salary will be confirmed upon appointment. **Please consider that the net salary may be much lower due to taxes, social benefit premiums etc.**
- In addition to the living allowance, selected candidates will benefit from a mobility allowance of gross **€600** per month. Selected candidates who have a family at the time of recruitment qualify for an additional family allowance of gross **€500** per month.\*

Table 1. Country correction coefficients for ITN living allowance (H2020 Work Programme 2016-2017) for countries involved in COUPLED

<b>Austria</b>	<b>104.8%</b>
Belgium	100.0%
Denmark	135.3%
<b>Germany</b>	<b>98.8%</b>
Spain	97.6%
Switzerland	113.1%

<sup>1</sup> Full-time equivalent research experience is measured from the date when you obtained the degree entitling you to embark on a doctorate (either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which you are recruited or seconded), even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged. Part-time research experience will be counted pro-rata.

\* 'Family' means persons linked to the researcher by marriage (or a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised) or dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.

The Netherlands	104.3%
UK	120.3%

## Timeline

Opening of the call	06 April 2018
Deadline for applications	15 May 2018
Selected candidates invited	18–25 May 2018
Skype/phone interviews	28 May –01 June 2018
Successful candidates informed	8 June 2018
Enrollment	01 July 2018 (preferred)

## Content and submission of your application

Your application consists of two parts:

1. An online application form
2. One PDF file containing all your application files

### 1. Online application form

To submit your application, please fill in the requested data in the online application form, upload your application file and submit your application. The online application form is available on the website [www.coupled-itn.eu](http://www.coupled-itn.eu).

In the online form, you are requested to fill in different types of information. This information is aimed to facilitate the eligibility check of your application. Please consider the following:

- To indicate your (expected) whereabouts, please list the start/end dates, country and description of your main activity in the required section.
- Please list your whereabouts in chronological order, starting from 1 January 2015 and ending with 01 July 2018.
- Should you have resided in more than one country within the requested period, please use the “Add another whereabouts” to list multiple whereabouts. In case you have more whereabouts, please list them in your CV.
- If you have not graduated yet, please indicate the expected date of your degree being awarded. Please keep in mind that you need to have obtained your degree before the time of recruitment.
- Please list the names and contact details of two referees. Please inform your referees upfront on the possibility of them being contacted by a representative of the COUPLED network regarding your application. The referees are most likely to be contacted late May 2018.

## 2. Your application file

Your application should consist of the following documents, in the following order:

1. A complete Curriculum Vitae
2. A copy of your Master certificate (if you have not graduated yet, please provide a copy of your Bachelor certificate)
3. A copy of your grades (if you have not graduated yet, please include Bachelor grades and available grades for your Master)
4. A motivation letter (max. 1 page)
5. A draft proposal related to the ESR position(s) applied for (max. 2 pages)
6. Copy of TOEFL or IELTS scores, if available

The copy of your TOEFL or IELTS scores is optional; all other documents are required. Failure to submit any of these documents will automatically result in a rejection of your application on formal grounds.

## SELECTION & EVALUATION PROCEDURE

### Eligibility check

All applications will be checked according to the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will be processed to the next phase.

- The applicant has completed a **Master's degree** or equivalent at the time of recruitment.
- The applicant is an **Early Stage Researcher**.
- The applicant complies with the **mobility rule** for the project(s) to apply for.
- The **application is complete**, in English and submitted through the online form before the deadline.

### Selection Procedure

Remaining candidates will be ranked by the principal supervisors of the ESR according to a point system (1-10), where points will be assigned for

- (1) Scientific background and merits to date
- (2) Motivation
- (3) Innovative nature of the draft proposal

Second, reference letters for top five candidates per ESR position will be requested and skype/phone interviews will be conducted with these candidates by the supervisors. All interviews will be conducted along a jointly established structure to ensure comparable selection.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further and up-to-date information, please visit the website <http://www.coupled-itn.eu> or contact us at [info@coupled-itn.eu](mailto:info@coupled-itn.eu).