



What's next?

Life after graduation: kick-start your career

MSc Development and Rural Innovation



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Life after graduation: kick-start your career

(Almost) graduated or just excited to start exploring your future career possibilities? The MSc Development and Rural Innovation (MDR) prepares you to be a multidisciplinary professional who understands complex transformation processes and can build bridges between various disciplines and stakeholders.

The change from student-life to working-life can feel like a big leap. You may have had a very clear goal in mind throughout your studies, knowing which sector or position you would love to work in. Or you may be in doubt about what it is exactly that you want in a job, what energises you professionally or where to even start. Luckily there are many ways in which you can prepare for this switch and this career booklet is here to inspire and guide you through this phase of transition.

MDR is a broad study programme with many possibilities. Students come in with different pre-education and make different choices throughout their study

that shape the direction of their career path. For example, the choice of your study track¹, internship and thesis are important decisions regarding your professional development and possible future jobs. In fact, there are not two MDR students who take the same exact programme. There is therefore not one clear career path for MDR graduates. The possibilities are abundant.

Looking back, you can ask yourself: what are the recurring themes of interest in your studies? Are there particular topics, projects or geographical regions that intrigued you most? Reflecting on this can help to carve out your own common thread

1 The study tracks in the MSc Development and Rural Innovation are important learning trajectories. There are four tracks: Communication and Innovation Studies, Technology and Development Studies, Sociology of Development, and Rural Sociology.



Figure 1 Where our alumni work, based on jobs held in 2022 by recent MDR graduates.

within the field of Development and Rural Innovation, supporting you in taking your first career steps.

In this career booklet we invite you to explore five potential job profiles (see figure 1). Each job profile provides general information about the job positions and sector, includes a personal career story from our MDR-alumni and lists two vacancy examples. These profiles can be used to test your interests for future jobs and hopefully inspire you about the multitude of possibilities upon graduation.

Importantly, this booklet clearly doesn't cover all possible job profiles, roles, and sectors, but rather seeks to provide an inspirational source for the first steps in your career. You will most likely have different jobs in the future, which gives

you the happy prospect of practicing your professional skills and developing yourself. Also, your vision of the ideal job will evolve over time. You'll learn as you go.

When looking for your first job, flawless choosing may not always be possible, but strategic planning is. The MSc Development and Rural Innovation provides you with unique academic competencies. In the final chapters of this career booklet, we offer insights in the competencies required by the labour market, tips on how to strategically strengthen them throughout your study and how to navigate the job search.

Dive in to get an impression of your future possibilities!



Job Profile 1

Staff member at non-governmental organisation

Possible positions in Job Profile 1 include:

- Programme manager
- Project manager
- Communication & Fundraising officer
- Finance & Grant manager
- Monitoring & Evaluation specialist
- Country specialist
- Thematic expert

“My role was that of an advisor towards local civil society organisations, and also providing training, coaching, or trouble shooting on the ground.”

Alumna Arti Indallah Tjakranegara - Project manager

Career story

Arti Indallah Tjakranegara

Project manager at HIVOS, Indonesia

www.hivos.org

Before starting the MDR-programme, Arti finished a bachelor's in Environmental Engineering. The reason to venture from data and technology into social science was that she often found a discrepancy between people having technology at hand and actually putting it to use. She wanted to find out more about human behaviour and how that drives or hinders development.



"The uniqueness of MDR is how the technical and social side are connected in the programme. Usually, they are treated as two different sides. In MDR you try to approach wicked problems from more than one angle."

Arti was able to apply what she learned about multidisciplinary already in her internship which she did for the 'Think, do and be – tank' in Bali dealing with climate change. Her first job after graduating from the master programme was for SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. There, she was part of the Voice for Change Partnership programme which focuses on capacity building and technical assistance for local civil society organisations. "My role was that of an advisor towards these local civil society organisations, and also

providing training, coaching, or trouble shooting on the ground."

When her contract ended, she applied for several other organisations in her home country Indonesia and finally landed on the Dutch organisation HIVOS for an Indonesian project. As an MDR graduate, she recognises a difference between her and her colleagues on how they approach problems. While her colleagues mainly argue from a technical point of view, she takes into account the social component as well.

Working as an advisor in Indonesia, she sees many topics of the MDR programme come back. "I still have my study materials at hand in my job. I mainly make use of the communication models and frameworks that can help

me figure out motivations and barriers for behaviour change in interventions. (...) What I would like to work most on are climate change issues. I think Wageningen is quite strong on environmental topics and many of the conversations in class and study groups are related to climate change. I want to see more of that discussion also in our community in Indonesia."

While working in the field is aligning with how Arti envisioned her career path, she has gathered some inspiration for a PhD during writing her thesis. The

professional grassroots work at HIVOS is what she is passionate about at the moment, but she does not want to rule out starting her PhD in the next five to ten years.

"The uniqueness of MDR is how the technical and social side are connected in the programme."



Career story

Flor de María Prado Rivera

Agriculture Value Chains & Food
System Advisor at SNV

www.snv.org

Prior to the MDR-programme, Flor had already worked for several years on rural development projects. During her MSc programme in Wageningen, she enjoyed the practical courses that provided her with tools to apply in her future work. Currently, she works as an Agriculture Value Chain & Food Systems Advisor at SNV.



SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation), is an international NGO established more than 50 years ago. The organisation has projects in 24 countries in Asia and Africa. Its mission is to strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform the agri-food, energy, and water systems, which enable sustainable and more equitable lives for all. As an advisor, Flor's role is to support processes in different ways and for a variety of projects.

"This year I was part of two projects. The first one has special focus on the generation of knowledge around two main topics: resilience, and service and inputs for farmers. For instance, I did research to come up with practical ways to address and include resilience in our

projects. We wrote documents and organised learning sessions around this topic. The second project focuses on food systems transformation in two countries. For that I travelled to Rwanda to be able to support this study closely."

Flor enjoyed her participation in the Rwanda food system study very much. "I like to be in contact with the reality I'm exploring or trying to understand, and this study gave me the possibility of being in Kigali for six weeks. I also had the chance to work with different colleagues with a diverse range of backgrounds and that gave me the opportunity to learn from them. Learning new things and getting to know new people and cultures always gives me excitement!"



The MDR programme provided Flor with a social sciences perspective. Having finished a bachelor's in Management at a Business School, her understanding of social sciences was mostly practical, due to her work experiences. During courses in Wageningen she developed new theoretical perspectives, as she explains: "These helped me to understand the reality around rural livelihoods, such as the misconceptions regarding technological progress, the migration from rural communities to urban areas, and the trade-offs that farmers deal with."

"Ask and be curious", that's Flor's advice for students orienting on the job market. "Use the university network and the teachers' expertise, contacts, and knowledge. The university doesn't just

offer courses. There are many other things to explore but unfortunately this is not that visible, so you need to be proactive." She also encourages to reach out to people who work in organisations that you would like to be part of. "From my personal experience, most of them are happy to have a brief call. I'm happy to talk about what I'm passionate about."

*Flor's advice:
"Ask and be curious. Use the
university network and the
teachers' expertise, contacts,
and knowledge."*

Vacancy examples

Human Rights Senior Associate – Rainforest Alliance

Job context:

The Rainforest Alliance's Livelihoods and Human Rights team seeks a collaborative and results-oriented Human Rights Senior Officer with experience working on human rights and/or gender issues in agricultural supply chains and landscapes with a keen interest in gender and human rights. This is a global role, supporting colleagues and teams around the world on implementing our global human rights strategic vision, including certification, donor funded programmes and programmes with companies.

Main activities:

- Contributing human rights-related content as part of proposals to institutional donors and corporate partners for field-level projects in various countries;
- This includes developing theories of change, results frameworks, workplans and other deliverables;
- Coordinating and tracking workplans, timelines, budgets, and other project management tools to support project implementation;
- Developing training materials, presentations, articles and other documents related to the implementation of the Rainforest Alliance's certification programme;
- •Overseeing contracts with consultants and/or researchers, directing their work and reviewing deliverables.

Your profile:

The position requires strong skills in proposal development and project coordination, and entails research, drafting documents, presentations, and training materials; data analysis, and engaging with partners inside and outside the organisation. The Senior Officer will grow toward increasing levels of responsibility and leadership on these topics. This is not a supervisory position. We are looking for a Senior Officer, based in Latin America or Africa (excluding Kenya).

Humanitarian and Triple Nexus Project Leader – Oxfam Novib

Job context:

Oxfam Novib SAFE Unit is looking for a Humanitarian and Triple Nexus Project Leader. The purpose of the SAFE GOAL Unit within the Oxfam Novib Programs Department is to develop and co-implement programmes in the following areas: Supporting People on the Move and Promoting Safe and Resilient Communities. The Unit is also responsible for upholding and promoting Oxfam’s humanitarian mandate within Oxfam Novib. The ideal candidate is an experienced, proactive, and enthusiastic project leader with the capacity to contribute meaningfully to proposal and programme development efforts.

Main activities:

- Support Oxfam Country Offices and Oxfam Novib SAFE Unit with proposal development, grant management and reporting work, including Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA), ECHO, UN and SHO. This includes leading and/or coordinating on proposal development;
- Provide technical and thematic input and/or liaise with relevant technical and thematic colleagues for proposal development;
- Support on project implementation and grant management;
- Provide thought leadership with regard to humanitarian and triple nexus programming;
- Contribute to institutional fundraising for programme scale-up;
- Support Oxfam Country Offices in timely and quality donor reporting;
- Undertake representational tasks on behalf of the SAFE Unit, for example in the DRA;
- Undertake secondments to Country Offices for gap-filling.

Your profile:

- Demonstrable understanding of humanitarian relief work and funding strategies;
- Experience working in crisis contexts in a humanitarian/development capacity;
- Thematic knowledge and affinity with the following areas: anticipatory action, triple nexus, equal partnerships and local humanitarian leadership, and innovation;
- Excellent proposal/policy writing and (inter-cultural) communication skills;
- Are able to think and act strategically, and creatively to address problems;
- Have the ability to work under pressure and with short deadlines;
- Have excellent written & spoken English skills and preferably also French;
- The ability and willing to travel at short notice, including to crisis contexts;
- Have strong cultural sensitivity and gender awareness;
- Applicants must be a National of a European Union member State or have a valid work permit for the European Union and possess travel permits.

Please note that all vacancies are listed with the sole purpose of providing career examples and that they have been edited/shortened to facilitate their inclusion in this career booklet.

UNITED NATIONS  NATIONS UNIES

Job Profile 2

Public officer at local, national or international level

Possible positions in Job Profile 2 include:

- Policy Officer Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- First/Second Secretary at an Embassy
- Policy Officer at the European Union
- Programme Manager at UNDP
- Trade Analyst at the WTO
- Thematic Specialist at FAO
- Junior Professional Officer at WFP

“We align our Dutch Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation policies with the 17 SDGs and use our worldwide network to convince governments and other actors like the private sector to work (faster) towards these goals.”

Alumna Lieke Willemsen - Senior Policy Officer

Career story

Lieke Willemsen

Senior Policy Officer at Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

www.nlontwikkelingssamenwerking.nl/en/#/results/sdg



Alumna Lieke works as a senior policy officer at the Social and Economic UN Affairs division of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She advises the National SDG Coordinator and the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (the coordinating minister for the SDGs).

Lieke's team is responsible for the monitoring, implementation, and reporting of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have been agreed upon in 2015 by all United Nations Members states with a deadline of 2030. "In the international context, that means we align our Dutch Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation policies with the 17 SDGs and use our worldwide network to convince governments and other actors like the private sector to work (faster) towards these goals."

Lieke explains that the SDGs, unlike its predecessors the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), are relevant for all countries across the globe. "That is why we have commissioned Statistics Netherlands

(CBS) to monitor SDG-progress in the Netherlands on a yearly basis, and have regular meetings with policy makers from other ministries on the 'SDG-challenges' we have here in the Netherlands, for example sustainable production and consumption, gender equality and climate action. Recently, Minister Schreinemacher has presented the second 'Voluntary National Review on SDG progress' of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN, a report that we publish once every five years."

"Currently, we work on a renewed national plan of action for the Netherlands and we are about to start the preparations for the UN SDG Summit in September 2023 and the UN Summit of the Future in 2024. This means we gain input from stakeholders from within



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and outside the government and coordinate the position of the Netherlands in the UN.”

The MSc programme proved a valuable contribution to Lieke’s career path. As she mentions: “MDR was very helpful for me as I wanted to understand sociological and political processes better, especially in the international development context. Coming from a background in Biology, I was not used to this way of thinking. It helped me to

take a more multi-disciplinary and holistic approach towards the complex global 21st century challenges that are captured in the 17 SDGs.”

“MDR was very helpful for me as I wanted to understand sociological and political processes better.”

Vacancy examples

Junior Professional Officer (Nutrition and Food Systems) – FAO

Job context:

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through the FAO Strategic Framework by supporting the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems, for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind. The main aim of the FAO country offices, which are headed by an FAO Representative, is to assist governments to develop policies, programmes and projects to achieve food security and to reduce hunger and malnutrition, to develop the agricultural, fisheries and forestry sectors, and to use their environmental and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Main activities:

- Collects, reviews/cross checks and/or analyses relevant agricultural, economic, trade, market, social, environmental, nutrition/food composition and/or gender related data, statistics and information to support delivery of programme projects, products, publications and services;
- Undertakes analysis, provides technical input for plans and reports and edits/revises technical documents and/or publications;
- Participates in the development of improved tools and methodologies;
- Updates databases and web pages.

Your profile:

- Working knowledge of English (proficient – level C) and limited knowledge (intermediate – level B) of another FAO official language (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian or Spanish);
- Work experience in more than one location or area of work, particularly in field positions is desirable;
- Extent and relevance of experience in collecting and analysing technical information and data;
- Extent and relevance of knowledge and experience in related fields such as policy and programme initiatives on food and nutrition security;
- Extent and relevance of experience in the preparation, editing and revision of technical/scientific documents and in organizing meetings and workshops.

Programme Specialist on Women’s Economic Empowerment - UNDP

Job context:

UN Women is dedicated to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in Afghanistan. Staff and consultants of UN Women Afghanistan Country Office (ACO) are expected to contribute to a professional working environment in which the strengthening of national capacities and human potential is prioritised. Respect for diversity and human dignity is required, as is the active pursuit of a collaborative and inclusive approach to both internal and external stakeholders, including colleagues and partners.

Main activities:

- Design and develop programme strategies in the area of Women’s Economic Empowerment;
- Coordinate the implementation of the Women’s Economic Empowerment programme;
- Oversee the technical assistance and capacity development to project/programme partners;
- Provide substantive inputs to the monitoring and reporting of the programme/ project;
- Contribute to people’s management and financial resources of the Women’s Economic Empowerment programme;
- Build partnerships and support in developing resource mobilisation strategies;
- Contribute to inter-agency coordination on Women’s Economic Empowerment to achieve coherence and alignment of UN Women programmes with other partners in the country;
- Coordinate advocacy, knowledge building and communication efforts.

Your profile:

- Master’s degree or equivalent in social sciences, human rights, gender/women’s studies, international development, or a related field is required;
- A first-level university degree in combination with two additional years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree;
- A project/programme management certification would be an added advantage;
- At least 5 years of progressively responsible work experience at the national or international level in design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects;
- Technical experience in Women’s income generation projects and Women’s Economic Empowerment;
- Experience coordinating and liaising with government agencies/donors is an asset;
- Experience working in the UN System is an asset;
- Experience in leading/managing a team is an asset;
- Fluency in English is required and working knowledge of another official UN language is an asset.



Job Profile 3

Researcher or lecturer

Possible positions in Job Profile 3 include:

- PhD Candidate
- Postdoctoral Researcher
- Assistant/Associate Professor
- (Junior) Lecturer
- Professional Researcher at an NGO or research institute

“Being able to show that you can develop your own ideas, work on your own project, overcome challenges, and to finish it can help the way that you are perceived on the job market.”

Alumna Mariana Garcia Medina - PhD Candidate

Career story

Eliot Jones-Garcia

PhD candidate

University of Nottingham

www.nottingham.ac.uk

CIMMYT

www.cimmyt.org



Eliot graduated from MDR in 2018, and after working for half a year in the Netherlands, he went to go traveling in Mexico. Before leaving, he planned a meeting with one of the MDR professors who had network connections to organisations in that country. While being in Mexico, he got a call from the research organisation CIMMYT (International Wheat and Maize Improvement Center) with a position offer.

Eliot started working for CIMMYT and built a positive reputation for himself, so that when he found a PhD position offer, the organisation agreed to support him throughout the 4 years of his PhD. Eliot had found his PhD through subscribing to a mailing list that regularly sends out offers for the disciplines he selected.

“Type in a discipline and ‘listserv’ into google and you will get a mailing list of people sharing job offers, PhD positions, conferences, papers, or research findings. They are like little communities. Everybody has their way to get ahead in life, mailing lists are one way to do it.”

In his PhD, Eliot studies how organisations build technological platforms to teach farmers how to farm better. He looks specifically at organisations that embrace an ethos of openness to engage farmers in the production of knowledge, including the implications of power within it and how the organisations can include sustainability.

“I think anyone can do a PhD. Maybe you have to change your habits a bit, but I don’t think there is an ideal type of person. You do want to enjoy reading and having an appreciation for writing helps. Be able to take criticism. But first and foremost, do not lose sight of the

passion that made you start MDR,
that is your guiding light.”

Eliot advocates for more people of diverse backgrounds to do a PhD, as it helps bring a wider variety to the academic debate. And research in itself differs. Approaches like ACTION research resemble facilitation much more than a traditional research project.

Students that are already sure of wanting to do a PhD can look into the

Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS) Graduate Programme. The programme cultivates three types of competencies to prepare their participants: project related, general research related, and career related. Students completing the programme receive a certificate and the WASS provides at least one open PhD position spot each year for the best proposal.



*“Do not lose sight of the passion
that made you start MDR, that is
your guiding light.”*

Career story

Mariana Garcia Medina

PhD candidate Knowledge,
Technology and Innovation,
Wageningen University & Research

www.wur.eu/kti

Mariana studied gastronomy as her bachelor in Mexico. After graduating from MDR in 2018, she returned to her home country Mexico and started working as a research assistant for CIMMYT (International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center).



Mariana was part of the socioeconomic programme group with a focus on markets and value chains in the Mexican maize sector. Her work revolved around understanding how the maize sector was operating and what consequences of public and private sector engagement had for farmers. Being an MDR graduate helped her in this work to think outside the box and regard the entirety of the system as well as relate to different actors involved in the maize seed sector.

“I learned to be an interdisciplinary professional. When we sat down at the table with multiple stakeholders and scientists to discuss genetic breeding for example, I was not only a spectator, but I was part of the discussion. It felt great to be able to relate to all viewpoints and actors.”

Mariana enjoyed working in her own country, Mexico, as this allowed her to dive deeper into the social structures as an outsider might have been able to. After working as a research assistant for CIMMYT, Mariana returned to Wageningen to start a PhD at the Knowledge, Technology and Innovation group. Her PhD project focuses on issues related to technological change in agriculture, with a focus on maize seed systems in Mexico and Kenya.

Deciding to go back into academia was influenced by her passion for it. While she believes that it is not a ‘must’ for a person working in the development sector, she definitely acknowledges the push that a PhD can give to your career. “Being able to show that you can develop your own ideas, work on your



own project, overcome challenges, and to finish it can help the way that you are perceived on the job market”

“The first job hunt can be a very scary and overwhelming challenge – I have two pieces of advice for MDR’s. The first one is to find people that you admire and that you are truly interested in their job - approach them. They might

become your mentors, and having a good mentor is always important for young professionals like us. The second one is do not stop moving, do not rush, but do not stop. Even if it is not your dream job or if it is scary, apply, contact people, knock on doors! You need to start spinning the ball. Once it starts moving – good things will come eventually!”

“I learned to be an interdisciplinary professional.”

Vacancy examples

PhD candidate/junior lecturer in crisis and disaster studies – Wageningen University & Research

Job context:

The Sociology of Development and Change Group (SDC) is looking for an outstanding candidate for a position as Junior Lecturer (40% of time) cum PhD candidate (60% of time) working on (climate) crisis, mobility and humanitarian governance. We invite ideas for PhD projects that develop new research on the intersection of (forced) migration, humanitarianism, and crisis, within the broader field of mobility, humanitarian, development or (forced) migration studies.

Main activities:

The position will be for 6 years, whereby 60% of your time is reserved for PhD research, and 40 % for teaching (support).

- Supervision of Bachelor theses and participation in courses in humanitarian and development studies; such as food crises, humanitarian aid, and research in development practice
- Work with a supervisor and two co-supervisors in the domain of mobility (climate) crisis and humanitarian governance.

Your profile:

Priority will be given to creative and innovative proposals aimed at unravelling and theorizing this intersectionality in a contemporary and relevant context, and that focus on (one or some of) the following themes:

- Compounded crises, mobility and its societal effects and responses;
- Humanitarian governance and environmental programming;
- Contemporary and novel forms of (digital/technological) engagement, advocacy and intervention;
- Changing responses and interventions in contemporary and protracted crisis contexts.

(Associate) Research Fellow – International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPR)

Job context:

The International Food Policy Research Institute seeks a qualified candidate to serve as an Associate Research Fellow (ARF), or Research Fellow (RF) for a two-year, renewable appointment in the Poverty, Health and Nutrition Division (PHND). The selected candidate will contribute to/lead the development and implementation of the research agenda on capacity sharing activities for the One CGIAR Initiative called Fruits and Vegetables for Sustainable Healthy Diets (FRESH). This Initiative uses an end-to-end approach (consumption, production, food environments) in low-and-middle-income countries to improving intake of fruits and vegetables, reducing poverty, addressing environmental constraints and equity-related issues.

Main activities:

- Designs and conducts research to understand the effectiveness of different types of capacity sharing approaches for increasing knowledge, attitudes and practices and in influencing investments and policies;
- Conduct empirical data analysis; prepare technical/donor reports, journal articles, and dissemination materials including blogs and project/policy notes;
- Collaborate in writing research proposals to complement existing funds for the research programme;
- Manage research reporting requirements to funding agencies and the One CGIAR;
- Disseminate research findings to governments, donors, the academic community, and other stakeholders at national, regional, and international levels;
- Publish research findings in high impact peer-reviewed journals;
- Maintain and coordinate excellent relationships with research programme donors and partners.

Your profile:

- PhD in Social Science, Public Policy, Agriculture, Nutrition, International Relations, Economics, Education or Public Health;
- Expertise in capacity strengthening, adult education, policy influence and interdisciplinary research;
- Proficiency in either quantitative or qualitative research methods with a preference for expertise in the use of mixed methods approaches;
- Experience or training in capacity strengthening or sharing methods;
- Experience working in multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary teams;
- Demonstrated ability to publish in peer-reviewed journals;
- Ability and experience in managing internal and external relationships with project teams, donors, and collaborators;
- Capability and interest in capacity strengthening and policy dialogue with international agencies, NGOs and donors;
- Excellent written and spoken English;
- Ability to travel extensively.



Job Profile 4

Entrepreneur, self-employed, consultant

Possible positions in Job Profile 4 include:

- Consultant
- Freelancer
- (Social) Entrepreneur
- Trainer
- Junior/Senior Advisor
- Business owner
- Documentary maker
- Guest Lecturer

“Freelancing is independent work. You are relying on yourself but you also are your own boss and get to enjoy a lot of freedom.”

Alumnus Aryo Feldman – Freelance writer

Career Story

Aryo Feldman

Freelance writer

Peri-Urban Farming Officer at Sustain
www.sustainweb.org



Aryo graduated from MDR in 2019.

Previous to that, he had already done both a masters in crop science and a PhD in crop physiology, plant breeding and genetics. It did not appeal to him to follow up with another PhD, but he did want to continue working in the academic field.

Currently, Aryo is freelancing parttime and working for Sustain.

Aryo started as a freelancer in academic writing. He got his first offers through professors from Wageningen University, as well as the student organisation OtherWise. OtherWise is a foundation based in Wageningen that organises events to give themes such as development, gender, and critical perspectives on science a platform to be discussed.

Freelancing is a part time occupation for Aryo as he also works for Sustain. This is a food and farming charity in the UK, doing project coordination for local partners in five different cities across the country. This model guarantees him a degree of certainty with regards to income. As a freelancer, it can be tricky to find jobs. Using your network can be of benefit. Several organisations also

hire freelancers. However, Aryo notes that while it does guarantee you a stable income, it offers less freedom in the kind of projects you can choose to work on.

“You start your first jobs, you build a profile, and people refer you. Getting your name out there attracts more opportunities.”

“Finding work is often exponential in the freelancer world. You start your first jobs, you build a profile, and people refer you. Getting your name out there attracts more opportunities.”

Aryo's tips for students or graduates who want to go into freelancing? "Show perseverance in the work you take on. Be organised and well-managed in your work. Budget yourself from the start, do not overspend once you get paid as freelancers tend to have fluctuations in their income. Find out where your values lie and what you can add to the field, that is your niche. Competition is sharp, and freelancing is independent work.

You are relying on yourself but you also are your own boss and get to enjoy a lot of freedom."

"Find out where your values lie and what you can add to the field, that is your niche."



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Vacancy examples

Consultant on EU nature restoration law – WWF EPO

Job context:

WWF European Policy Office (EPO) is looking for a consultant to give expert support for our work on the EU nature restoration law, protected area commitments and forest issues during the calendar year of 2023.

On 22 June 2022 the European Commission published the legal proposal for an EU Nature Restoration Law which aims to restore at least 20% of EU land and sea by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

Main activities:

WWF is looking for a consultant to give expert support for our work on the EU nature restoration law, protected area commitments and forest issues during the calendar year of 2023. The tasks contain the following elements:

- 1 Support for the EU nature restoration advocacy work (development of advocacy papers & outreach to the WWF network)
 - Development of briefing papers and/or position papers: 10 days;
 - Supporting the organisation of events and/or actions: 10 days;
 - Supporting outreach to the network (team meetings, individual contacts with WWF offices): 20 days;
 - Support the coalition work with other NGOs: 5 days.
- 2 Support for the advocacy work on protected area commitments and EU forests
 - Development of briefing papers and/or position papers: 10 days;
 - Organise meetings with the WWF network and/or other NGOs follow-up: 5 days.

Total: Up to 60 days

Deliverables (in written form):

- Three briefing papers or position papers on the Nature Restoration Law (NRL) and/or protected area commitments;
- Updated table with positions of the MS on the NRL;
- Draft agenda and notes of the WWF and/or NGOs meetings on the NRL and protected area commitments.

Your profile:

Interested consultants are invited to send us the following information:

- Economic offer, indicating the daily rate;
- A one-page cv or description of the expertise of the consultant on the subject and related topics.

Consultant Fair for All programme – Oxfam Novib

Job context:

The Fair for All programme is looking for consultants to conduct its Mid-Term Review. The programme, implemented across 17 countries/regions is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) under its Power of Voices subsidy framework. The strategic objective of the programme: A strengthened civil society which is capable of creating space and mobilizing people across geographies to demand and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable trade and value chains that respect human rights, protect the environment and promote women's economic empowerment.

As part of the programme's commitment to consistently focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of the programme, an external mid-term review is to be undertaken.

The overarching evaluation question is "How has FAIR for ALL contributed to a strengthened civil society that is able to work effectively towards more inclusive and sustainable trade and value chains, and how can it ensure its contribution remains relevant and sustainable?"

Main activities:

- Suggesting suitable methodology, methods, and sampling criteria; desk review, development of data collection tools and analysis frameworks, and analysis and report writing;
- Ensure that the evaluation incorporates and integrates participatory and inclusive approaches – including participatory approaches for data collection, localisation of the research process;
- Support and facilitate introductory/inception meetings with key stakeholders; check-in and update sessions during the review process, and reflection and learning exercises and events.

Your profile:

- Experience in evaluating the content and intervention strategies relevant to the FAIR for ALL Programme (fair value chains, inclusive and sustainable trade, influencing, civil society strengthening);
- Proven experience in evaluation major programmes in multi-country setting and with a diversity of stakeholders;
- Previous experience - at least two assignments - comparable in content, time, scope and money;
- Experience in facilitating online, offline, hybrid co-creation and validation workshops and sessions;
- Proven abilities in working across geographies, languages, contexts and cultures;
- Ability to organise and deliver products on time against a tight deadline;
- Strong networking and problem-solving skills;
- Strong writing and communicative skills (including intercultural communication);
- Excellent command of English.



Job Profile 5

Employee at corporate business/ profit sector

Possible positions in Job Profile 5 include:

- Sustainability analyst/manager
- Communication and Marketing officer
- Sales and Finance officer
- Corporate Social Responsibility specialist
- Global Sourcing manager
- Strategy and Innovation officer
- Impact Investment officer
- Energy and Climate specialist

*“What we do now is help local entrepreneurs
to develop a business based on advanced
quality technology.”*

Alumnus Bram van 't Klooster - International Sales Manager

Career story

Bram van 't Klooster

International Sales Manager at
Paul Mueller Company

www.paulmueller.com

Growing up on a dairy farm in the Netherlands, Bram finished a bachelor's in animal husbandry and always knew that he wanted to work abroad. Before starting MDR, he began his career as a farm manager on dairy farms in Russia and Africa. MDR then allowed Bram to implement the sociology aspects of the topics that he encountered already in his work.



Before starting the Master Development and Rural Innovation, he began his career as a farm manager on dairy farms in Russia and Africa, which also allowed him to establish early connections with his later employer, Agriterra. MDR then allowed Bram to dive deeper into the sociological aspects of the topics that he encountered already in his work.

“When you do the MDR study, you dive much deeper below the surface of understanding human behaviour than you ever could while working in the field. (...) My knowledge on culture and people is much better now, and my work is much more connected to getting back to the people. I now ask more often ‘what do the people really need?’ instead of assuming.”

After finishing his MDR internship for a company setting up trade of dairy equipment between the Netherlands and Kenya, Bram started his first job as a business advisor for East Africa at Agriterra. However, he quickly realised that while he enjoyed the work at the NGO, he was missed the commercial aspect. He started working as the International Sales Manager of Southern Europe, Africa and the Middle East at Paul Mueller Company. The company is manufacturing and selling milk coolers to African businesses to stimulate market development. For him, this is in line with his career goals: to get involved with local people and support the creation of long-term business opportunities.

“I now ask more often ‘what do the people really need?’ instead of assuming.”

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“I’d like to work with local entrepreneurs who can actually maintain and install these technologies and support them making a living out of their business.”

“What we do now is help local entrepreneurs to develop a business based on advanced quality technology. We are doing more than just providing the technology. What you often see with NGO’s is that they move into a country to set up a dairy development project. Then they throw in some 100 milk coolers, they have a couple of them installed, and after half a year the equipment breaks down, as they cannot

be locally maintained, and no lasting change is created. I’d like to work with local entrepreneurs who can actually maintain and install these technologies and support them making a living out of their business.”

Understanding how people respond to change and how to manage relations is central to the MDR programme. Bram knows that what makes sense to a European does not necessarily make sense to an African when starting a farm. “MDR is mostly based on the social aspects of how developing countries function and their infrastructure. In your professional career, you then start to understand how important the background of the people is when implementing change.”

Vacancy examples

Climate Change & Land Use Programme Officer – Cargill

Job context:

The Sustainability Programme Officer will coordinate the implementation of our work to deliver against Climate change and Land Use strategies. This role has high potential for growth – working across a variety of geographies, functions, and topics. Working directly with sustainability and BOSC (business operations, and supply chain) partners the role will support project design, planning, implementation, budgeting, and reporting across a diverse portfolio globally, with a focus on project that address land use change, GHG emissions, water, and waste. The role will also help build and maintain systems and approaches to measure and monitor supply chain and product-based Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and reductions. The role partners with other functional departments (sourcing, business operations, transport, finance, marketing, sales) to deliver.

Main activities:

- Support coordination climate strategy development, governance and deployment;
- Implement sustainability projects that address climate and land use related impacts in cocoa producing countries supporting technical leads and country sustainability teams;
- Design model, measure and monitoring of operations, supply chain, product-based GHG and water and waste footprints, including continuous improvement of methods and approaches;
- Organise submission of project proposals and progress reports for customers and donors, with proven ability to process complex topics into succinct, compelling copy;
- Organise and collaborate with the Data & Reporting, Global Impact Team, Natural Resource Teams to ensure timely integration of data into results frameworks, reporting scorecards;
- Perform energy assessment of internal operations to inform reduction initiatives; partner with key site, functional, project leaders in BOSC to integrate and operationalise programme based on industry standards.

Your profile:

- Bachelor's degree in a related field or equivalent experience;
- Minimum of two years of related work experience;
- Demonstrated affinity with sustainability issues: in particular climate change, land use and environmental and water protection;
- Strong Microsoft skills particularly proven experience in proposals writing and presentation creation. Examples may be requested;
- Ability to work independently with minimal supervision;
- Project management experience.

Programme Manager Boost Africa Technical Assistance Facility – Adam Smith Europe

Job context:

Adam Smith International, a global advisory company that works locally to transform lives by making economies stronger, societies more stable, and governments more effective. We work on behalf of governments, foundations and companies that share our ambition to take on the big challenges facing the world.

Our core team of managers and technical experts, in offices around the world, ensures the quality of delivery and high ethical standards that we and our clients require. We bring together a global network of specialist experts, who contribute their experience and know-how, where and when it is needed.

Main activities:

Adam Smith Europe is delivering the Boost Africa TAF, an innovative, five-year technical assistance programme funded by the European Investment Bank to support the venture capital and investment ecosystem across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Programme Manager will be responsible for:

- The effective management of the overall programme activities, resources and budget to ensure effective delivery against programme targets;
- Providing support to the Team Leader and Component Leads in the development of innovative and results-oriented technical assistance and training activities, in line with programme objectives;
- Manage the identification, recruitment and contracting process for highly qualified experts for the TA activities.

Your profile:

- A postgraduate degree in international development, business management, or other relevant field from an internationally recognised university;
- A minimum of five years of work experience in a consultancy or development-focused organisation, ideally working on private sector development;
- Demonstrated track record of successfully managing multi-year technical assistance programmes for European donors;
- Strong interest in impact investment, venture capital and the start-up ecosystem in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Demonstrated experience of using initiative, client-orientation, and working in complex and time-pressured contexts;
- Excellent communication (outstanding written and spoken English), inter-personal, and team-working skills;
- Strong numerical ability with experience in financial management for projects;
- Excellent IT skills including Microsoft Dynamics / PSA and Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint);

Competencies

Knowledge, skills and attitude needed for the job

In addition to an educational degree, organisations and companies in the labour market demand certain competencies from graduates. As you've read in the vacancy examples in this booklet, a small section usually describes the competencies that an organisation or company is looking for. These competencies reflect knowledge, skills and attitude.

Throughout your study you develop a wide variety of competencies, such as academic writing skills, presentation skills and the ability to collaborate across disciplines. It is important that you show in your CV and during your job interviews that your competencies are of good quality. You can do that by explaining how you have strengthened them during your education, which includes internships and thesis work. For many students the course Facilitating Interactive Processes in the first year of their MSc programme also provides great examples of how they developed, applied, and reflected on their competencies in practice.

Here we provide a list of important competencies that are retrieved from vacancies in the field of Development and Rural Innovation. When you start orienting on the labour market, you can check the list to strategically help you prepare for an application. Part of that

preparation is also a plan on how you will further strengthen your competencies while performing on the job. You can still be a good candidate without having all demanded competencies. It is important you demonstrate insight in both your qualities and strengths as well as 'weaknesses' - competencies to be developed further.

For a better overview, the competencies are categorised in five different groups, but they do overlap.

Knowledge: social & cognitive

- Strategic and analytical skills;
- Broad interest in international topics;
- Collaboration and networking skills;
- Ability to grasp the complexity of a situation or problem;
- Ability to make connections and see new opportunities.

Communication

- Intercultural communication;
- Team player and good organiser;
- Interpersonal and presentation skills;
- Knowledge of other languages is an asset;
- Able to work with various (social) media and technology.

Reflection and learning

- Independent and critical thinking;
- Diplomatic sensitivity;
- Personal and practical ethics;
- Reflection and personal leadership;
- Project management and organisational skills.

Academic skills

- Writing skills;
- Information literacy;
- Relevant field experience is an asset;
- Data science technology skills;
- Academic English language skills.

Attitude

- Flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances;
- Inventive and assertive attitude;
- Ability to join interdisciplinary (academic) communities;
- Values diversity and inclusion;
- Responsibility for an adequate attitude of learning, sharing and respect.



Job search

The steps to landing that dream job

1 Orientation phase

Start with orientating yourself. What is important for you, what skills do you really enjoy using or which topics are you endlessly intrigued by? What kind of organisations or companies speak to you? As there are many different options within the field of Development and Rural Innovation, it is important that you define your own focus. It's likely that throughout your BSc and MSc programme you have already started carving your own pathway. It can help to reflect on the choices you made, on the courses and projects you enjoyed most and on the people that inspired you. What do these have in common?

“Find out where your values lie and what you can add to the field, that is your niche.”

Alumnus Aryo Feldman

If you are unsure about the career path that suits you well, there are various opportunities throughout your study to explore this. For example, through Modular Skills Training courses that focus on Career Exploration or Personal

Motivation Assessment. Also, Student Career Services is a great source of support and inspiration. They offer a variety of career events every year. Would you like to brainstorm about your career? Reach out to your study advisor!

Perhaps you are very clear about what it is that you want. Great! You can now start looking for concrete job vacancies. Even if you are not yet convinced about the type of job you are looking for, scanning vacancies can be helpful to expand your horizon and learn more about the concrete tasks and responsibilities in various positions. And a friendly reminder: keep an open mind. New opportunities can also cross your path at unexpected times and places.

Searching for vacancies

Don't underestimate the power of a great network. Let your own network know that you are looking for a job. You can strategically use social media for this, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Reaching out to your network can include contacting the people whom you know through your internship, thesis, and other assignments. You can also express your interest in people that



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have interesting positions and ask whether they are open to talk to you about their experiences.



Join the “WU MID Students” Facebook group, where often vacancies for different internships and jobs are shared. Another useful Facebook group is “International development jobs for young professionals”.



Join the LinkedIn groups “Alumni Development and Rural Innovation from Wageningen University” and “Alumni of Development Studies in Wageningen (BIN/MID/MDR)”. You can also look for more specific groups and follow organisations and companies of your interest.

Browse the internet

The following websites are examples:

Government

www.werkenvoornederland.nl
www.unjobs.org

Academia

www.academictransfer.com/en/

Within the broad domain of international development

www.oneworld.nl/vacaturebank
www.devnetjobs.org
www.partos.nl/actueel/vacatures
www.idealists.org/en
www.yeprogrammes.com
www.devj.org

Environment and sustainability

www.environmentjobs.com

Traineeships

In addition to job vacancies, you can also search for traineeships. This is an opportunity to gain work experience, while actively investing in further developing your skills and knowledge. Relevant traineeships include: the Rijkstraineeship, Diplomatic training by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SDG Traineeship, Advanced Master International Development (AMID), Trainee programme at Wageningen Economic Research (WEcR) or Blue Book Traineeships at the European Union.

2 Applying

Once you've found a vacancy that you are interested in, it's time to get to work! Depending on the application procedure, the process generally involves writing a motivation letter, updating your CV and sharing references. Some things to keep in mind:

When you apply, take a close look at the organisations aims, required competencies, values, and activities. Pay specific attention in your motivation letter on how you match these aspects. This way you can demonstrate that you fit the organisation.

Student Career Services

WUR Student Career Services checks CVs, motivation letters, LinkedIn profiles and gives advice on finding a job or internship. They regularly host Career Days and help students explore their wishes and talents through workshops.

More info scan QR:



Note that you can change your CV when you send it to different organisations or companies. Each organisation has specific interests and values. You can comply to the uniqueness of each organisation by submitting an adjusted and updated CV.

Be reminded that you can ask others to check your cover letter and CV before submitting it. They might see errors or unclarities that you did not notice yourself.

3 Interview

When you are invited for a job interview, it is important that you prepare by having a thorough look at the organisation or company's mission, vision and activities. Getting to know the organisation better also allows you to prepare some questions, through which you can demonstrate that you have prepared well for the conversation.

It can also be helpful to prepare your answers to certain interview questions.

For example, why you are suitable for the job and what (professional) experience you have that is relevant to the position. Providing concrete examples are always useful but can be difficult to come up with on the spot. Brainstorming in advance on relevant projects, challenges and learning moments can support a smooth conversation.

4 Follow-up

Please be reminded that at the end of the job interview, you can ask when they will inform you about the outcome. If you do not hear from them after the indicated time, you can always contact them. Many organisations do not automatically provide each applicant with feedback. If for whatever reason you are not chosen for a particular job or invited to an interview, be assertive

and ask for feedback on your motivation letter and CV. This can help you in your next application and demonstrates your motivation and eagerness to learn.

“Even if it is not your dream job or if it is scary: apply, contact people, knock on doors! You need to start spinning the ball. Good things will come eventually!”

Alumna Mariana Garcia Medina

Work on your skills

As part of your MSc programme, you have the opportunity to take Modular Skills Training courses offered by Education and Learning Sciences. We all have certain competencies we would like to improve or gain more confidence in. These courses help you do that. They range from *Negotiation Skills* to *The Art of Public Speaking*. Find all courses in the course catalogue on Osiris.







**More information on the programme
and career perspectives?**

Scan the QR code or visit wur.eu/mdr
Questions? Email: mdr.msc@wur.nl



MSc Development and Rural Innovation