

PhD scholarship in Sustainability Evaluation

We offer

In the frame of the SUSFOODBEL project, funded by the Belgian Federal government (BELSPO Brain program), we offer a 4 year PhD scholarship jointly supervised by UGent and ULB, Belgium.

SUSFOODBEL – “Transitioning to healthy diets from sustainable food systems in Belgium: Priority policy actions and their multiple sustainability impacts” is a project that aims

- 1) To identify priority policies and their dietary trajectory scenarios based on a novel food policy index, a business impact assessment on population nutrition and the environment, a representative consumer survey and consumer experiments;
- 2) To develop and apply a tailor-made LCA-based sustainability impact assessment framework to assess multiple sustainability impacts of selected priority policies and dietary trajectory scenarios;
- 3) To conduct, for the priority policies, a systemic exploration of trade-offs and synergies across actors, policy domains and governance levels, and of in(coherences) across those priority policies.

SUSFOODBEL is coordinated by Sciensano and involves teams from KU Leuven, UGent and ULB.

The offered PhD scholarship is linked to the sustainability evaluation part of the project. In order to achieve the overall objectives of the SUSFOODBEL, the PhD research will measure multiple sustainability impacts of transitioning from current diets to sustainable healthy diets, as well as the contributions of the identified priority policies and dietary trajectory scenarios to realize such a transition. Sustainability impacts will include environmental impacts (i.e. ecosystem quality, human health, resource depletion endpoints) and diverse social and socioeconomic impacts (i.e. consumer’s diets, diet cost and affordability, health and health inequalities, and health care costs and expenditures).

Responsibilities

The main responsibility of the offered position is to develop and apply a tailor-made life cycle assessment (LCA)-based sustainability impact assessment framework to assess multiple sustainability impacts of selected priority policies and dietary trajectory scenarios. This overall task will include both methodological LCA research as applied research. Starting from the standardized LCA-methodology, we aim to expand the scope of the impact evaluation towards a sustainability evaluation by including, next to environmental impacts, also social and socioeconomic impacts. The developed method will later need to be applied to the trajectory scenarios and priority policies developed in the other parts of the project, and to the current situation, in order to evaluate the overall sustainability effect of transitioning from the current situation towards the developed scenarios.

This research work fits in a PhD trajectory, which means that next to the research the candidate will also need to fulfill a PhD formation track, including scientific communication, teaching support, skill courses, etc.

Profile description

The ideal candidate holds a Master degree in Bioscience Engineering, Environmental Engineering, or Environmental Science and Management, and graduated with at least Distinction. Candidates with other Masters, but with proven experience on the research domain and tasks at hand, are welcome as well.

Further the ideal candidate would have affinity and knowledge on agricultural productions systems, the food sector, has an analytical mind and quantitatively oriented. Knowledge and experience with the Life cycle thinking tools are a strong plus. Some affinity with public health and epidemiology are also a plus. Good data management and analysis skills are important. In addition, knowledge of Dutch and/or French are an asset.

As the position is a PhD scholarship, we seek somebody with a clear and strong motivation to do scientific research, who can work both individually as in group, can manage his/her time, set intermediate goals, and can develop towards an independent researcher.

Work Environment

The offered PhD position will be jointly supervised (double diplôme) by Prof. Jo Dewulf (UGent) and Prof. Wouter Achten (ULB).

At the UGent the candidate will integrate in the Sustainable Systems Engineering Research Group, Department Green Chemistry and Technology at the Faculty of Bioscience Engineering (<https://www.ugent.be/bw/gct/en/research/sten>) At the ULB the candidate will be part of the Socio-Environmental Dynamics Research Group (SONYA) (<https://sonya.sciences.ulb.be/fr>) (Faculty of Sciences). SONYA focuses on analytical research of the systemic sustainability links between micro, meso and macro levels (i.e. individuals, groups, companies, economies, states, etc.), and more specifically on the interaction between societal and natural systems. SONYA consists of 3 professors, 5 postdoctoral researchers, 10-15 (PhD) researchers, and hosts expertise on the political, governance and transitions aspects of sustainable development, on social systems' networks, and on environmental and sustainability impact assessment and management tools.

How to apply

To apply, you should send an application to Prof. Wouter Achten (wouter.achten@ulb.be)
Your application should consist of:

- a **cover letter** stating your motivation for this position and past experiences regarding the content of this vacancy.
- **extensive curriculum vitae** (including the grades obtained in your Master)
- A digital copy of the best scientific work you produced (a cours tasks, master dissertation, paper).

Application have to be send no later than October 17th 2022

For further information on the position or the research project you may contact Wouter Achten (wouter.achten@ulb.be) and Jo Dewulf (Jo.Dewulf@UGent.be) .