

PhD offer

Transdisciplinary collaborations in sustainability science. The making of new relationships in French LTSER sites.

Collaborations are on the rise in all domains and at the global scale. This particularly holds for science: there is a general increase in scientific collaborations, notably in sustainability science. It is widely believed that the environmental issues human societies are currently facing cannot be correctly addressed let alone solved by researchers alone. Researchers, then, are strongly encouraged to work with operational actors and to communicate about these collaborations.

Oriented towards the resolution of real-life issues, transdisciplinary collaborations bring together researchers and non-academic actors. The PhD project will study these collaborations in sustainability science by drawing on the case of the “zones ateliers” of CNRS, which are similar to long-term socio-ecological research (LTSER) sites or belong to the international LTSER network and where researchers and non-academic actors invent new ways of working together. It will seek to produce a symmetrical analysis of collaborations, attending to its inputs as well as difficulties, costs and limits. It will account for their multiple dimensions — material, cognitive, relational, affective— as well as for their evolution in the long term, and will analyse them at the institution-level, site-level and individual-level. It will draw on a mixed survey combining i) an ethnographic approach based on repeated observations in the field and in-depth interviews; ii) a quantitative approach based on a questionnaire sent to all the members of the zones ateliers. It will contribute to the academic debate about transdisciplinary collaborations and sciences in society and will enhance the reflexivity of actors and institutions involved in collaborative structures.

The PhD will take place at the Grenoble Centre of Irstea. It will be supervised by sociologist Isabelle Arpin (Irstea) and by ecologist Vincent Bretagnolle (CNRS), who is responsible for the national network of zones ateliers.

The candidate must have accomplished a master thesis in sociology and must be familiar with social studies of science and, if possible, environmental sociology. S/he must be able to discuss with researchers in sustainability sciences and have a strong taste for qualitative and quantitative fieldwork and for team work. S/he must have outstanding writing capacities both in English and French.

For more details, send a message to Isabelle Arpin: isabelle.arpin@irstea.fr