

CONDJUST Post-Doctoral Fellowship Call

Four Positions, each for 42 months.

We welcome applications to four post-doctoral research fellowships that will work on the ERC Advanced Grant “Conservation Data Justice (CONDJUST)” which is led by Dan Brockington. Each fellowship lasts for 3.5 years. None can be extended.

Conservation Data Justice is an emerging research field that explores the data justice implications of data used in conservation decision-making, particularly in spatial prioritization exercises. Questions of data justice pertain to recognition – who is excluded from the data; procedure – how the data are compiled, and distributed – what might the consequences of different plans be. CONDJUST will interrogate conservation data and models and explore the epistemic communities producing them, to develop new theories of socially just, data-driven conservation. It will challenge the colonising tendencies of prioritisation work and seek decolonising alternatives.

The project is split into different work packages, and the appointed researchers will develop their own plan of research within them. Each position will be advertised separately. The link to apply to each position will be provided on Dan Brockington’s website in due course, and also check his twitter feed, or simply write to him for details of how to apply. However, all the positions are described below so that applicants can see how they fit together.

Positions 1 and 2 will be advertised in March with an end date of early May 2023. Positions 3 and 4 will be advertised in June with an end date of late September 2023.

The Work Packages and Positions available

The four positions advertised are attached to different work packages as follows:

Work Package 1: Positions 1 and 2

This work package explores the data and models used in prioritisation exercises. It will explore the models’ blind-spots and weaknesses at different temporal and spatial resolutions asking who, or whose world views, do they miss out? It will consider what additional forms of data are/will become available and how these may address or intensify current deficiencies. It will consider if, to whom and in what contexts these omissions actually matter.

There are two fellowships attached to this work package:

Position 1: This post-holder must be highly skilled in critical GIS and able to replicate existing prioritisation models, and analyse their potential consequences and implications using other models and GIS layers. This researcher should be prepared to take the data on their own terms, and examine the distributional consequences of plans based upon them. The researcher will consider how different plans, and forms of conservation, might lead to different outcomes for people and biodiversity. But the post-holder will also be aware of how the construction of data layers and models can create challenges of recognition and procedure.

Position 2: This post-holder must be highly skilled in the forensic examination of data used in prioritisation work. They need to be adept at analysing the construction of environmental, economic or social indices using complex quantitative approaches with appropriate insights from qualitative data. They will be able to explore the weaknesses and gaps inherent in

statistical offices' representations of complex rural societies and economies. Their primary focus is questions of procedure and recognition: how different data layers can include, or exclude, particular groups. But they will be aware of the distributional consequences of these issues.

Each researcher in this work package will develop and pursue a distinct research programme that can be successful on its own and will seek synergies with their companion researcher on this work package.

Work Package 2: Position 3

This work package looks for the positive outliers of effective conservation prioritisation. Through a collaborative process of co-design, in the first instance working with the ICCA consortium, the post-holder in this work package will explore cases of progressive and effective conservation that participants feel best address the challenges of conservation prioritisation. These are likely to be cases where ICCA members have themselves set the agenda of conservation prioritisation, and identified and mobilised their own priorities in ways which other conservationists can appreciate and support. This component will seek ways in which we can learn from more positive examples, where data, and diverse forms of data, are being used justly in conservation prioritisation. This work package is highly likely to include work with communities and partners in the global south.

Work Package 3: Position 4

This work package explores debates about conservation prioritisation and data justice as issues of (mis)communication between different epistemic communities. These debates can be seen as the continuation of long-standing differences between natural and social sciences in conservation and the different questions, values, ontologies, epistemologies and practices that they entail. The post-holder will use social networking analysis to explore the construction and constitution of the epistemic communities at work. They will explore cases of effective and ineffective interactions between these disciplines and will develop opportunities of action research that builds bridges across communities. They will also examine how these epistemic communities are constituted geographically, exploring their construction and formation in different places in the global north and south.

Skills, Attributes and Expected Activities.

All applicants must be fully independent researchers who are able to devise their own research questions, methodologies, protocols, preparation for ethical review, writing, publication strategies, network building, and diverse forms of public engagement including social, media, film and policy briefs. Successful applicants will work as a team that will include a PhD student who is working on CONDJUST's fourth work package (see [here](#) for more details).¹ The post-holders must be ready to listen to advice, edits and their peers, and present their work in diverse academic and practitioner fora. Their projects need to be able to function individually, if necessary, without being dependent on the success of other work packages. At the same time they will be expected to work convivially to realise the synergies and possibilities of collaborative work across the CONDJUST project and with other research labs working in this area. They are expected fully to participate in the intellectual life of ICTA by physically attending workshops, seminars, reading groups and away days. They are also expected to contribute material to the project website and companion sites about conservation data justice.

¹ <https://tauler.seu.cat/pagDetall.do?idEdicte=402775&idens=11>

In addition to these general qualities the successful applicants will also have a variety of unique skills and attributes, according to the position sought. These are:

Position 1 (WP1)

- A high level of competence in working with critical GIS and conservation prioritisation that includes a record of published, and/or nearly published papers on this topic.
- A critical understanding of the gaps in the data these models use, and the potential consequences of those gaps for the models and their predictions.
- A good understanding of the variety of other data which could be used to examine the consequences of different prioritisation models.

Position 2 (WP1)

- A sophisticated understanding of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to conservation research that is manifest in a record of published and/or nearly published papers.
- Highly skilled in using complex quantitative techniques forensically to explore the construction of environmental, social and economic indices.
- Highly skilled in used statistical and economic analyses to explore the relationship between these indices and other data sets.
- Thoroughly adept at using in-depth qualitative research both on their own and in conjunction with quantitative data. The latter can entail, *inter alia*, interrogating the meaning and implications of quantitative data, asking new questions of quantitative data, and imagining new quantitative data sets.
- A good understanding of the ways in which different national and international statistics are constructed and what questions need to be asked to understand their strength and weaknesses.

Position 3 (WP2)

- Experience of working with civil society and research groups on conservation and environmental affairs, and strong networks across these groups, particularly in the global south.
- Experience of conducting research with marginalised groups, particularly in the global south.
- Practical experience / understanding of the ways in which conservation prioritisation can empower and/or marginalise different groups.
- Ability to analyse the local consequences of different sorts of conservation prioritisation exercises.
- Experience / understanding of the different ways the processes of constructing prioritisation can empower and/or marginalise.

Position 4 (WP3)

- A detail understanding of the theories of epistemic communities and engagement with different epistemic communities in conservation debates.
- Experience of working in research positions in the global north and south.
- Experience of working sensitively with groups who may be marginalised by epistemic communities.
- Experience of research work that uses social network analyses to explore epistemic communities.
- It is not necessary (and may be preferable not) to be identified with any of the epistemic communities working on conservation prioritisation or in conservation social science.

Application Procedure

These roles have not been formally announced yet. When they are the deadline for positions 1 and 2, working on the first work package will be in early May 2023. The deadline for positions 3 and 4, working on the other work packages will be in late September 2023.

When these roles are formally announced then you will need to log in/create an account [at this site](#).² Further instructions will follow the formal announcement. It will be possible to apply to more than one position, *but each application must be made separately*.

Applicants will need to prepare a planned research programme that responds to the tasks identified in the work packages above. Within that constraint, post-holders will enjoy considerable freedom as to how, precisely, they will fulfil those tasks. There are no constraints as to where they work, and there is good provision in the project budget for research placements and activities anywhere in the world. In your application you will need to explain what that proposed research programme, is in a four page document, following the instructions below.

Please submit the following documents when completing the application:

- A two page letter of application which explains how you meet the general and specific criteria for this position and why you want to take it up.
- A two-four page CV.
- A four page (max) research proposal that outlines what programme of work you will pursue if you were awarded this fellowship. Please explain what your questions are, why they matter and how they will contribute to the literature, how you will answer them, where you will work and the networks and organisations with whom you hope to collaborate.
- The reference list of your research proposal, either as a separate document, or appended to the four page proposal.
- An 300 to 500 word abstract for an original paper that you would want to present at the first CONDJUST symposium (May 2024) if you were invited to attend. The symposium will be exploring research frontiers in Conservation Data Justice and welcomes any contribution on that topic.
- An expected list of publications, included intended journal where you will submit them to, that you hope will result from your research.
- A short (half page) account of how you have already engaged with interest groups beyond academia through your research. Please embed in this account links to appropriate twitter threads, blogs, videos, newspaper articles etc etc.
- Names of three referees who we could approach if you are shortlisted.

Appointments Procedure

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted within three months of the closing date of these positions with instructions for interview procedures. There is some flexibility as to when appointments are taken up. We can wait for good people to be free.

² <https://seleccio.uab.cat>

Further Enquiries

Dan Brockington would welcome further enquiries, for which please write to him directly at his UAB email address.