

ADVERTISEMENT

TWO PHD SCHOLARSHIPS

in the

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

INVITATION TO APPLY

The Department of Geography and Asia Research Institute (ARI), National University of Singapore (NUS), invites applications for two **full-time** and **fully-funded, four year PhD Scholarships** to undertake research connected to a SSRC-funded research project entitled *Sustainable Governance of Transboundary Environmental Commons in Southeast Asia*. The expectation is that the successful candidates will register for the PhD studies at NUS in **January 2018**.

The project is being funded through a S\$2.579 million grant from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) of Singapore.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT

As a small, island city-state, Singapore is closely interconnected, economically, environmentally and politically, with regional neighbours in Southeast Asia. The resilience and reliability of these interconnections have facilitated economic growth, regional stability and cordial diplomatic relations. Development benefits in the region have not come without costs, however; rising living standards are associated with increasing rates of resource extraction, reduced environmental quality and impoverishment of biodiversity that have negative ramifications for exposed population groups.

In light of the above challenges, and focusing on water, hydropower and fisheries in the Mekong and peatlands, fire and plantations in Indonesia, this project seeks to: first, identify the drivers and impacts associated with two major transboundary environmental challenges impacting land, water and atmosphere in Southeast Asia i.e. biomass burning and haze, and hydropower development and water resources; second, to examine these transboundary challenges in the context of the governance of transboundary environmental commons, or common pool resources, within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as the identification of relevant best practices worldwide; and third, to develop the concept of transboundary environmental commons within ASEAN.

The project also aims to contribute to environmental sustainability within ASEAN, as well as provide an evidence-based foundation for policy-making and implementation at both national and ASEAN levels that enhances Singapore's reputation as a responsible neighbour and a leader in sustainability sciences.

THE PHD SCHOLARSHIPS

With an ideal start date of 1 January 2018, **two Research Scholarships (RS) are available in the Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore (NUS) for prospective PhD students interested in completing research on environment-related projects in the Southeast Asian region**. The successful candidates will be work closely with the team of researchers connected to the SSRC-funded research project *Sustainable Governance of Transboundary Environmental Commons in Southeast Asia*. The Research

Scholarships cover four years of full-time study (fees and maintenance). Additional funds are also available to cover fieldwork and conference attendance. The end-date of the award will be the fourth year of study. The scholarships are linked to two empirical work packages (WPs) that form the core of the research project (WPs 1 and 2). One PhD Scholar will be linked with WP1. The second PhD Scholar will be linked to WP2. Both PhD scholars will work closely with other researchers linked to their respective WPs, including two Postdoctoral Research Fellows, and to the wider research project. The two WPs are:

- **WP1: Atmosphere: Biomass burning and the haze.** WP1 has two main foci. First, peatlands and associated communities and activities in the region, and the drivers and impacts of peatland (biomass) burning. Second, the potential for changes in the value chain through which oil palm-derived and containing products are produced, towards cleaner and less damaging forms of production, and for attaining environment, social and governance goals.
- **WP2: Water: Hydropower (Energy).** WP2 will examine the drivers, characteristics and implications of the shift to private-sector development of hydropower in transboundary river basins; and understand how these processes are redefining the relationship between water as a public or private resource, and its governance, and the implications of this redefinition for governance across geographic scales.

The PhD Scholars will be expected to conduct field research (including ethnographic studies, interviews, participant observation, and political-economic analysis) complementary to research questions identified for the relevant WP. PhD scholars will work with on-site collaborators in Laos, Thailand and Indonesia to gain access to research subjects and institutions. The PhD student linked to WP1 will also work in collaboration with the Global Production Networks (GPN) Centre, NUS.

Department of Geography & ARI at NUS

The QS World University rankings place NUS in the top 25 universities in the world and number one in Asia. In the same rankings the Department of Geography, NUS (<http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/geog/>), was ranked 11th among Geography programmes globally. The Department runs a very active graduate research programme of international standing, including both graduate research and taught graduate students. At present, around 50 PhD students are registered in the Department. There are also around 20 Master's by research students and 15-20 taught MSc students (registered on the MSc Applied GIS). Further information on the Department's graduate programme is at: <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/geog/graduate/overview.html>

ARI (<https://ari.nus.edu.sg/>) was established as a university-level institute in July 2001 as one of the strategic initiatives of the NUS. The mission of the Institute is to provide a world-class focus and resource for research on the Asian region. NUS's GPN Centre was launched in January 2015 and aims "to become a leading research node for work on global production networks and development in Asia" (<http://gpn.nus.edu.sg/>).

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Graduate research students in the Department of Geography follow a semi-structured programme that involves a taught component in the first two years of registration. The programme allows a PhD student to acquire and develop to a high standard both subject-specific and transferable skills, thus enabling a student to access a broad range of future employment opportunities – in business, industry, consultancy, education and research.

Please note that the application deadline (for a January 2018 start) is **15 August 2017**. For further information, please contact in the first instance the project PI **Professor David Taylor** (email david.taylor@nus.edu.sg).

Applicants must be university graduates with at least an upper second class honours degree or equivalent and at the time of the award of the Research Scholarship. Applications from candidates who also already hold a graduate degree (e.g. Masters) are particularly welcome. There is no restriction on the nationality of applicants.

Please note that all applications must include a **Statement of Purpose**. Details are at: <http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/geog/graduate/application.html> Essentially the Statement of Purpose places less emphasis on the "Research Proposal" and more on the ability of an applicant at the application stage to write concisely, precisely and with effect. The underpinning assumption is that the successful applicants will spend much of their first year as a PhD student in the Department developing their PhD research proposal, as part of the Qualifying Exam (Q/E), linked to the aims and objectives of the larger *Sustainable Governance of Transboundary Environmental Commons in Southeast Asia* project. Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- The quality of their Statement of Purpose
- Academic performance as evident in the grades received in the completed Undergraduate and Graduate programmes
- External referees' reports
- Demonstrable evidence of capacity to carry out independent research and present complex ideas in English
- Potential to pursue a career in advanced research as demonstrated in the Statement of Purpose

Interested applicants should in the first instance email Ms Pauline Lee (geoleepl@nus.edu.sg) to indicate that you are interested in applying specifically for a "*Sustainable Governance of Transboundary Environmental Commons in Southeast Asia*" scholarship in the Department of Geography/ARI.

- **Completed applications using the attached application form must be received by 15 August 2017**

Applicants may be asked to appear for interview (including over SKYPE).