



Université Libre de Bruxelles  
Institut de Gestion de l'Environnement et d'Aménagement du Territoire  
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<http://igeat.ulb.ac.be>

## JOB OFFER

PhD position on:

### **Enhancing importance of social aspects in product development and production -Improving the social life cycle assessment methodology-**

Founded in 1993 within the **Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)**, the **Institute for environmental management and land-use planning (IGEAT – <http://igeat.ulb.ac.be>)** is an interdisciplinary education and applied research Institute. Scientific staff is about 40 interdisciplinary researchers. The group **Environmental, Societal and Land Management (GESTe)** is one of the research units of IGEAT. This multidisciplinary team specializes in environmental assessment in the broad sense. The group masters assessment techniques for products and services (e.g. LCA), projects (e.g. environmental impact assessment), as well as for plans (e.g. strategic environmental assessment) and programs and policies. Next to their evaluation function, these competences are also used to nourish smart land management (including rural areas, landscapes, forests, ...) for which the team employs an ecosystem approach.

#### **We offer**

In the framework of the ULB Mini-ARC project "*Enhancing importance of social aspects in product development and production -Improving the social life cycle assessment methodology-*" there is an opportunity for a **PhD student** (full time, 2 × 2 years starting on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014).

Within **life cycle thinking** several tools look at different sustainability aspects of products and services. Life cycle assessment looks at the environmental aspect, life cycle costing at financial and economic aspects, whereas social life cycle assessment (S-LCA) looks at social impacts. However, the methodological development of S-LCA is still in its infancy, which makes the social dimension undervalued in decision making. The **general aim** of the project is to explore and contribute to the development of a Social Life cycle Assessment method for land-based systems. This will include reviewing and applying the currently proposed methods to a case study basing on agricultural production (e.g. textile, food, biofuel), perform SWOT analyses, survey relevant social impacts and requirements of the decision takers, select and develop new impact indicators (e.g. on poverty alleviation), identify potential data sources.

The PhD project will be supervised by Prof. Wouter Achten (ULB - IGEAT)

#### **We look for**

The candidate holds a **Master** in a project relevant domain (e.g. Social Sciences, Environmental Engineering, Agricultural Sciences), and has knowledge on or experience with executing quantitative and qualitative surveys and social impacts indicators. Ideally this candidate is acquainted, or has experience with sustainability impact assessment tools of products and services (i.e. life cycle thinking). A keen interest in sustainability of land-based production systems and its social aspects is important.

The candidate should be graduated with at least one distinction grade. The candidate has strong analytical thinking skills, can approach complex issues in a systematic way and has the capacity to work autonomously towards objectives and deadlines. The candidate should be fluent in English writing and speaking, have good communication skills. Active knowledge of French is considered an added value, but not a prerequisite

#### **Apply**

For further information on the position or the research project you may contact Wouter Achten ([wouter.achten@ulb.ac.be](mailto:wouter.achten@ulb.ac.be); +32 2 650 43 22). To apply, you should send an **extensive curriculum vitae** (including annual study results, and any scientific output, e.g. thesis, presentation, papers, chapters) and a **cover letter** stating your motivation and past experiences to [wouter.achten@ulb.ac.be](mailto:wouter.achten@ulb.ac.be) no later than **September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014**. Job interviews will be planned from 6 to 17 October 2014.

#### **Keywords**

Life cycle thinking; social life cycle assessment; sustainability; agricultural production