

## PhD in SIA at University of Groningen

Oct 4, 2011 by [Frank Vanclay](#)

**Vacancy number: 211164**

**Title: Implications of agreement making processes for Social Impact Assessment**

### **Organisational affiliation**

Department of Cultural Geography, Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

The Faculty of Spatial Sciences at the University of Groningen (RUG) consists of 85 members and focuses on high quality teaching and research in the fields of economic and cultural geography, planning and demography.

### **Description of the PhD Project:**

Impact Benefit Agreements (community development agreements etc) are becoming increasingly common in new large project developments (mines, dams, pipelines etc) around the world, and are actively advocated by the World Bank. So far, the process of agreement-making has tended to take place outside the context of social impact assessment (SIA). This raises several concerns, specifically whether the requirements of free, prior and informed consent are being met in the development of those agreements. The proposed PhD research will consider the rise of agreement making and consider the implications of this for SIA practice. It will seek to identify ways to integrate agreement making with SIA so as to ensure better outcomes for communities. Thus, through innovation in SIA practice, the PhD seeks to improve the individual and community wellbeing that flows from projects that accelerate spatial transformation.

### **Department of Cultural Geography:**

Complementing the Faculty's research theme of '*wellbeing, innovation and spatial transformation*' and the University's foci on '*healthy ageing*' and '*energy*', the Department of Cultural Geography has a research focus on **issues of place, identity and wellbeing**. In particular, we explore the relations between people and place, and the social experience of transformations in rural and regional communities. We seek to undertake theoretically-informed, applied social research that contributes to policy and practice, and makes a theoretical contribution. Our research is integrative, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary spanning social and cultural geography, landscape studies, rural studies, social impact assessment, tourism studies and connects with kindred disciplines such as rural and environmental sociology, environmental psychology, gender studies, social gerontology and those of our fellow departments in the Faculty of Spatial Sciences: demography, economic geography and planning. We use qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and have a particular interest in innovative methods including visual methodologies and location-based applications (social GIS). We study the lived experiences of local peoples all over the world. We approach our focus on issues of place, identity and wellbeing from varying angles, including: community engagement; ageing and wellbeing; innovation and rural transformation; heritage; historical landscape change; perception and evaluation of nature and landscape; death and burial; entrepreneurship; employment opportunities; housing and living environments for various groups; social impact assessment; social aspects of new technology; governance; social aspects of agriculture and farming; social aspects of natural resource management; and visitor and host experiences of tourism. Our research embraces the social relations between people and places, and the experience of spatial transformation. We believe that knowing one's 'place' is fundamental to the formation of human identity and to wellbeing. Forms of cultural expression such as art, architecture, ritual and language, and our understanding and appreciation of nature and landscape all interact with the physical environment in the creation of our individual and community life-stories. As such, the ways in which we construct and

transform spaces and places manifest our imagination and self-awareness. In doing so, we make sense of, define, and celebrate our personal and collective identities, communities and localities.

#### **Requirements:**

- a Masters degree in geography, sociology, anthropology, development studies or other appropriate social science
- a strong interest in the field of social impact assessment
- creativity and interest to shape the thesis project
- excellent written and verbal communication skills in English

#### **Competences:**

- analytical ability
- self-confidence
- communication
- drive.

#### **Conditions of Appointment**

The University of Groningen offers a salary of € 2,042 gross per month in the first year of the appointment, rising to € 2,612 gross per month in the fourth year of a full time position. The conditions of employment comply with the Collective Labour Agreement for the University of Groningen. The full time appointment as PhD researcher (AIO), is temporary for four years. You will first be appointed for a period of 18 months. After a positive evaluation, the contract will be extended for the remaining part of the project.

**Starting date: We expect the PhD researcher to start as soon as possible by negotiated agreement.**

#### **Contact for Further Information**

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Applications due 29-October-2011

Please submit your application via the website

<http://www.rug.nl/corporate/vacatures/vacaturesRUG>

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