



The Institute of Geography of the University of Bern commits itself to a geography embracing social and physical sciences to contribute knowledge for societal transformation. It understands that interdisciplinarity is required to analyze human-environment interactions and to address current challenges toward a sustainable world.

We invite applications for:

Two PhD positions (full time) in Human Geography on commons initiatives, in favor of “greening cities” and “affordable housing”

As a successful candidate, you will be part of the interdisciplinary research project “Commonification: transition pathways for urban sustainability (COMMONPATHS)”, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation ([commonpaths.unibe.ch](https://www.commonpaths.unibe.ch)). Focusing on case studies in Switzerland and in Ghana, the project aims to better understand the emergence, organization, effects, and conditions of success of three commonification processes aimed at (1) greening cities, (2) creating affordable housing, and (3) supporting community-based agrifood initiatives. By focusing on the governance of these resource systems, COMMONPATHS aims to analyze how and under what conditions these movements effectively contribute to strong urban sustainability and the transformation toward a post-growth society.

Under the guidance of the senior project members of the project, who are based at the University of Bern, the University of Lausanne, the University of Leeds, the University of Ghana in Accra, the Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Hague, and the University of Vienna, you will conduct your main research in Switzerland and Ghana. You will be affiliated with the research group of Prof. Jean-David Gerber and work closely together with partners at the other universities involved in COMMONPATHS.

Tasks

- Conduct a PhD research in Geography
- Analyze how community-based initiatives are governed, how they evolve over time, how they manage resources and how they are embedded in large institutional regimes (e.g. public policies, property rights systems)
- Conduct field research in Ghana and Switzerland over extended periods of time (in total approximately 1 year across the PhD time; more if desired)
- Collaborate closely with colleagues and partners of the COMMONPATHS project in Switzerland, Ghana and beyond; participate in project publications, research workshops and other events; build a network with practitioners; and contribute to the project’s overall communication strategy
- Present your research at scientific conferences
- Publish results in international peer-reviewed journals

Requirements

- An excellent Master's degree in Human Geography or related social sciences disciplines
- Methodological skills in case study analysis and comparative analysis are desired; experience in institutional analysis (e.g. Institutional Analysis and Development, or Institutional Resource Regimes) is a plus
- Excellent language skills in English
- Practical or research experiences in Ghana or Switzerland and/or in community-based initiatives are desirable
- You must be a team player, who can work in a precise, engaged, and self-organized manner. In addition, you must have the skills and commitment to work in an interdisciplinary field.

What we offer

- A highly motivated, dynamic, and intercultural research environment, committed to shaping sustainable futures
- The chance to become an integral team member in the Sinergia-funded COMMONPATHS project
- Close and supportive supervision and collaboration of the project leaders and partners for your PhD research
- Possibility to participate in the International Graduate School North-South (www.igs-north-south.ch)
- Fully funded PhD position for 46 months, including fieldwork budget. Remuneration is according to [Swiss National Science Foundation standards](#).

Details

- *Location:* Institute of Geography, Hallerstrasse 12, 3012 Bern, Switzerland; with close exchanges in the project team, with extended presence and fieldwork in Ghana and Switzerland
- *Starting:* 1 March 2023 (or as agreed)
- *Duration:* 46 months
- *Application documents:* Please send your letter of motivation, CV including a copy of university transcripts, and contact details of two references (no reference letters needed at this stage) together as a single PDF document to: marlen.stoeckli@giub.unibe.ch. Additionally, please send us a pdf of your master thesis in a separate PDF document. Please indicate in the motivation letter for which of the two PhD positions you apply.
- *Application deadline.* For full consideration, please submit your materials by November 20, 2022. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis after that deadline until the position is filled.
- *For more information:* Prof. Jean-David Gerber (jean-david.gerber@giub.unibe.ch).

The Institute of Geography values diversity and is committed to equal opportunities; applications are welcome from all suitably qualified candidates who meet the stated criteria.