

Cutting-edge Research for a Changing World



Helmholtz-Zentrum
hereon

PhD Position – Participatory Methods for Impact chain assessment and backcasting

Reference code: 50139757_2

Commencement date: August 1st, 2025

Work location: Hamburg

Application deadline: 04.06.2025

The Climate Service Center Germany (GERICS), a scientific organizational entity of the Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon, invites applications for a PhD Position (75%), starting August 1st, 2025 (or as soon as possible thereafter), as part of the "Helmholtz Institute for Climate Service Science" (HICSS) – a cooperation between GERICS and the University of Hamburg. The position is limited to 3 years and is intended to complete with a PhD. The place of employment is Hamburg.

GERICS develops science-based prototype products and services in support to government, administration and business in their efforts to adapt to climate change. It builds up a national and international network structure in order to integrate existing competences and knowledge, and to link various actors within the complex area of climate change.

This 3-year position, part of the Helmholtz Institute for Climate Service Science (HICSS) ClimateBridge project cluster, focuses on developing and testing new methods and tools for assessing needs of rural stakeholders for climate change adaptation planning in the Brazilian Amazon and Harburg County, Germany.

The successful candidate will work in the BeChange project, part of the HICSS ClimateBridge cluster. The project aims to address the complex socio-environmental challenges faced by small landholder stakeholders in the Brazilian Amazon.

The project has two main components:

1. Assessment of land use and perceived climate change impacts: Working closely with local stakeholders, the project will develop an impact chain related to land use, with particular emphasis on agricultural production, deforestation, and climate change, providing a comprehensive understanding of the region's complex socio-ecological system.
2. Backcasting Novo Progresso, Pará, Brazil and Harburg County, Germany: Through participatory methods, the project will identify possible actions and adaptation strategies to achieve desirable future states for climate-resilient development in the study regions. This approach recognizes the importance of local perspectives in shaping sustainable futures and empowers stakeholders to actively contribute to the transition towards more environmentally friendly practices.

The outcome of this research will enhance the development of climate service digital tools that promote behavioural change and contribute to informed decision-making for climate-resilient actions.

Equal opportunity is an important part of our personnel policy.

Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon

The Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon conducts cutting-edge international research for a changing world: Around 1,000 employees contribute to the tackling of climate change, the sustainable use of the world's coastal systems and the resource-compatible enhancement of the quality of life. From fundamental research to practical applications, the interdisciplinary research spectrum covers a unique range.

Climate Service Center Germany (GERICS)

The interdisciplinary team at Climate Service Center Germany (GERICS), an institution of Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon, develops science-based prototypical products and services to support decision makers from politics, economy and public administration in adapting to climate change. GERICS is an independent scientific organizational unit of the Helmholtz-Zentrum Hereon located in Hamburg's center.



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Your tasks

- conduct workshops with local stakeholders, including rural producers, community leaders, and environmental organisations, to a) identify land use-related impact chains and b) co-create a vision for a sustainable and resilient future
- use participatory methodologies to outline the steps required to transition from the current state to the desired future state, focusing on key milestones such as reduced deforestation rates, improved agricultural practices, reduced mismanagement of land use and enhanced community engagement
- assist in the biophysical modelling system (link to ClimateBridge cluster) to local conditions in Novo Progresso and Harburg County to simulate and analyse the impacts of suggested agricultural practices under changing climate conditions
- develop a methodology and a timeline for implementing actions, including establishing local committees for sustainable land use planning and integrating adaptation strategies into agricultural policies
- gather feedback from local stakeholders on practical implementation to achieve the desired regional sustainable future
- report on the cluster projects implementation as well as prepare any other reports as needed
- participate in project meetings and present results at scientific conferences
- publish findings in international peer-reviewed journals

Your profile

- Master's degree in Human Geography, Sustainability Sciences, Sociology, Spatial Planning, Communication Sciences or related fields
- strong knowledge of qualitative methods in empirical social research
- experience with participatory and creative research methods
- good knowledge of quantitative methods in empirical social research
- desired: experience in rural contexts in Latin America (particularly Brazil)
- willingness to conduct fieldwork in Brazil for several weeks
- fluency in Portuguese or Spanish, English (oral and written), knowledge of the German language is an advantage
- strong social, communication, and intercultural skills

Informal enquiries can be directed to Dr. Maria Manez (maria.manez@hereon.de) and Prof. Martina Neuburger (martina.neuburger@uni-hamburg.de).

We offer you

- an exciting and varied job in a research centre with around 1,000 employees from more than 60 nations
- you will benefit from comprehensive academic training by joining the Graduate School of Integrated Climate and Earth System Sciences (SICCS)
- social benefits according to the collective agreement of the public service and remuneration up to pay group 13 (according to EntgO Bund)
- an excellent technical infrastructure and modern workplace equipment
- 6 weeks holiday per year; company holidays between Christmas and New Year's Day



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- very good compatibility private and professional life; offers of mobile and flexible work
- PhD Buddy Program
- free assistance program for employees (EAP)
- corporate Benefits
- office location in the heart of the city of Hamburg in the historic Chilehaus

Interested?

Then we are looking forward to receiving your comprehensive application documents (cover letter, CV, transcripts, certificates etc.) indicating the reference number code no. 2025/KG 5 until 04.06.2025.

Apply now!

Severely disabled persons and those equaling severely disabled persons who are equally suitable for the position will be considered preferentially within the framework of legal requirements.



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