

**Date of publication of the job offer:** 25/03/2026

**REFERENCE CALL:** CPIS-PREDOC-PIPF-2026-01

**Job title:** 3 PhD student positions in the ERC Project “DIVERSE” at [Pompeu Fabra University](#) (Barcelona, Spain), Department of Social and Political Sciences.

**Project:** [DIVERSE](#) – Digitalisation of Grassroots Transformative Initiatives for Environmental Justice and Biocultural Diversity.

**Duration:** 3 years (full-time 35h)

**Start date:** June 2026

**Supervision:** Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Beatriz Rodríguez Labajos, with co-supervision from a postdoctoral researcher of the project.

**Research line:** Environmental Social Science and Political Ecology

### About the project

The ERC CoG project DIVERSE investigates how grassroots transformative initiatives (GTI) around the world engage with and reshape digitalisation in pursuit of environmental justice (EJ) and biocultural diversity. Combining global data compilation, comparative case studies across continents, and biographical research on digital leaders, the project aims to develop an alternative, relational model of digital transformation emerging from bottom-up socio-environmental action. The PhD researchers will be fully integrated into an interdisciplinary team working across political ecology, digital studies, geography, social sciences, and environmental justice.

### Position summary

We are seeking three highly motivated PhD researchers to carry out field-based, qualitative research on digitalisation processes within grassroots transformative initiatives across different world regions to work in the project Digitalization for Environmental Justice and Biocultural Diversity (DIVERSE), funded by a 2.13M€ Consolidator Grant of the European Research Council. Grant Agreement 101124195.

Each PhD researcher will conduct fieldwork in two case studies at two levels (community and individual), contribute to multi-case analysis, and participate in global scenario and dissemination activities.

The work on their PhD project within the framework of the DIVERSE project. Support data collection process of legal information on institutional characteristics. Work cooperatively with the PI and any other research team members. Engage in the project's research activities.

### **Tasks:**

- **1. Conceptual and methodological fine-tuning.** This entails conducting literature reviews on the topics of the project, fine tuning research protocols outlined in the overall DIVERSE proposal, and updating data management plans and ethics evaluation procedures related with the respective PhD projects.
- **2. Fieldwork and Data Collection.** This task encompasses preparing and conducting two fieldwork campaigns (up to three months each) in two selected countries/regions. During those periods the successful candidate will implement observation (participant and non-participant), semi-structured interviews, biographical interviews, supplementary questionnaires, archival/visual data collection. The candidate will also apply agreed field protocols for ethics, consent, file management, transcription and data handling.
- **3. Data Organisation and Coding.** This task includes processing the automated transcription of interviews using designated tools, code qualitative data (with MaxQDA) using open and axial coding, contributing to codebook preparation and inter-coder reliability. This data will be systematised and inputted into the DIVERSE PostgreSQL/PostGIS relational database of the project following an agreed project protocol.
- **4. Analysis and Writing.** The successful candidate will contribute to comparative multi-case analysis using methods of qualitative data analysis, and network (using R/Gephi when relevant). This task also includes helping to organise and participating in scenario development workshops. Importantly, the successful candidate will lead the preparation of at least three co-authored drafts to be submitted for peer-reviewed journals and contribute to others, and will write and defend a PhD dissertation based on project results.
- **5. Team Collaboration and Dissemination.** This involves participating in regular (weekly or biweekly) team meetings, collaborating on the generation project reports, and engaging in project scientific and public dissemination activities. Dissemination tasks involve presenting individual and joint work at international conferences, and contributing to outreach materials, including blog posts, accessible summaries and possible podcast contributions. The successful candidate will also support the organisation of dissemination and networking events done in the course of the DIVERSE project (e.g. online and in person events or workshops).

### **Project and institution that finance the contract**

European Research Council Consolidator Grant project DIVERSE “Digitalisation for Environmental Justice and Biocultural Diversity”.

**Call:** HEu-ERC-2023-CoG

**ERC Grant number:** 101124195 (see [CORDIS](#))

## Mandatory requirements

The successful applicants will join the [PhD Programme in Political and Social Sciences](#) of the Department of Political and Social Sciences, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. This call is subject to the official admission requirements in the doctoral programs according to RD 99/2011, and all the submission requirements

The PhD candidates will articulate their dissertations around the DIVERSE project's objectives, advancing through the drafting of co-authored papers to be submitted to reputable academic journals. Unjustified failure to comply with the work plan of the DIVERSE project would be a reason for terminating the contract.

Short listed candidates who pass to an interview phase will have to prepare a 3 pages PhD research outline aligned with the project objectives. Precise indications for this outline will be sent to shortlisted candidates.

To be admitted to the selection process the candidate must fulfil the requirements for admission to a doctoral program:

- To be admitted to this selection process the candidate needs to have completed 300 ECTS credits.
- Excellent written and spoken language skills in English. Catalan and/or Spanish are desirable.
- Training and/or experience in database design and geographic information systems (GIS) will be valued.

## Required qualifications of the applicants

- A completed Master's degree in: Social sciences, political ecology, environmental studies, geography, anthropology, sociology, STS, digital studies, development studies, or related areas.
- Strong qualitative research skills, including familiarity with interviews and/or ethnographic approaches.
- Demonstrated interest in environmental justice, biocultural diversity, grassroots activism, digitalisation, or socio-environmental movements.
- Willingness and ability to conduct extended fieldwork abroad, potentially in remote or low-connectivity contexts.
- Excellent written and spoken English.
- Self-Management and work ethics that support autonomy, problem-solving, and the ability to complete complex tasks.

## Other desirable skills

- Experience working with interdisciplinary intercultural groups, and excellent communication skills.

- Additional language skills depending on fieldwork regions (e.g., Spanish/Portuguese for PhD1; Spanish/French/Malagasy for PhD2; Hindi/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages in Australia for PhD3) will be highly valuable.
- Technical skills supportive of the tasks mentioned above:
  - Experience with qualitative coding software (e.g., MaxQDA).
  - Basic management of qualitative software R.
  - Familiarity with GIS tools or relational databases (PostgreSQL/PostGIS) will be evaluated as a special asset during the selection process.

### **It will be valued**

- Previous publications in peer-reviewed journals will be highly valued.
- Experience working with grassroots organisations, frontline communities, or fieldwork done in the global South or multicultural environments, particularly if this experience connects with the use of digital tools and platforms.
- Cultural familiarity and / or previous work done in the proposed countries.
- Experience in narrative or biographical analysis.

### **Selection criteria**

Applications from candidates who fulfill at least 5 requirements mentioned above will be evaluated:

- Disciplinary fit with the project: 1-5 points
- Relevant methodological skills and fit of the PhD project's topic: 1-5 points
- Relevant academic and research experience: 1-5 points

Candidates must pass a minimum of 3.5 points for each of the selection criteria. The selection committee will short-list candidates for an online interview. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to prepare a 3 pages research outline to be discussed during the interview.

The recruitment will follow the HR excellence in research policy that guarantees open, transparent and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R) for all candidates and all phases of the process. UPF is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from women, under-represented groups, and candidates with diverse backgrounds.

### **Selection committee**

President: Beatriz Rodriguez Labajos

Secretary: Francesc Xavier Belvis Costes

Member: John Palmer

### **Salary/duration/benefits/facilities**

The candidate will work full-time (35h/week) for a duration of 3 years (extended 1 more year) and starting ideally in June 2026. A yearly gross income of 20.000€ approx. (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year), 22.000€ approx. (3<sup>rd</sup> year) and 25.000€ (4<sup>th</sup> year) approx.

The contract includes all the benefits of the Spanish public health and social security system, as well as additional financial support for the participation in project-relevant conferences and scientific meetings.

Funding for fieldwork, travel, conferences, and open access publications. Participate in a rich Department's training program for PhD students. Opportunities to co-author high-impact publications prepared in the context of the group, and advance your career to an ERC-level research infrastructure.

The position will be based at the [Johns Hopkins University-Universitat Pompeu Fabra-Public Policy Center](#), linked to the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the [Pompeu Fabra University](#) (UPF), Barcelona. The JHU-UPF Public Policy Center is a highly internationalized, inclusive, and accessible work environment. It is located at [Ciutadella Campus](#) of the UPF, near Barcelona seaside, and it is specialized in social sciences and humanities.

### Information on the application process

To apply for this position, candidates should send the documentation by *Interfolio* through the following link <https://apply.interfolio.com/180975>

- A detailed CV (max 3 pages)
- A motivation letter (max 2 pages) explaining alignment of background and qualifications with the requirements and tasks mentioned above, preferred geographical areas, and work experience in those areas, and concrete interest within the scope of the project.
- One academic recommendation.
- Names and contact details of two referees.
- A sample of written work on topics related with the project, preferably already published.

**Deadline to submit application:** 10/04/2026

**Euraxess link:** <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/406800>

**Contact:** [diverse@upf.edu](mailto:diverse@upf.edu)

**Information about the selection process:** [Job offers Department Faculty of Political and Social Sciences \(UPF\)](#)

## Annex I: PhD1 Africa – Europe Region

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The proposed case studies are in Madagascar and in Spain. This location is flexible if properly justified.

**Title:** Digitalization and Environmental Justice in Community Initiatives in Africa and Europe.

The **DIVERSE** project studies how Grassroots Transformative Initiatives (GTI) employ, adapt or reject digitalisation processes to promote environmental justice (EJ) and biocultural diversity.

### The research combines:

- global data analysis (WP1),
- in-depth case studies on different continents (WP2),
- biographies of digital leaders in socio-environmental movements (WP3).

### Actions and tasks of the contract:

#### a) Research (WP2 and WP3)

- Conduct semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis.
- Transcribing, encoding (MaxQDA) and organizing data following the DIVERSE protocol.
- Identify local digital leaders and conduct biographical interviews.
- Participate in multi-case analysis, causal analysis, and network analysis.

#### b) Training and scientific production

- Participate in bi-weekly team meetings.
- Attend international conferences (POLLEN, DOPE, AAG, ISEE, ESEE, etc.).
- Contribute to scientific publications and the DIVERSE database.
- Prepare a doctoral thesis within the framework of the project.

#### c) Participation in project activities (WP4 and WP5)

- Participate in Digital Fairs, global stage workshops and outreach activities.
- Prepare informative texts, blogs and contributions to podcasts.

#### d) Specific duties

- Two case studies: one in Africa and one in Europe.
- Long-term fieldwork (two 6-month campaigns).
- Analysis of the role of technological sovereignty, digital divides and community networks.
- Contribution to the comparative analysis between contexts with different digital infrastructure.

### Desirable language requirements

- French or Malagasy
- Spanish or Catalan (for the European case)

## Annex II: PhD2 The Americas

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The proposed case studies are in Brazil and in the US. This location is flexible if properly justified.

**Title:** Digital Technologies and Climate and Indigenous Justice Movements in the Americas.

The **DIVERSE** project studies how Grassroots Transformative Initiatives (GTI) employ, adapt or reject digitalisation processes to promote environmental justice (EJ) and biocultural diversity.

The research combines:

- global data analysis (WP1),
- in-depth case studies on different continents (WP2),
- biographies of digital leaders in socio-environmental movements (WP3).

### Actions and tasks of the contract:

#### a) Research (WP2 and WP3)

- Conduct semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis.
- Transcribing, encoding (MaxQDA) and organizing data following the DIVERSE protocol.
- Identify local digital leaders and conduct biographical interviews.
- Participate in multi-case analysis, causal analysis, and network analysis.

#### b) Training and scientific production

- Participate in bi-weekly team meetings.
- Attend international conferences (POLLEN, DOPE, AAG, ISEE, ESEE, etc.).
- Contribute to scientific publications and the DIVERSE database.
- Prepare a doctoral thesis within the framework of the project.

#### c) Participation in project activities (WP4 and WP5)

- Participate in Digital Fairs, global stage workshops and outreach activities.
- Prepare informative texts, blogs and contributions to podcasts.

### Specific responsibilities

- Case studies in Brazil and in the USA.
- Participatory observation in indigenous, youth and climate movements.
- Identification of digital leaders and elaboration of narrative biographies (WP3).
- Integration of audiovisual materials and digital activism networks.

### Desirable language requirements

- Portuguese or Spanish

## Annex III: PhD3 Asia – Pacific

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The proposed case studies are in India and Australia. This location is flexible if properly justified.

**Title:** Alternatives to development and digitalization in Asia-Pacific from a relational perspective.

The **DIVERSE** project studies how Grassroots Transformative Initiatives (GTI) employ, adapt or reject digitalisation processes to promote environmental justice (EJ) and biocultural diversity.

The research combines:

- global data analysis (WP1),
- in-depth case studies on different continents (WP2),
- biographies of digital leaders in socio-environmental movements (WP3).

### Actions and tasks of the contract:

#### a) Research (WP2 and WP3)

- Conduct semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis.
- Transcribing, encoding (MaxQDA) and organizing data following the DIVERSE protocol.
- Identify local digital leaders and conduct biographical interviews.
- Participate in multi-case analysis, causal analysis, and network analysis.

#### b) Training and scientific production

- Participate in bi-weekly team meetings.
- Attend international conferences (POLLEN, DOPE, AAG, ISEE, ESEE, etc.).
- Contribute to scientific publications and the DIVERSE database.
- Prepare a doctoral thesis within the framework of the project.

#### c) Participation in project activities (WP4 and WP5)

- Participate in Digital Fairs, global stage workshops and outreach activities.
- Prepare informative texts, blogs and contributions to podcasts.

### Specific responsibilities

- Case studies in India (e.g. Vikalp Sangam) and Australia (e.g. Aboriginal Foodways).
- Working closely with indigenous communities and movements for alternatives to development.
- Deepening of leadership stories and relational values (care, community, connection).
- Comparison between digitally rich spaces and contexts of low connectivity.

### Desirable language requirements

- Hindi or other languages from India/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages in Australia.