

RESEARCH ASSISTANT – 1 (one) vacancy

(CES/31/2026-RA-EJMAPPING)

The Centre for Social Studies (CES) – Associate Laboratory - University of Coimbra (Portugal), invites applications for one (1) Research Assistant position (CES/31/2026-RA-EJMAPPING) in the FCT project "EJMAPPING: Counter-mapping environmental justice conflicts in the European periphery: The case of Portugal", funded by national fundings and FEDER, with the references COMPETE2030-FEDER-00931800 and 2023.17429.ICDT, and coordinated by Gustavo García López.

CES provides a stimulating intellectual environment in the domain of social sciences and humanities. The project is a collective effort of the CES working group Ecology and Society Workshop (ECOSOC) and its themes are embedded in the research line RISE – Risks, Ecology, and Health, and the Observatory of Risks (OSIRIS).

A. Project Description

EJMAPPING: Counter-mapping environmental justice conflicts in the European periphery: The case of Portugal

This project addresses theoretical and methodological gaps in Environmental justice (EJ) studies through qualitative-quantitative participatory-action research (PAR) of EJ conflicts in Portugal, analyzed through a decolonial/south framework. Our main objectives are to enrich the theory of EJ, develop a comprehensive analysis of the state of EJ conflicts in Portugal, and identify solutions to advance transitions towards equitable and ecologically-sustainable development. The overall objective of this project is to generate actionable knowledge that contributes to addressing environmental injustices, and to promote pathways for transformative, "just sustainability" (or "just transitions"), while simultaneously enriching the conceptual and methods applied to these conflicts. To address these objectives, the project combines counter-mapping methods, committed to listening to the perspectives of those who inhabit the territories and/or establishing a relationship of proximity with them. These methods will include: a) a historical analysis of conflicts and struggles for environmental justice in Portugal, b) characterizing the current state of environmental struggles through a national inquiry focusing on the period after 2018, c) producing a national map (similar to the Environmental Justice Atlas: ejatlas.org), and d) developing case studies selected from the Centro, Alentejo, and Algarve regions. In each of the case studies, methods such as interviews, participatory observation, body-territory and environmental health mapping, and image and story mapping techniques will be used.

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Expected duration of the project execution: from May 1, 2025 to April 30, 2028.

B. Scientific Field
Social Sciences and Humanities, with a focus in Political Ecology

C. Workplan
The Research Assistant will assist the EJMAPPING team in four workstreams between February 2027 and February 2028, under the supervision of the Principal Investigator and in collaboration with the leads of each case study and with the communications team. The selected candidate is expected to be based in Coimbra, with availability for regular field trips to the Algarve and Sines, including stays of several days, to carry out the following work plan:

Workstream 1 — Participatory mapping: body-territory, environmental health, sound and image

- Support the design of the local mapping processes with participants and the case study team: body-territory mapping, environmental health mapping, and sound and image mapping (e.g. photovoice, soundscapes, citizen science);
- Co-facilitate the body-territory mapping workshops in the Algarve, Sines and Coimbra (February to April 2027);
- Carry out, together with the case study teams, the environmental health and sound and image field visits, with at least one visit per case;
- Support the production of local maps for each case together with participants, and their validation with the communities (June–July 2027);
- Document and systematise the mapping material, and, in collaboration with the project's cartographer, add it to the project database where relevant (by July 15, 2027).

Workstream 2 — Comparative analysis of the case studies

- Support the application of the cross-case comparison protocol and systematise the results of the mappings and fieldwork;
- Help link the local findings to the national statistical and historical analyses;
- Help prepare and facilitate the transdisciplinary team's discussions of preliminary results;
- Contribute to writing the three working papers on each community by October 30, 2027.

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Workstream 3 — Supporting local feedback and collaborative learning

- Support the implementation of the feedback plan validated with the communities, starting with the first session planned for June 2027;
- Help organise co-learning workshops in each case, including sharing the national results;
- Help organise activities with children and young people, through schools and community groups, in the 2027/28 school year;
- Support the preparation of the three local Environmental Justice and Just Transition Plans and the national synthesis; work with the communications team on the participatory mapping practices handbook (fanzine) and the pre-preparation of the final international event in April 2028.

Workstream 4 — Scientific publication

- Co-author at least one of the project's manuscripts or working papers, under supervision, and possibility to contribute to the others;
- Present results at conferences and project events and development of outputs (e.g. a conference paper or working paper) from the fieldwork, with the team's support.

The Research Assistant will also take part in weekly team meetings, training events, and gatherings with the extended peer community, and contribute to progress reports. All fieldwork follows the ethics approval granted by the CES Ethics Committee.

D. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

Labour Code Law No. 7/2009, of February 12th (and subsequent amendments).

E. Workplace

Research will be performed at the Centre for Social Studies facilities in Coimbra, Portugal, as well as in fieldwork sites in Portugal. Selected researchers will occasionally need to travel to other locations to perform research tasks.

F. Duration of the Contract

The temporary contract ("termo certo") will be signed for the sole purpose of the execution of the project and will automatically end with the completion of the activities foreseen in the activity



plan. Moreover, according to Article 112 of the Labour Code, paragraph 2 a), a trial period of 30 days is established.
The contract will be foreseeably starting in February 1, 2027.

G. Application dates
From November 27 – December 16, 2026. After December 16 (23h59 Lisbon time), 2026, applications will not be considered for evaluation.

H. Application process
Applications must include:

a) Presentation/Motivation letter with the call reference (CES/31/2026-RA-EJMAPPING) of maximum 2 pages in English in which the candidate addresses at least four points:

   i. motivation to be part of the EJMAPPING project within the ECOSOC working group and the associated research line;

   ii. how they will execute the project tasks described above;

   iii. to what extent education and previous experience match the selecting criteria listed;

   iv. demonstration of oral and written language proficiency in both English and Portuguese (with reference to the context where the candidate learned and perfected both languages or to whether they are native speakers);

b) Detailed Curriculum Vitae;

c) Copies of degree certificates. It is mandatory to be holder of a Master degree by the deadline of the application (note: candidates must meet the eligibility conditions and conditions indicated in point "K. Mandatory requirements");

d) One written work (a publication, research report or the master's dissertation) which best represents the writing skills of the applicant and their proximity to the EJMAPPING project, in Portuguese or English;

e) Other relevant documents for eligibility purposes. Applications should be sent by email to concursos@ces.uc.pt until the final deadline. Applications must include a clear indication of the reference of this call (CES/31/2026-RA-EJMAPPING).

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I. Preferred selection criteria and their weighing

We are looking for someone who can combine participatory fieldwork, community engagement and scientific writing. The following criteria and weights will be applied in the curricular evaluation.

- **Academic background (25%):** Master's degree in a field relevant to the project; final grade; relevance of the master's dissertation to environmental justice, political ecology or participatory research. Enrolment in a relevant PhD programme, or completed doctoral coursework, will be valued.
- **Participatory and qualitative fieldwork (30%):** experience with counter-mapping, body-territory mapping, photovoice, soundscapes, citizen science and/or environmental health mapping; interviews and participant observation; previous work with communities, social movements or local organisations, including in funded research projects (e.g. as a research fellow or research assistant).
- **Scientific writing and dissemination (20%):** publications (articles, chapters, reports or working papers; the master's dissertation will also be considered), conference presentations, and writing skills in Portuguese and English.
- **Facilitation and community engagement (15%):** experience facilitating workshops, working with schools or young people, and producing materials for non-academic audiences (fanzines, exhibitions, audiovisual or sound materials).
- **Complementary skills (10%):** qualitative data analysis software (e.g. NVivo, MAXQDA, ATLAS.ti), audiovisual or sound production; *experience organising events, workshops or fieldwork (e.g. scheduling, travel logistics, materials, coordinating with partners)*.

J. Monthly Allowance

The monthly salary is 1499,15 euros gross (plus months 13 and 14), equivalent to level 16 of the TRU, meal allowance, and all social security charges, in accordance with the Portuguese Labour Code.

K. Mandatory requirements

Applicants must meet all of the following requirements by the application deadline:

1. A Master's degree in Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Environmental Studies, Public Health or a related field in the social or environmental sciences. Applicants with an academic degree and diploma issued by a foreign Higher Education Institution must present proof of

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recognition of the academic degree by the Portuguese Higher Education System, (law DL66/2018). Any candidate without the recognition of the degree(s) will be admitted to the competition, but during the evaluation process the selection panel, cannot: i. recognize the candidate's grades and assess according to the possession of such grades; ii. give equivalence to, or validate, the grade of her/his degree; iii. use that note or its conversion as an evaluation parameter.

In case of selection, the contract can only be signed after the recognition of the academic degree by the Portuguese authorities, under the terms of the Law-decree n66/2018, August 16. The selected candidate must deliver the recognition of the degree within 30 days after the communication of the results. After the 30 days, the jury may decide to (1) either extend the deadline for the candidate to prove the recognition; (2) assign the position to the next candidate for merit; (3) or not award the position.

2. Be proficient in Portuguese and English;
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the topics of the project (see sections A. and C. above).

SELECTION PROCESS

L. Selection process

Applicants will be selected based on their curricular evaluation. In case of equivalent curricular evaluations, the best-positioned applicants should be short-listed for an interview, meant to assess the applicant's potential in integrating the project's scientific dynamic. If applied, the two methods of selection applied will have a rating of 50% in the final classification.
If the President of the jury is unable to perform his or her duties, s/he shall be replaced by the permanent member of the jury with the highest professional rank.
When any conflicts of interest involving permanent or substitute members of the jury compromise the jury's ability to meet the minimum quorum, the Presidency of the CES Scientific Board is responsible for appointing new substitutes.
The jury reserves the right to not select applicants for the vacancy, if the applicants do not have the adequate quality and profile in terms of absolute merit.

M. Selection panel:

- Gustavo Garcia-López (president)
- Patrícia Vieira (permanent member)
- Isabel Ferreira (permanent member)



- Jonas Van Vossole (substitute member)
- Rita Calvário (substitute member)

N. Communication of Results:
All candidates will receive the results by e-mail. The meeting minutes of the selection panel will become available publicly. After the communication of results, applicants have 10 working days to present a redress to the evaluation and the result by e-mail.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Equality of opportunities:
CES abides by the national law that regulates the prevention, prohibition and fighting against discrimination on the grounds of racial and ethnic identity, colour, nationality, family background, territory of origin, and disability (Law nº 93/2017, 23 August; Law nº 4/2019, 10 January).
Data protection:
By submitting your application, you are agreeing with the use of your personal data by CES administrative services for the sole purpose of the current call, namely to be contacted directly by CES services and allow the communication of results as in point n. of this call. CES abides by the principles of GDPR.

Contact:
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