



Cambridge ESRC DTP Knowledge Exchange Studentship 2022:

Tourism, conservation and sustainability: supporting policy development for the post-covid recovery and economic reorientation of the Galápagos Islands

The University of Cambridge ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership [DTP], in collaboration with The Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galápagos Islands (CDF), is pleased to offer a studentship available for admission in October 2022 in the Department of Geography.

The studentship will be a three-year doctoral programme and will be co-supervised by Dr Chris Sandbrook (Department of Geography) and Dr. María José Barragán P. (Science Director, CDF). The student will spend at least a full year conducting fieldwork in the Galápagos, during which time they would be based within the CDF campus in Puerto Ayora.

ESRC DTP students will acquire a unique set of skills that will equip them for high-profile careers as leading social scientists, in academia or in other government, industrial, commercial and third sector organisations, either in the UK or elsewhere.

Project description

The Galápagos Islands are home to endangered biodiversity and over 30,000 resident people who experience a range of development challenges. Prior to the covid-19 pandemic Galápagos hosted over 250,000 tourists per year, generating employment in Galápagos (and continental Ecuador) but also driving human population growth, overwhelming social services and introducing invasive species. The collapse of tourism caused by Covid-19 has plunged thousands of island dwellers into poverty, highlighting the fragility of the islands' socioeconomic system. In this context, the governing bodies of Galápagos wish to recover the economy by exploring an economic model in which tourism is one component, linked with an expanded array of conservation, research, education and other knowledge-based activities, as well as local food production. This forms part of a wider plan to transform Galápagos into a Sustainable Development Goals Territory.

Achieving a more sustainable tourism model for the Galápagos requires well-informed policy recommendations, and a policy-making system that can act on these recommendations. However, at present no detailed analysis of post-covid tourism models has been conducted, and the current policy-making system in Galápagos has weaknesses. In 2019 the Minister for Galapagos requested the University of Cambridge to help build permanent capacity for independent policy analysis. Several problems were identified, including: contradictory sectoral policies; conflict between national and local perspectives; major knowledge gaps; poor communication of available evidence, and limited capacity of government institutions to absorb and implement policy recommendations.

The ESRC-KES studentship will have two broad objectives: (1) To investigate alternative post-covid tourism models for Galápagos, and their potential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. (2) To investigate the science-policy interface in Galápagos, using the life-cycle of the tourism policy project as a case study. These objectives will be addressed through mixed methods social research taking place in Galápagos and mainland Ecuador. The student will work within the newly established Galapagos Hub for Sustainability, Innovation and Resilience (Galapagos Hub) under its policy advisory mechanism (GAP-REVISO), which is intended to be a responsive, multi-institutional boundary network-based platform, enabling evidence-informed policy-making. Funding has been secured for CDF to launch the Galapagos Hub/GAP-REVISO in 2021, with strong involvement from Cambridge staff. This ESRC-KES project builds directly on two years of collaborative work involving both of the proposed co-supervisors. The studentship will help to inform policy to achieve a more sustainable, resilient form of tourism in Galápagos, and the longer-term design of GAP-REVISO.

Cambridge ESRC DTP studentships are open to all students, both Home and International who demonstrate the required academic potential.

An ESRC DTP studentship will cover fees at the Home rate and provide £15,609 p.a. in living costs (current rates). DTP students also receive a personal allowance for additional training costs, and can apply for further funding to pursue fieldwork, academic exchange, and collaboration with non-academic partner organisations. International applicants are encouraged to apply for additional sources of funding to meet the difference between home fees (covered by the ESRC studentship) and international fees.

What to do next

You can find out more about the Cambridge ESRC DTP at: <https://www.esrcdtp.group.cam.ac.uk/about/onoffer> and read about some of the opportunities that will be available to you.

You can find out more about the Department of Geography at <https://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/graduate/> and the Charles Darwin Foundation at <https://www.darwinfoundation.org/en/>. Please address any questions about this studentship to Dr **Chris Sandbrook** (cgs21@cam.ac.uk).

All Cambridge ESRC DTP applicants follow the University's standard admission process. Applications for this studentship should be made to the Department of Geography. Please go to our [Postgraduate Admissions Portal](#) to start your application and ensure you indicate the project title as the proposed research title and Dr Chris Sandbrook as the proposed supervisor on the online application form.

Applicants' research proposal should explain their motivation for applying, including why their prior skills/knowledge make them a good fit for the studentship, as well as offer preliminary reflections on how they might develop the proposed research project.

The closing date for applications will be **Tuesday 4 January 2022**. If applicants would like to be considered for any other funding available via the [University funding competition](#), applications must be made by 2 December 2021.