



Programme-specific Section of the Curriculum for the MSc Programme in Environment and Development at the Faculty of Science, University of Copenhagen 2012 (rev. 2026)

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1 Title, affiliation and language

A shared section that applies to all BSc, part-time MSc and MSc Programmes at the Faculty of Science is linked to this programme-specific curriculum.

1.1 Title

The MSc programme in Environment and Development leads to a Master of Science (MSc) in Environment and Development with the Danish title: *Cand.scient. (candidatus/candidata scientiarum) i naturressourcer og udvikling*.

1.2 Affiliation

The programme is affiliated with the Study Board of Natural Resources, Environment and Animal Science, and the students can both elect, and be elected, to this study board.

1.3 Corps of external examiners

The following corps of external examiners is used for the central parts of the MSc programme:

- Corps of External Examiners for Agricultural Science (*jordbrugsvidenskab*).

1.4 Language

The language of this MSc programme is English.

2 Academic profile

2.1 Purpose

Environment and development issues are global, and graduates will work with a great variety of situations in their professional lives. The MSc Programme in Environment and Development focuses particularly on natural resource management and agriculture in low- and middle-income countries. These display a set of specific transformative dynamics related to resource access, use, and management. This includes political and legal transformations affecting the environment, livelihoods, resource control and governance with long-term structural effects, as well as new interventions based on technological innovations.

The aim is to give participants the scientific knowledge and skills required to engage in trade, commerce, management, consultancy and research activities related to agricultural production and renewable natural resources in a development context. Students are encouraged through interdisciplinary, multicultural real life experiences to observe, understand, and critically analyse the whole context of the systems encountered.

2.2 General programme profile

The MSc Programme in Environment and Development encompasses all critical aspects of environment related development activities, from soil fertility management to rural livelihood strategies. Teaching includes empirical data collection in the field and linking findings to theory. The MSc Programme in Environment and Development is a combination of:

- An interdisciplinary field-oriented common part which includes training in techniques for gathering data under a variety of field conditions combined with training in the research process, also across disciplines.
- A specialisation based on elective courses providing in-depth knowledge on either Agriculture and Ecology or Livelihoods and Governance.

- The thesis which must include empirical data collection in the field.

Environment and Development is the key subject area of the programme.

2.3 General structure of the programme

The MSc programme is set at 120 ECTS.

The MSc Programme in Environment and Development consists of the following elements:

- Specialisation 120 ECTS.

The student must choose one of the following specialisations:

- Agriculture and Ecology
- Livelihoods and Governance

2.4 Career opportunities

The MSc Programme in Environment and Development qualifies students to become professionals within business functions and/or areas such as:

- Private companies within food and agro-industry, e.g. in the sustainable sourcing of products from the Global South.
- Development agencies (public or NGO) with national and international scope where graduates are involved in developing, implementing, managing, and monitoring intervention programs or projects.
- Government bodies where graduates are involved in policy related activities.
- Consultancy and project design and evaluation.
- A PhD programme.
- Universities and research institutions where graduates are involved in research.

3 Description of competence profiles

Students following the MSc programme acquire the knowledge, skills, and competences listed below. Students will also acquire other qualifications through elective subject elements and other study activities.

3.1 Generic competence profile

Graduates holding an MSc in Environment and Development have acquired the following regardless of specialisation:

Knowledge about:

- An overview of key theories and current debates related to agriculture, environment, sustainability, livelihoods, and governance
- An overview of key field data collection methods (both natural and social science methods)
- The values of scholarship: inquiry, reflection, integrity, open-mindedness, evidence-based thinking, and collegiality.
- Critical aspects of working at the environment and development nexus.
- A philosophy of science basis for interdisciplinary and intercultural research and work across the social and natural sciences

Skills in/to:

- Apply and assess own knowledge, skills, and competences in relation to complex, interdisciplinary problems
- Work in interdisciplinary and intercultural groups
- Apply selected methods in the field
- Analyse the validity and reliability of different types of natural and social science data
- Explore, understand, and challenge disciplinary boundaries
- Apply intellectual, practical, numeracy, communication, information and communication technology, interpersonal/teamwork, self-management and professional development skills
- Analyse and interpret different forms of data to generate consistent conclusions.

Competences in/to:

- Critically reflect on and discuss approaches to development questions, as appropriate within the fields of agriculture, ecology, sustainability, livelihoods, and governance
- Reflect on the benefits and challenges related to practising interdisciplinarity
- Reflect on case-level results and generalize these to broader discussions and issues
- Display the competence, key skills, behaviour and attitudes required in a professional working life, including the ability to work in interdisciplinary and intercultural teams in both the private and public sectors.
- Communicate clearly, concisely and confidently in spoken and written format, including field-based reports to meet the objectives of multitudinous stakeholders.
- Develop the independent learning skills necessary for the foundation of lifelong learning.

3.2 Agriculture and Ecology

In addition to the generic competence profile, graduates holding an MSc in Environment and Development with a specialisation in Agriculture and Ecology have acquired the following:

Knowledge about:

- Current research and advanced theories in relation to agriculture and sustainable use of natural resources in low- and middle-income countries
- Natural science approaches to describe and characterize agricultural- and ecological systems and analyse key aspects in relations to productivity, resilience, and sustainability

Skills in/to:

- Research planning, data collection using a range of field methods, and data analysis techniques
- Participate in academic and practical discussions on agricultural development and the environment
- Link and harmonize agricultural activities with environmental conditions.
- Critically identify sustainability issues in relation to agriculture and natural resource management
- Identify, analyse and communicate a research question from a complex setting to broader audiences, both professionals and non-professionals, at a variety of levels, using modern and appropriate information and communication tools

Competences in/to:

- Plan and implement agricultural interventions as a professional capacity in private sector companies, government bodies, non-governmental organisations, research institutions, or development agencies
- Display independence and integrity, as well as awareness of ethical and moral questions related to agriculture and ecology and take these into account when working in different cultural settings
- Continuously acquire new skills and knowledge when working in complex field settings as well as in interdisciplinary teams in intercultural environments

3.3 Livelihoods and Governance

In addition to the generic competence profile, graduates holding an MSc in Environment and Development with a specialisation in Livelihoods and Governance has acquired the following:

Knowledge about:

- Social science theories and concepts related to analysing and understanding challenges at the nexus of environment, livelihoods, and governance at local and household levels
- The theoretical basis of qualitative and quantitative data collection methodology, including interviews, questionnaires, surveys, and rapid appraisal techniques

Skills in/to:

- Undertake high quality quantitative and qualitative data collection on local livelihoods, governance, and environments
- Apply principles, theories, and frameworks to case studies and critically engage in research and debates related to local development and environmental resource governance

Competences in/to:

- A thorough and interdisciplinary ability to analyse processes of change in relation to livelihoods and governance in low- and middle-income countries
- The skills to identify, formulate, and operationalize interventions that are relevant to livelihoods and governance in particular locations

4 Admission requirements

4.1 Bachelor's degrees that automatically fulfil the academic requirements

Applicants with one of the following Bachelor's degrees or Professional Bachelor's degrees automatically fulfil the academic requirements for admission to the MSc Programme in Environment and Development:

- Agricultural Economics/Environmental and Food Economics, Animal Science, Anthropology, Biochemistry, Biology, Biotechnology, Economics, Food and Nutrition, Forestry and Landscape Engineering, Geography and Geoinformatics, Natural Resources, Political Science or Sociology from University of Copenhagen
- Anthropology, Biology, Biotechnology engineering (*civilingeniør*), Plant- and Food Science, Politics and Economics, Political Science or Economy from Aarhus University
- Biology, Chemistry and Biotechnology, Political Science or Economy from University of Southern Denmark

- Environmental Biology, TekSam, International Studies, Geography or Economy from Roskilde University.

4.2 Other Bachelor's degrees

Applicants with a Bachelor's degree, Professional Bachelor's degree or equivalent from Danish or international universities other than those listed in 4.1 is qualified for admission to the MSc Programme in Environment and Development if the degree includes the following:

- 30 ECTS within the field of social science

or

- 30 ECTS within the field of natural science

4.3 Other applicants

The Faculty may also admit applicants who, after an individual academic assessment, are assessed to possess educational qualifications equivalent to those required in Subclauses 4.1-2.

4.4 Language requirements

Applicants must be able to document English proficiency corresponding to one of the following:

- An entrance examination with an English level comparable to the Danish level B or higher from a country within EU/EEA or Switzerland
- International Baccalaureate (IB) from an international school
- European Baccalaureate (EB) from one of the approved schools
- English B or A as Single Subject Course in Denmark
- IELTS test score of minimum 6.5 with at least 6.0 in each sub score
- TOEFL test score of minimum 83 with at least 20 in each sub score
- Cambridge Advanced English (CAE) or Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE) with a minimum score of 180 (C1-level)

4.5 Supplementary subject elements

The qualifications of an applicant to the MSc programme are assessed exclusively on the basis of the qualifying Bachelor's degree. Supplementary subject elements passed between the completion of the bachelor's programme and the admission to the MSc programme cannot be included in the overall assessment.

However, subject elements passed before the completion of the Bachelor's programme may be included in the overall assessment. This includes subject elements completed as continuing education as well as subject elements completed as part of a former higher education programme. A maximum of 30 ECTS supplementary subject elements can be included in the overall assessment.

Subject elements passed before completing the Bachelor's programme which are to form part of the MSc programme to which the student has a legal right of admission (§15-courses) cannot be included in the overall assessment.

5 Prioritisation of applicants

There is no BSc programme with reserved access for this programme.

If the number of qualified applicants to the programme exceeds the number of places available, applicants will be prioritised according to the following criteria:

- Grades achieved in relevant courses*
- Grade-point average achieved in qualifying degree.

*Relevant courses include agricultural economics, environmental and food economics, animal science, anthropology, biochemistry, biology, biotechnology, economics, food and nutrition, forestry and landscape engineering, geography and geoinformatics, international studies, natural resources, plant science, political science, or sociology.

6 Structure of the programme

The compulsory subject elements, restricted elective subject elements and the thesis constitute the central parts of the programme (Section 30 of the Ministerial Order on Bachelor and Master's programmes (Candidatus) at Universities).

6.1 Agriculture and Ecology

The specialisation is set at 120 ECTS and consists of the following:

- Compulsory subject elements, 30 ECTS.
- Restricted elective subject elements, 30 ECTS.
- Elective subject elements, 15 ECTS
- Thesis, 45 ECTS.

6.1.1 Compulsory subject elements

All of the following subject elements are to be covered (30 ECTS):

Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
NIFK23004U	Global Challenges in Environment and Development	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIGK23000U	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Environment and Development	Block 2	7.5 ECTS
NIFK23006U	Practicing Interdisciplinary Field Research on the Environment	Block 3	15 ECTS

6.1.2 Restricted elective subject elements

30 ECTS are to be covered as subject elements from the following list:

Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
NIFK14026U	Entrepreneurship and Innovation	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NPLK14008U	Plant Infection and Disease Management	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIFK18001U	Planning Interdisciplinary Research	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NPLK14019U	Plant Nutrition and Soil Fertility	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
LPLK10367U	Tropical Crop Production*	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIGK13003U	Tropical Forest Restoration	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
LPLK10287U	Agroforestry	Block 2	7.5 ECTS

Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
NPLK18001U	Applied Insect Ecology and Biological Control	Block 2	7.5 ECTS
LNAK10010U	Environmental Impact Assessment	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
NIFK14026U	Entrepreneurship and Innovation	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
	Project in Practice	Block 1-5	15 ECTS

*The course is not offered in the academic year 2026/27

6.1.3 Elective subject elements

15 ECTS are to be covered as elective subject elements.

- All subject elements at MSc level may be included as elective subject elements in the MSc programme.
- BSc subject elements corresponding to 15 ECTS may be included in the MSc programme.
- Projects. See 6.1.4 Projects.

6.1.4 Projects

- Projects outside the course scope (PUK) may be included in the elective section of the programme with up to 15 ECTS. The regulations are described in Appendix 5 to the shared section of the curriculum.
- Project in practice (PIP) may be included in the elective section or restricted elective section of the programme with 15 ECTS. PIP may not exceed 15 ECTS in total on the restricted elective and elective section of the programme. PIP may be written as a combination of the restricted elective and elective section of the programme. The regulations are described in Appendix 4 to the shared section of the curriculum.
- Thesis preparation projects (PREP) may not be included in the elective section of the programme. The regulations are described in Appendix 6 to the shared section of the curriculum.

6.1.5 Thesis

The MSc Programme in Environment and Development with a specialisation in Agriculture and Ecology includes a thesis corresponding to 45 ECTS, as described in Appendix 2 to the shared curriculum. The thesis must be written within the academic scope of the programme.

The thesis must be based on at least two months of field work. The data for the thesis are expected to be collected during this period. The fieldwork can be combined with an internship at international organisations, NGOs, universities, or similar.

Students will obtain financial support from the supervising department in connection with thesis fieldwork if funding criteria are met.

The thesis research problem and country of fieldwork must be approved by the Head of Studies.

6.1.6 Academic mobility

The curriculum makes it possible to follow subject elements outside the Faculty of Science.

The academic mobility in the MSc Programme in Environment and Development with a specialisation in Agriculture and Ecology is placed in block 3+4 of the 1st year.

Academic mobility requires that the student follows the rules and regulations regarding pre-approval and credit transfer.

In addition, the student has the possibility to arrange similar academic mobility in other parts of the programme.

6.2 Livelihoods and Governance

The specialisation is set at 120 ECTS and consists of the following:

- Compulsory subject elements, 30 ECTS.
- Restricted elective subject elements, 30 ECTS.
- Elective subject elements, 15 ECTS
- Thesis, 45 ECTS.

6.2.1 Compulsory subject elements

All of the following subject elements are to be covered (30 ECTS):

Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
NIFK23004U	Global Challenges in Environment and Development	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIGK23000U	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Environment and Development	Block 2	7.5 ECTS
NIFK23006U	Practicing Interdisciplinary Field Research on the Environment	Block 3	15 ECTS

6.2.2 Restricted elective subject elements

30 ECTS are to be covered as subject elements from the following list:

Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
LOJK10272U	Applied Econometrics	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIGK24014U	Applied Ethnobotany	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIFK22002U	Global Forests and People	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIGK14009U	Land Use Transitions in the Global South	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIFK18001U	Planning Interdisciplinary Research	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIFK15004U	Political Ecology	Block 1	7.5 ECTS
NIFK17004U	Environmental Justice	Block 2	7.5 ECTS
NGEK10024U	Globalisation and Dynamics in Global Value Chains	Block 2	7.5 ECTS
NIFK16006U	Participatory Natural Resource Governance	Block 2	7.5 ECTS
NIFK23005U	People, Poverty and Environmental Change	Block 2	7.5 ECTS
LOJK10292U	Agricultural Value Chains in Developing Countries	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
NIFK21000U	Gender, Environment and Sustainable Development*	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
NIGK13012U	Human Adaptation to Climate Change and Variability	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
NIFK23009U	Impact Evaluation	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
NIGK20001U	Rural-Urban Transformations in the Global South	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
NIFK19001U	Working as a Consultant	Block 4	7.5 ECTS

Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
NIFK26002U	Global Business and Sustainability Management	Block 4	7.5 ECTS
	Project in Practice	Block 1-5	15 ECTS

*The course is not offered in the academic year 2026/27.

6.2.3 Elective subject elements

15 ECTS are to be covered as elective subject elements.

- All subject elements at MSc level may be included as elective subject elements in the MSc programme.
- BSc subject elements corresponding to 15 ECTS may be included in the MSc programme.
- Projects. See 6.2.4 Projects.

6.2.4 Projects

- Projects outside the course scope (PUK) may be included in the elective section of the programme with up to 15 ECTS. The regulations are described in Appendix 5 to the shared section of the curriculum.
- Project in practice (PIP) may be included in the elective section or restricted elective section of the programme with 15 ECTS. PIP may not exceed 15 ECTS in total on the restricted elective and elective section of the programme. PIP may be written as a combination of the restricted elective and elective section of the programme. The regulations are described in Appendix 4 to the shared section of the curriculum.
- Thesis preparation projects (PREP) may not be included in the elective section of the programme. The regulations are described in Appendix 6 to the shared section of the curriculum.

6.2.5 Thesis

The MSc Programme in Environment and Development with a specialisation in Livelihoods and Governance includes a thesis corresponding to 45 ECTS, as described in Appendix 2 to the shared curriculum. The thesis must be written within the academic scope of the programme.

The thesis must be based on at least two months of field work. The data for the thesis are expected to be collected during this period. The fieldwork can be combined with an internship at international organisations, NGOs, universities, or similar.

Students will obtain financial support from the supervising department in connection with thesis fieldwork if funding criteria are met.

The thesis research problem and country of fieldwork must be approved by the Head of Studies.

6.2.6 Academic mobility

The curriculum makes it possible to follow subject elements outside the Faculty of Science.

The academic mobility in the MSc Programme in Environment and Development with a specialisation in Livelihoods and Governance is placed in block 3+4 of the 1st year.

Academic mobility requires that the student follows the rules and regulations regarding pre-approval and credit transfer.

In addition, the student has the possibility to arrange similar academic mobility in other parts of the programme.

7 Exemptions

In exceptional circumstances, the study board may grant exemptions from the rules in the curriculum specified solely by the Faculty of Science.

8 Commencement etc.

8.1 Validity

This subject specific section of the curriculum applies to all students enrolled in the programme – however, see Appendix 2.

8.2 Transfer

Students enrolled on previous curricula may be transferred to the new one as per the applicable transfer regulations or according to an individual credit transfer by the study board.

8.3 Amendment

The curriculum may be amended once a year so that any changes come into effect at the beginning of the academic year. Amendments must be proposed by the study board and approved by the Dean.

Notification about amendments that tighten the admission requirements for the programme will be published online at www.science.ku.dk one year before they come into effect.

If amendments are made to this curriculum, an interim arrangement may be added if necessary to allow students to complete their MSc programme according to the amended curriculum.

Appendix 1 The recommended academic progression

The table illustrates the recommended academic progression. The student is allowed to plan an alternative progression within the applicable rules.

Table – Agriculture and Ecology (thesis, 45 ECTS)

Period	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
1 st year	Global Challenges in Environment and Development	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Environment and Development	Practicing Interdisciplinary Field Research on the Environment	Elective
	Restricted elective	Restricted elective		Elective
2 nd year	Restricted elective	Thesis		
	Restricted elective			

Table – Livelihoods and Governance (thesis, 45 ECTS)

Period	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4
1 st year	Global Challenges in Environment and Development	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Environment and Development	Practicing Interdisciplinary Field Research on the Environment	Elective
	Restricted elective	Restricted elective		Elective
2 nd year	Restricted elective	Thesis		
	Restricted elective			

Appendix 2 Interim arrangements

The Shared Section that applies to all BSc, part-time MSc and MSc Programmes at the Faculty of Science applies to all students.

The interim arrangements below only consist of parts where the current curriculum differs from the rules and regulations that were previously valid. Therefore, if information about relevant rules and regulations are missing, it can be found in the curriculum above.

1 General changes for students admitted in the academic year 2025/26 and 2024/25

Students admitted to the MSc programme in the academic year 2025/26 and 2024/25 must finish the programme as listed in the curriculum above with the following exceptions.

1.1 Agriculture and Ecology

Restricted elective subject elements

30 ECTS are to be covered as subject elements from the following list:

Restricted elective subject elements offered as part of this curriculum (see above)			
Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
NMAK14003U	Applied Statistics	Discontinued*	7.5 ECTS

*See discontinued courses below.

2 General changes for students admitted in the academic year 2023/24

Students admitted to the MSc programme in the academic year 2023/24 must finish the programme as listed in the curriculum above with the following exceptions.

2.1 Agriculture and Ecology

Restricted elective subject elements

30 ECTS are to be covered as subject elements from the following list:

Restricted elective subject elements offered as part of this curriculum (see above)			
Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
NMAK14003U	Applied Statistics	Discontinued*	7.5 ECTS

*See discontinued courses below.

2.2 Livelihoods and Governance

Restricted elective subject elements

30 ECTS are to be covered as subject elements from the following list:

Restricted elective subject elements offered as part of this curriculum (see above)			
Course Code	Course Title	Block	ECTS
LNAK10037U	Applied Ethnobotany	Discontinued*	7.5 ECTS
NIFK19005U	Critical Development Studies	Discontinued*	7.5 ECTS

*See discontinued courses below.

3 Discontinued courses

Course Code	Course Title	ECTS	Interim arrangement
LNAK10037U	Applied Ethnobotany	7.5	The course was restricted elective on the specialisation in Livelihoods and Governance in the academic year 2023/24 and earlier.

			<p>Offered for the last time: 2023/24</p> <p>The course has changed its offering department and is identical to NIGK24014U Applied Ethnobotany.</p>
NMAK14003U	Applied Statistics	7.5	<p>The course was restricted elective on the specialisation in Agriculture and Ecology in the academic year 2025/26 and earlier.</p> <p>Offered for the last time: 2025/26</p> <p>Last exam if applicable (cf. SCIENCE's Teaching and exam rules): 2026/27</p>
NIFK19005U	Critical Development Studies	7.5	<p>The course was restricted elective on the specialisation in Livelihoods and Governance in the academic year 2023/24 and earlier.</p> <p>Offered for the last time: 2021/22</p> <p>Last exam if applicable (cf. SCIENCE's Teaching and exam rules): 2022/23</p>

Appendix 3 Description of objectives for the thesis

The thesis must include at least two months of fieldwork and must therefore, at least in part, include and analyse primary data collected by the student.

After completing the thesis, the student should have:

Knowledge about:

- The chosen subject with point of departure in the key methods and approaches in the specialization.
- Bordering subject areas to main specialization and alternative approaches or methods.

Skills in/to:

- Collect empirical data using preselected tools.
- Analyse collected data using appropriate frameworks and methods.
- Present objectives, methods, and results in a clear and comprehensive way.
- Discuss results in relation to literature in the subject area.
- Draw general conclusions from results and discuss the limitations of the specific data set.

Competences in/to:

- Plan, perform, and evaluate an empirical study in a country of relevance for environment and development.
- Critically evaluate data quality and appropriateness of methods.
- Operationalize an objective, via development of research questions, selection of appropriate methods and relevant sources of information.
- Put an empirical study into a wider development perspective.