



Université du Québec
à Trois-Rivières

About the project

We are seeking a highly motivated Postdoctoral Fellow to join the research project PATH (Pathways for SMEs to protect and restore Ecosystems). This transdisciplinary project is led by Christopher Luederitz (Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR) and Karina Benessaiah (University of Guelph, (UofG)) and investigates how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contribute to safeguarding ecosystems. Using a combination of systematic review methods, participatory action research, and comparative case study analysis, PATH aims to develop a novel framework explaining the pathways through which SMEs can support biodiversity conservation and ecosystem integrity.

The project focuses on two UNESCO Biosphere Regions: the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve (Quebec) and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere (Ontario, Canada). Working closely with businesses, community organizations, and biosphere managers, the project explores how SMEs can collaborate to address region-specific environmental challenges while contributing to broader sustainability transformations (see for the project summary below).

Research responsibilities

The successful candidate will play a leading role in carrying out the project, building partnerships and conducting research. Key tasks include:

- Conduct a systematic literature review on the role of SMEs in ecosystems.
- Design, facilitate, and analyze participatory workshops with SMEs and regional stakeholders in two Biosphere Regions.
- Conduct and analyze semi-structured interviews and participant observations.
- Lead stakeholder engagement, recruitment, and knowledge co-production processes.
- Contribute to the development of a conceptual framework describing pathways through which SMEs safeguard ecosystems.
- Lead and co-author high-impact journal articles, policy briefs, and knowledge mobilization outputs.
- Mentor graduate students supporting the project.

The offer

A two-year, full-time postdoctoral research position at UQTR, with the possibility of renewal, depending on funding availability. The position will be supported through a fellowship in line with Canadian standards and determined based on the candidate's qualification and experience. Detailed information about the postdoctoral fellowship at UQTR can be found [online](#). You will be formally affiliated with the Institute for Research on SMEs (InRPME). InRPME brings together more than thirty researchers working on topics related to SMEs and entrepreneurship, alongside postdoctoral fellows, doctoral and master's students, and research professionals (www.uqtr.ca/inrpme).

Your profile

This position is designed for a curious and engaged researcher who is committed to transdisciplinary and socially relevant research and who fulfills the following requirements

- Completed a Ph.D. between 2023 and 2026;
- Experience conducting qualitative and/or mixed-methods research.

- Strong analytical skills, including proficiency in quantitative and qualitative analysis software (e.g., R, NVivo).
- Excellent facilitation skills for working with diverse stakeholder groups.
- Excellent organizational skills and strong ability to work independently and collaboratively within an interdisciplinary team.
- Strong experience with transdisciplinary sustainability research.
- Excellent communication in French and English.

Women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, and members of 2SLGBTQI+ communities are actively encouraged to apply because equity and diversity are an integral part of academic excellence and impactful research.

How to apply

Interested candidates are invited to submit the following documents by August 31, 2026

- A 1-page cover letter outlining personal motivations, qualifications and your experiences relevant to the position;
- A curriculum vitae, including a list of publications;
- Three writing samples (e.g., published articles, dissertation chapters, or manuscripts);
- The names and contact information of three referees who may be contacted for letters of reference.

The application should be addressed to Christopher Luederitz and Karina Benessaiah and submitted to the following email address: christopher.luederitz@uqtr.ca

Results

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until August 31. The anticipated start date is October 1, 2026, or earlier. Candidates who are not selected will be notified by the end of September.

Contact

For any questions about this application, please contact Christopher Luederitz at christopher.luederitz@uqtr.ca.

Project summary

Pathways for small- and medium-sized enterprises to protect and restore ecosystems

Biodiversity loss constitutes an unprecedented challenge to Canada's ecosystems and, thereby, to its economy. Businesses across Canada depend on resilient ecosystems to meet their resource needs, while they often contribute to the degradation of the very biodiversity and natural systems that underpin economic prosperity. Businesses are, therefore, key actors in developing strategies to address the root causes of biodiversity loss. Despite the central role businesses could play in alleviating and addressing the impacts of biodiversity loss, environmental conservation initiatives rarely consider them beyond restricting their influence. Instead, environmental conservation advocacy is often led by civil society organizations, while legislation by governments typically seeks to limit human activity to preserve biodiversity. As a result, little progress has been made in exploring opportunities for businesses to engage in protecting and restoring ecosystems to address changes in the environment and sustain benefits from biodiversity.

In response to this research gap, this project explores the pathways businesses pursue to support the safeguarding of ecosystems. The research focuses on small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the bedrock of the economy. Yet, they are frequently overlooked by decision-makers who prioritize large corporations in the context of nature conservation, and even within organizational scholarship, the critical role of SMEs in addressing biodiversity loss is often neglected. This two-year project assesses the role SMEs can play in safeguarding ecosystems and explores how these organizations participate in collective processes that pursue this goal. Through a comprehensive review of cases across the world where SMEs are involved in protecting and restoring ecosystems, this study will evaluate the potential of these organizations to address biodiversity loss. The localized and empirical research will engage SMEs in the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve (Quebec) and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere (Ontario), which have been pioneering collaborations with businesses to improve the integrity of ecosystems. The two case studies are part of the 19 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in Canada that aim to reconcile environmental protection with economic activities and collectively provide a home to over 2.3 million Canadians. The participatory research in the selected Biosphere Reserves will help to understand how SMEs can contribute to collective processes necessary for advancing the safeguarding of ecosystems. Building on the analytical and empirical insights, this project will demonstrate how business interventions protect or restore biological integrity and functional processes of ecosystems and evaluate the impact of collaborative initiatives.

The project will offer novel insights by bringing together insights from management and the study of SMEs, and environmental sciences and the study of ecosystems to explore the role of SMEs in safeguarding ecosystems. Specifically, the project will theorize the potential of SMEs to drive change within their own organization and contribute to system-wide processes in support of improving the integrity of ecosystems. The study will directly benefit the businesses involved through participatory research by developing new practices needed for the safeguarding of ecosystems. Benefits are also generated for Canadian Biosphere Reserves to improve their management practices and more effectively involve businesses in fostering sustainable economic development. Finally, this project will produce action-oriented recommendations for leaders of business and environmental organizations to mobilize the uncovered opportunities for addressing biodiversity loss across Canada and beyond.