

ADVERTISEMENT

THREE PHD SCHOLARSHIPS

in the

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, FACULTY OF LAW & ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE,
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

INVITATION TO APPLY

The Department of Geography, National University of Singapore (NUS), invites applications for **THREE full-time and fully-funded, four-year PhD Scholarships** to undertake research funded by the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC) Singapore, under its Thematic Grant programme, entitled *Climate Governance of Nature-based Carbon Sinks in Southeast Asia*. Evaluation of applications will commence on **15th August 2022** and will continue until suitable candidates are found. The expectation is that successful candidates will register for enrolment in a PhD program in the Department of Geography, NUS commencing in *either January or August 2023*.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This project places social sciences scholarship at the core of climate governance strategies involving Nature-based Carbon Sinks (NCS), defined as ecosystems that absorb and store more carbon than they release. The geographical focus of the project is Southeast Asia, a region rich in carbon sequestration potential where the sociospatial relations, economic realities and land use regimes that underpin the medium to long-term effectiveness of NCS in mitigating climate change remain critically understudied. The project aims to strengthen linkages between the natural and social sciences by assessing the optimal arrangements for governing NCS at and across a range of spatial and administrative scales. With its focus on the governance of different types of NCS found in terrestrial and mangrove forests, peatlands and agricultural soils, the project will locate technologies of NCS governance within the socio-spatial contexts, power asymmetries and institutional cultures that shape their success or failure. In these ways, this policy relevant research will contribute to ongoing efforts by Singapore and other ASEAN countries to adapt and build resilience to climate change challenges by developing low-carbon initiatives with social, economic and environmental co-benefits.

The successful candidates recruited as PhD students will join a large multi-disciplinary research team that includes graduate and postdoctoral research staff funded through the same project and based in the Asia Research Institute (ARI), NUS. Opportunities also exist for student (part-time) research assistants.

THE PHD SCHOLARSHIPS

With an ideal start date of **January or August 2023**, **three Research Scholarships** are available in the **Department of Geography at NUS** for prospective PhD students **interested in completing research on environment-related projects in the Southeast Asian region**. One of the three successful PhD candidates will be co-supervised by the **Faculty of Law** at NUS by scholars specialising in the field of **Environmental Law**. All three successful candidates will work closely with an international research team involved in the SSRC-funded research project *Climate Governance of Nature-based Carbon Sinks in Southeast Asia*. The Research Scholarships cover four years of full-time study (fees and maintenance). Additional funds are available to cover fieldwork and conference participation. The end-date of the award will be the fourth year of study. The scholarships are linked to three thematic Work Packages (WPs), with *one* PhD scholar attached to each of the three WPs (see below). All three PhD scholars will work closely with other researchers in the project, including three Research Fellows and a Senior Research Fellow. The three WPs are:

- **WP1: Terrestrial forests:** WP1 aims to increase knowledge of effective and inclusive governance regimes for aboveground forest carbon stocks found in Southeast Asia. It focuses on the governance of: (a) intact forests as net GHG sinks; and (b) damaged and degraded forests where targeted reforestation interventions are planned, underway or completed.
- **WP2: Blue and Teal Carbon:** WP2 aims to safeguard Southeast Asia's coastlines against climate change threats and impacts by increasing knowledge about the optimal arrangements for governing two types of aquatic carbon sinks: (1) blue carbon stocks found in mangroves, saltmarshes, seagrasses and tidally influenced freshwater wetlands; and (2) teal carbon found in non-tidal freshwater ecosystems that are rich in fluvial and lacustrine carbon stocks.
- **WP3: Soil Carbon:** WP3 has two foci on the climate governance of: (1) peatlands; and (2) non-peat (mineral) urban soils. The research component on low-carbon governance in peatlands connects to Singapore's national interest of promoting sustainable peatland development in neighbouring countries to limit biomass burning that contributes substantially to transboundary haze pollution and GHG emissions. The non-peat, urban soil component involves citizen Science with a Singaporean nonfor-profit organisation invested in urban composting and food security.

The PhD Scholars will be expected to conduct field research (including ethnographic studies, interviews, participant observation, and document analysis) complementary to research questions identified for the relevant WP. PhD scholars will work with onsite collaborators in Laos (WP1), the Philippines (WP2) and Indonesia (WP3) to gain access to research subjects and institutions.

Department of Geography, Faculty of Law & ARI at NUS

Located in one of the most culturally diverse and technologically advanced cities in the world, at the centre of an extremely dynamic and exciting region, Geography at the National University of Singapore (<https://fass.nus.edu.sg/geog/>) is now firmly established as Asia's leading Department of Geography and is consistently ranked among the top geography departments globally. This reputation is in part built upon research excellence in three key areas: tropical environmental change, social and cultural geographies, and political and economic geography. It is also, however, a product of a long-standing commitment to collegiality, inclusion, safety and mutual respect. The Department runs a very active graduate research program of international standing, including both graduate research and taught graduate students. Further information on the Department's graduate program is at: <https://fass.nus.edu.sg/geog/graduate-introduction/>).

The Faculty of Law (<https://law.nus.edu.sg/>) at NUS is Singapore's oldest law school and is widely regarded as the leading law school in Asia. One of three successful applicants will be co-supervised by the Department of Geography and the Faculty of Law at NUS.

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. Successful applicants will participate in ARI events and receive mentorship and supervision from scholars based at ARI.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

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

Evaluation of applications will commence on **15th August 2022** and will continue until suitable candidates are found. 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**. 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 *Climate Governance of Nature-based Carbon Sinks in Southeast Asia* project.

Please note that online applications for admission to a PhD in the Department of Geography, including the three directly linked to the *Climate Governance of Naturebased Carbon Sinks in Southeast Asia* project, are preferred.

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Quality of Statement of Purpose
- Academic performance as evident in the grades received in completed Undergraduate and Graduate degrees
- Two referee 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

For further information on applications to the Department of Geography's PhD programme, please see: <https://fass.nus.edu.sg/geog/application/>.

Interested applicants should in the first instance email Ms. Pauline Lee (geoleepl@nus.edu.sg) the Senior Executive supporting Graduate Studies in the Department. Please indicate in your email to Ms Lee that you are interested in applying specifically for a *Climate Governance of Nature-based Carbon Sinks in Southeast Asia* PhD scholarship in the Department of Geography.

Short-listed applicants will be interviewed on-line (via zoom) prior to any final decision being made over their application.