

## Research Fellow vacancy

### Land and life in the Anthropocene: Landscape reform (LAND)

The LAND project is supported through a European Research Council Synergy grant and will be working in four sites: the Colombian Amazon, coastal Indonesia and the Spanish plains, as well as the mid-Zambezi valley in Zimbabwe. The aim of the project is to elaborate new approaches to 'more-than-human landscape reform' to meet Anthropocene challenges focusing on climate, biodiversity, food and infrastructure, and their interconnections, making use of the 4Ps framework. See Box 1 for the Project Summary.

#### Box 1

How can we learn to live on earth in new ways? This is the challenge of the Anthropocene. We propose a novel 4Ps framework to investigate land–life dynamics, which, for the first time, will connect perspectives on human–nonhuman relations (Partners), property-making (Property), land regimes (Profit) and land–climate systems (Planet). We will draw on critical perspectives from both environmental humanities and agrarian studies, bringing together diverse traditions from human–nonhuman anthropology, geography, political ecology and economy, ecological economics and complex systems thinking in a unique interdisciplinary synthesis. Connecting land and life, this project will address four Anthropocene challenges – climate, biodiversity, food and infrastructure/investment – through four exemplar landscape cases in the Colombian Amazon, southern African savannas, Spanish Mediterranean plains and coastal Southeast Asia. The core team (Jun Borrás, Esteve Corbera, Ian Scoones and Anna Tsing) bring a range of expertise and experience that, together with eight postdoctoral and seven PhD researchers, can form the foundation for radically rethinking how we conceptualize land–life relations in the Anthropocene. We have designed a collaborative project organization and process for working together that will promote synergistic conceptual and methodological breakthroughs, while building the capacity of researchers to engage with Anthropocene challenges through a novel framework. Engaging with policymakers, social movements and local communities, our public action work will in turn lead to practical approaches to 'landscape reform', where new ways of living in the Anthropocene are imagined and elaborated.

For the Colombian work, we are interested in how the 4Ps and the 4 Anthropocene challenges unfold in given landscapes: the interactions between land, nature and people within the Colombian Amazon and Altillanura landscapes, focusing on interlocking production and social reproduction, connecting the human and non-human interactions across local to planetary scales. Our Anthropocene challenge focus is climate change. Existing approaches to land, food and rural development policies, biodiversity conservation, climate action, and infrastructure development in the Colombian Amazon/Altillanura area fail to address these interactions effectively.

Land reform focuses on individual property on plots; collective titles for Afrodescendants and Indigenous on formalized demarcation of territories and climate action on profit-

making solutions to climate change, biodiversity and infrastructure on the pursuit of unfettered national economic growth. None of these approaches, currently supported by mainstream development and private investments, engage with how human and non-human processes intersect across landscapes.

We will engage in public action, involving participatory scenario analysis and engaged dialogue, which brings actors together to imagine landscape reform for the Colombian Amazon and Altillanura regions, for now and into the future, defining new narratives, practices and politics, elaborating an approach to 'landscape reform'. This will look very different to current, standard approaches to both climate change and development, and so will suggest new ways of addressing the Anthropocene challenges.

### **We are seeking to hire 1 Research Fellow**

We are seeking to hire one Colombia-based Research Fellow (RF) for three years, with the possibility to extend to a fourth year.

The RF will be hired via consultancy agreements by the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Netherlands, one of the core partners in the LAND project. The research will be in the Colombian Amazon and Altillanura regions of Colombia (Meta, Vichada, Guaviare) and will involve considerable periods of time in the field. More specifically, there will be three pre-identified sub-landscapes: Vichada area, Villavicencio/Puerto Rico area, Meta/San Jose/Calamar/Miraflores area. The RF will be assigned an area in any these three sub-landscapes.

The RF will be central to the Colombia research team, which will be led by Professor Jun Borrás (ISS/EUR) in close collaboration with Professors Dario Fajardo (Universidad de Externado), Julio Arias Vanegas (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana), Jenniffer Vargas Reina (Universidad Nacional), and Sergio Coronado. They will support the RF in the field and contribute to team-wide activities. The RF will collaborate with the international LAND team and contribute to relevant cross-cutting activities, interacting with all Principal Investigators (Jun Borrás, Esteve Corbera, Ian Scoones and Anna Tsing) and participating in project meetings where relevant to their contracted work.

The successful candidate will be a Colombian national, fluent in English, has an excellent track-record in conducting research work in the northern part of the Amazon or Altillanura. The RF will have completed her/his PhD confirmed by the time s/he start with the job. The RF will be committed to sustained fieldwork in difficult rural settings in the Amazon or Altillanura. We especially encourage those who have past experience (professional or personal) in the study area to apply.

The candidate will design her/his own research project in discussion with the Colombia team leads but these must relate to the overall focus of the LAND project, the '4Ps' and the possibilities of more-than-human landscape reform – in a given sub-landscape (mentioned earlier). The RF will be based in Colombia and has the option of linking to a local institution appropriate for this project. The expected output will be single- and jointly authored academic publications, non-academic publications (working papers, blogs), active participation in public action-related activities of the project, among others.

They will report to Professor Jun Borrás and provide regular reports on progress as agreed.

The successful candidate will be hired by ISS/EUR via consultancy agreement. The monthly fee will be €2,200, and will be indexed every year. Fieldwork costs will be paid by the project upon agreement with the project's PI (Jun Borrás) periodically. As a consultant the RF will be responsible for her/his own insurance and all other costs.

Expected Start date is 01 December 2026.

The period November-December will be an intensive period of preparatory scoping fieldwork, with some field visits together with Professors Jun Borrás, Julio Arias and Jennifer Vargas. This will be a period when plans for the research will be elaborated. This will be shared with colleagues in Colombia at a workshop, involving both academics, social movements, and policy players, on 8-9 December 2026, and the RF is expected to be part of this national inception workshop. The main field research will start in January 2027.

### **About the International Institute of Social Studies**

The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), part of Erasmus University Rotterdam  
The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) is part of Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands (EUR). ISS is an international graduate school of policy-oriented critical social science. Established over 60 years ago, it brings together academics and students from the Global South and North to study political, economic, and social developments in transition economies. ISS has a long tradition in action-oriented research and a wide range of expertise working on and with societies in the Global South.

The LAND Research Fellow (RF) will collaborate with the Extractive Industries and Natural Resources Research Team.

### **Application process**

The deadline for applications is 15 October 2026. You can apply by emailing your application to: [land@iss.nl](mailto:land@iss.nl)

**The application must be in English in one pdf document, including documents in the suggested order.** Please note: we strongly discourage the use of generative AI in your application.

1. A motivation letter (max. two pages).
2. A curriculum vitae (2-page CV).
3. Names and contact details of two referees.
4. A concept note or description of research ideas (max. four pages), outlining the intended focus, possible research questions, and methodological and theoretical approach – for one of the three sub-landscapes (mentioned earlier).
5. Publications, if any. For publications with multiple authors, please include a short description of your contribution.

After reviewing all applications, we will compile a shortlist of candidates who will be invited for an interview. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. A second interview may be held before a final selection is made. Interviews will be held online in English and are expected to take place on 2-6 November 2026.

### **Further information**

For further queries, please contact: Jun Borrás at [land@iss.nl](mailto:land@iss.nl)