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Terra Preta Program - Grants available for obtaining PhD degree in the Netherlands-

The program *Terra Preta do Indio – Recovering the Past, Regaining the Future of Amazonian Dark Earths* is now recruiting doctoral students who will work in an interdisciplinary research team in Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia. This program is being implemented by Wageningen University (the Netherlands) in collaboration with several Latin-American organizations. The main partner organizations are EMBRAPA- Amazonia Occidental and EMBRAPA Solos in Brazil, the Instituto Boliviano de Investigación Forestal in Bolivia, and the Universidad Nacional de Colombia in Colombia.

How to apply

Application materials should be sent digitally to thom.kuyper@wur.nl until June 13th, 2010. The applications will be reviewed by an international and interdisciplinary team. Top candidates will be interviewed around end of June.

Applicants must be citizens of Bolivia, Brazil or Colombia to apply. Applicants should send all the documents requested in [Application material](#). Successful applicants should have a MSc degree in a discipline of relevance to the research topic selected and should fulfill the English proficiency level required.

Program description

Anthropogenic soils with high fertility in the Amazon (*Terra Preta*; also known as *Amazonian Dark Earth*) challenge conventional theories on environmental limitation in the Amazonian basin. These improved soils (and their co-evolved crops) offer a major inspiration for (re-)creating soils for sustainable agriculture. This program aims to (1) understand conditions under which Terra Preta originated, both from the biophysical and socio-economic side; (2) understand the institutional and policy dimensions related to actual use and potential future use of such fertile soils, including the creation of new soils; (3) link actual perception and use of these soils for various agricultural purposes, ranging from annual and biannual cropping systems to (agro-)forestry), to biophysical properties and socio-economic conditions (markets); (4) contribute to the creation of soils that allow sustainable and productive agriculture in the Amazon, using the functioning of Terra Preta as a source of inspiration; (5) contribute to and maintain the functioning of a network of Latin

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American Terra Preta researchers; (6) use the conceptualization of Terra Preta as socially constructed soils to reflect on (and change) actual scientific discourses and practices, both in research and education.

Research topics

To achieve the aims of the program nine research topics have been defined. One of them will be carried out in Bolivia, six in Brazil and two in Colombia. More information in [List of research topics](#).

The PhD program at Wageningen University

Selected doctoral students will be enrolled at the PhD program of Wageningen University and will be affiliated to one local institution. Students will receive a four-year grant, will spend 18 months in the Netherlands and 30 months in the study country. Students will be supervised by both Dutch and local supervisors. The students will work together and with other members of the program through conferences, workshops and courses. See [PhD program and description of grants](#) for more detailed information.

Questions?

Please contact the Terra Preta program coordinators: Dr. Thom Kuyper (thom.kuyper@wur.nl) or Dr. Marielos Peña-Claros (marielos.penaclaros@wur.nl).

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