

## POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER : Regenerative Design Research (The Becoming Regenerative Project, LUL, UCL, Partner HE Institution) REQ240880

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified

### Job Description

#### Job Grade

Specialist and Supporting Academic Research Grade 6

#### Job Purpose:

*Becoming Regenerative: Innovation for Renewal through Entrepreneurship and Interspecies Creativity (B-Regen Project/2024-2027)* seeks to investigate – in unprecedented detail – the emergence of new regenerative innovations and startups in the UK, the Netherlands, South Korea and Japan. This UKRI-funded project is unique in that it will be conducted with co-Investigators from the HE partner University and the Institute for Global Prosperity at University College London, as well as with support from multiple partners such as Pangaia (sustainable and regenerative fashion), PDIE (purpose-driven leadership and entrepreneurship network) and the Fashion District. Two postdoctoral researchers will be recruited to conduct essential research tasks, focusing on longitudinal (partly observational) field research and data collection activities with regenerative designers, entrepreneurs and their teams. The two researchers will be supervised by co-investigators from the partner university and UCL, under the overall leadership of Dr Tuukka Toivonen, the Principal Investigator (Reader in Regenerative Design & Innovation at LUL and Director of the Becoming Regenerative Lab).

Postdoctoral Researcher is expected to hold a PhD in a relevant area or discipline (e.g., biodesign, design studies, ecological or regenerative innovation, social entrepreneurship, anthropology, sociology). They will also possess a promising publication record and a demonstrated ability to write effectively for academic and general audiences. Robust methodological expertise is a core requirement of the role—along with demonstrated field research expertise, applicants will be asked to showcase their ability to creatively combine different methods to shed light on key research questions and creatively illustrate important findings. We would expect familiarity with More-Than-Human ethical and research approaches as well as readiness to methodologically and theoretically unravel creative interactions between different species (e.g., human designers and living materials such as fungi, algae and microbes).

Successful applicants will moreover possess strong communication skills and the ability to co-author publications for competitive academic journals in relevant disciplines (e.g., design research, creativity research, biodesign, regenerative innovation studies) as well as shorter public-facing outputs, along with contributions to new project briefs and funding bids. Applicants also need to demonstrate their ability to work effectively and dynamically as part of diverse teams and networks, in fluid contexts requiring strong self-leadership.

The core Becoming Regenerative team will comprise the Principal Investigator, three Co-Investigators, two Post-Doctoral Research Fellows, as well as a small number of creative freelancers. The project team will be supported by the University's Research Management & Administration (RMA) service and other Professional Services staff within a collegiate environment offered by Loughborough University London. The academic partners (UCL and another partner university) will also serve as essential sources of complementary knowledge and networks.

This is an opportunity for a motivated and dynamic individual with a resonant PhD and resonant research interests to join a world-leading project that is expected to contribute to the success of regenerative design and entrepreneurship as a field of research and practice, both in the UK and globally. The project will intersect with emerging fields such as regenerative fashion, architecture, biodesign, regenerative AI and entrepreneurship support. It will seek to have significant social impacts through informing the formation and development of regenerative innovation ecosystems and networks while allowing the project team to offer support to emerging teams and startups where relevant.

Training opportunities relevant to the needs of the project will be offered and the chosen researcher will be encouraged to participate in LUL's academic community where possible. Key deliverables will be clearly defined and discussed, with close support from the partner university Co-Investigator in particular. The postdoctoral researcher will enjoy access to considerable career development opportunities via the project team's strong global network and they are expected to quickly develop into a leading contributor within the growing field of regenerative design, entrepreneurship and innovation through the experience they accumulate and the pro-active support that they will receive.

From a scholarly perspective, *The Becoming Regenerative Project* (on the whole) will expand current understandings of the role of design and entrepreneurship in the discovery and elaboration of regenerative potentials that can help accelerate – and scale – regenerative practices across the creative industries and beyond. The project will moreover extend specific strands of theory in relation to 'interspecies creativity' (i.e., how humans can enter genuine co-creative relations of ontological equivalence with non-human organisms and ecosystems) as well as strategic entrepreneurship (e.g., how distinctive dimensions of materiality are utilised in the process of gaining traction and demonstrating positive impact vis-à-vis key audiences). The project will build on the findings and methodology of our prior research on Creative Jolts (see, e.g., Toivonen et al. 2023 in the *Academy of Management Journal*) as well as emerging pilot studies on the creative journeys of well-known regenerative startups. The 50+ designers and entrepreneurs we will invite to join this study – along with the living organisms and ecosystems they collaborate with – will be approached both as research subjects and stakeholders, with the ethical dimension of such engagements receiving extensive attention from the project team.

Both postdoctoral scholars we will recruit need to demonstrate rigorous attention to detail and a creative, interdisciplinary mindset to enable full and fruitful contributions within our diverse team and the emerging field of regeneration studies.

## **Job Duties**

- To partake in methodological co-development and refinement of the team's field research approaches, building on a strong knowledge of relevant fields (e.g., regenerative design) and original thought
- To conduct and coordinate longitudinal primary research in demanding conditions
- To lead on research participant recruitment activities, based on clear selection criteria co-shaped with the team
- To contribute to high-level scholarly and public-facing publications
- To co-plan and co-deliver project events online and offline
- To effectively plan and manage operational activities and related sub-projects to achieve long term objectives
- To communicate and collaborate with project partners, as/when needed
- To analyse, generate insights / themes and write up reports and updates in accordance with the project's deliverables requirements
- To assist in setting up project risk assessment, impact framework and evaluation measures, where relevant
- To contribute actively to regular project meetings, timely updates to the project website, fulfilling administrative duties, and University processes as deemed appropriate by the PI
- Any other tasks deemed necessary by the PI

## Supervision

The Postdoctoral Researcher A will report to the Co-Investigator, Dr Delfina Fantini van Ditmar, and the Principal Investigator, Dr Tuukka Toivonen (PI), in terms of project duties and performance.

## Points to Note

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

## Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equality & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

## Organisational Responsibility

The Postdoctoral Researcher will report to the Co-Investigator, Dr Delfina Fantini van Ditmar, and the Principal Investigator, Dr Tuukka Toivonen (PI), in terms of project duties and performance.

## Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed with respect to meeting the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Application
- 2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Interview

### Essential Criteria

| Area                 | Criteria   | Stage   |
|----------------------|--|---------|
| Experience           | Proven research background with a PhD in a relevant discipline or multi-disciplinary area                            | 1       |
|                      | Evidence of strong methodological expertise  | 1       |
| Skills and abilities | Ability to work under strict and tight deadlines, both proactively with the project team and independently as needed | 1 and 3 |
|                      | Ability to work proactively and enthusiastically with the project partners and professional communities              | 3       |

|                |  |         |
|----------------|--|---------|
|                | Excellent interpersonal, written and oral communication skills   | 1 and 3 |
|                | Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines  | 1 and 3 |
|                | Excellent analytical skills  | 1       |
|                | Evidence of emerging publication track record in journals and transactions of high quality   | 1 and 3 |
|                | Ability to present research work in academic and public contexts   | 1 and 3 |
|                | Strong visualisation and communication skills  | 1 and 3 |
| Training       | Willingness to undertake appropriate further training and to adopt new procedures as and when required   | 1       |
| Qualifications | An outstanding educational profile and a mix of relevant skills  | 1       |
|                | PhD in a subject area of relevance to the project topic  | 1       |
| Other          | Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times   | 1       |
|                | Willingness to travel domestically and internationally and attend meetings related to research projects or similar, or conduct the work online as and when required        | 1       |
|                | Ability to work regularly from the team office at LUL in the Olympic Park and at various changing locations in London and beyond, as required by field research priorities |         |

## Conditions of Service

The position is **full-time and fixed term for 20 months, starting on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024**. Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic Research Grade 6 £33,966 – £44,263 per annum plus £3,518 London Allowance, at a starting salary commensurate with experience and to be agreed on appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's normal Terms and Conditions of Employment for Academic and Related staff, details of which can be found [here](#).

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which are available at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/family-leave-policy-and-procedure---page.html>.

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements. We also strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/>

## Informal Enquiries

Informal enquiries should be made to Dr Tuukka Toivonen and Dr Delfina Fantini van Ditmar, via email. Please address all correspondence to [T.H.Toivonen@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:T.H.Toivonen@lboro.ac.uk) , [delfina.fantini@rca.ac.uk](mailto:delfina.fantini@rca.ac.uk) **and** [hello@becoming-regenerative.org](mailto:hello@becoming-regenerative.org) .