

Job description – Research assistant

Horizon Europe Project: ZOE – Zoonosis emergence across degraded and restored forest ecosystems

Time period: by January 2025 for a duration of up to 18 months

Working hours: up to 30 hours/week (minimum 20 hours/week)

Salary grade: B1/1 subject to level of experience, according to the [Collective Bargaining Agreement](#)

About:

ZOE is a research project funded by the European Union (2024-2027), and lead by the Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany). The ZOE project is run by an interdisciplinary consortium with expertise in geography, ecology, virology, immunology, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, anthropology and science dissemination from seven EU and four American countries.

The ZOE consortium aims at advancing the understanding of the effects of ecosystem degradation in the form of deforestation and associated biodiversity loss on the risk of emergence of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases, and at better defining the protective value of forest ecosystem restoration. It fully embraces a holistic, integrated, inter- and transdisciplinary One Health approach to the links between human, animal, and environmental health, identifying mitigating and exacerbating socio-economic and behavioural factors, attitudes and perceptions at the biodiversity-health nexus.

For more information, go to: <https://www.zoe-project.eu/>

The project team from the [Urban Studies Working Group at the Department of Geography and Regional Research at University of Vienna](#) and the [Department of Psychology at Universidade da Coruña](#) are responsible for the design and implementation of Work Package 2 of the project.

Work Package 2 focuses on the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of zoonosis emergence and spread in selected settlements and communities; that is, how activities like trade, different land use practices, or interactions with livestock shape the risk of disease transmissions between animals and humans. One of the main tasks is to develop new methodological approaches and to test them under different case study conditions. Here, Work Package 2 will work with academic partners and local communities from four case studies in Slovenia, Slovakia, Guatemala and Costa Rica to better understand human and cultural drivers behind the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases as well as understanding actions for risk reduction and avoidance.

Position:

The research assistant will be based in Vienna and work as part of the Work Package 2 team with case study partners. She/he/they will be supervised by Prof Kerstin Krellenberg at University of Vienna and will support the development, implementation, analysis and communication of the case study research through the following tasks:

- Background research on the four case studies and their relevant social, economic and cultural contexts, including key risk drivers, institutional actors and their environments, amongst others;
- Regular meetings with case study partners to establish and strengthen the research relationship and co-design a contextually sensitive and salient research approach in each case;
- Co-design of quantitative and qualitative research methods which are likely to include surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions;
- Implementation of the developed, and selected research methods in up to four case studies;
- Case study analysis as well as comparative analysis across the four cases;
- Regular communication of activities for the ZOE and Urban Sustainability Living Lab website and social media;
- Support in project reporting to the EU;
- Support in the writing of academic articles and other scientific outputs.

Qualifications:

- MSc degree in Geography, Public Health, Sociology, Environmental psychology, or related fields;
- Experience in conducting interdisciplinary and case-study based research, ideally in teams crossing natural and social sciences;
- Experience in designing and implementing qualitative and quantitative methods. Experience in conducting surveys and qualitative interviews is particularly desired;
- Experience in transdisciplinary/participatory research, e.g. in the organisation and running of community workshops and focus groups;
- Knowledge of, or keen interest in, issues of environmental risk, public health, biodiversity, and land use;
- Excellent command of English. The ability to communicate in one of the other languages of the project (Spanish, Slovak, Slovenian) is an asset.

To apply, please submit your CV, proof of required qualifications such as academic certificates, motivation letter as well as the contact details of one referee via e-mail.

Applications are processed on a rolling basis and the position will be advertised on the [Urban Studies Lab website](#) until it is filled.

Please direct enquiries and applications to:

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