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Forest governance, policies and politics across the globe – working towards a global forest transition?

Date and location: July 13-24, 2026, Beijing, China.

Sponsors:

Renmin University of China (RUC)

Chinese Academy of Forestry, China

Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil

Wageningen University, The Netherlands

Beijing Forestry University, China

University of Freiburg, Germany

International Union of Forest Research Organizations

Organizers:

China-Brazil Joint Research Center on Exchanges and

Learning between Civilizations (CBRC)

Institute of Area and Country Studies, RUC

School of Agricultural Economics and Rural

Development, Renmin University of China

Ecology and Nature Conservation Institute (ENCI),

Chinese Academy of Forestry



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Background and Objectives

Forest landscapes around the globe change rapidly. Human actions are the key drivers of these changes, resulting in concurring but regionally different processes of deforestation, forest degradation, and forest restoration. Deforestation and forest degradation are globally linked to biodiversity loss, carbon stocks depletion, and disturbance of regional and global rainfall patterns, and have multiple implications for local livelihoods. Simultaneously, an increasing number of countries have passed the so-called forest transition inflection point and report increasing forests areas, yet with different forest conditions and implications for forest ecosystem services provision to local, national and global beneficiaries.

Drivers of deforestation and degradation as well as of re- and afforestation and forest restoration operate locally, regionally, and internationally. They are affected by global trade and investments, national and international conservation and forest restoration priorities and efforts, but also by changing valuations and recognition of the relevance of forest landscapes for wellbeing and sustainable development. Political perspectives on forests vary between countries and continents but may also affect perspectives scientists have on forest landscapes and their governance.

A consensus was reached at UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai that countries should strive to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. At COP 30, the Brazilian conference presidency proposed a 'Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation Roadmap' to be further elaborated at COP31 in Antalya, Turkey. The roadmap recognizes that forest landscapes are subject to manifold societal demands, resulting in conflicts which are again a key concern in forest policy making.

The (re-)distribution of forest benefits between various forest dependent groups is central to forest policy making and forest governance in general, and is altered along forest transition trajectories. Strategies that are developed and implemented range from agroforestry systems to close to nature forestry, depending on the context.

The summer school announced here explores forest governance, policies and politics in three major countries and world regions: Brazil, China and Europe. Specifically, it focuses on policies affecting forests and people relating to them. Attention is given to policy making and outcomes, including the role of political ideologies and world views that underly these policies. Summer school participants will be engaged in lectures, discussions and assignments to answer the following questions:

- 1) What drives forest policy and governance in the three countries and regions, and what are their consequences?



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- 2) What can be learned from individual case studies for larger patterns and drivers of forest policy making and can it be linked to forest transitions?
- 3) How can international cooperation support forest governance locally, nationally and globally to restore forest landscapes for the benefit of people?

The summer school will combine lectures by renowned scholars and policy experts from three continents, group discussions, field trips within China, and other assignments. Participants will be invited to present their own research plans and activities. A specific focus will be on the COP 30 ‘Halting and Reversing Deforestation and Forest Degradation Roadmap’; here the summer school participants will jointly prepare a young researchers’ statement that will be communicated to the Roadmap Secretariat.

Target participants

The summer school is intended for M.Sc., and Ph.D. students, post-graduates active in forest policy and governance related research or work, and other interested participants with a sufficient knowledge of and active engagement with the summer school subject matter. Space will be allocated to become familiar with forest policies and management of the host country China.

Why come to the summer school?

Work with leading scholars in forest governance and policy from three continents. You will receive lectures on state-of-the-art forest governance and policy knowledge, engage in group discussion, and undertake relevant group-assignments to train relevant skills and capacities.

Meet people from different nationalities and backgrounds. Participants will originate from different regions of the world, working on different questions and challenges related to transforming forest landscapes, which offers plenty of opportunities to mutual learning and networking.

Contribute to the global forest policy debate by learning about the UNFCCC COP30 Roadmap, and collectively providing an own contribution.

Present your own research and get feedback from peers and experts. Space will be provided to present your own research and discuss and exchange ideas with participants of the summer school and lecturers contributing to the event.



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Organization

The summer school will be held in English at the Renmin University of China campus. It will last two weeks, starting on July 12 and ending on July 24. The program is divided into lectures provided by the summer school lecturers, lectures by invited policy practitioners, group discussions in smaller groups, group assignments, and excursions to locations to demonstrate forest governance and policy of the host country,

Participants are expected to arrive in China not later than July 12, the same day on which a Beijing city tour is planned. The final day of the summer school is July 24, and all participants are expected to complete the full program until that day.

Fees and accommodation

The registration fee will be waived for all participants, however the participants are expected to cover own travel expenses to China, and apply for a visa to enter China, if necessary, and cover own expenses for the stay in China. You will have the option to book accommodation in the RUC on-campus hotel, and organizers will reserve hotels for all participants for field trips with best prices. Costs for both hotels on the RUC Campus and during the field trip are about 85 € per night, and for the around tickets from Tianshui of Gansu province from and to Beijing about 90 € for the second class, and 150 € for the first class. The summer school secretariat can provide letters to support visa applications.

Financial Support

This summer school is part of the joint EU-China research project “Integrative Forest Management for multiple ecosystem services and enhanced biodiversity” (China Grant number: 2023YFE0112800 and EU Grant agreement ID: 101135263 (Transformit project)). CBRC and Ecology and Nature Conservation Institute, Chinese Academy of Forestry will provide necessary financial support to the success of the summer school.

Lecturers

Raoni Rajão is an Associate Professor of Environmental Management and Science and Technology Studies at Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and an affiliated member of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. He served as Director of Deforestation and Fire Control Policies at Brazil’s Ministry of Environment (2023–2024). He holds a degree in Computer Science from the University of Milano-Bicocca and a PhD from Lancaster University, with postdoctoral research at the Wilson Center. His work



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focuses on the intersection of technology, science, and public policy, particularly deforestation control and environmental services, and he has published in leading journals such as *Science*, *Nature*, and *PNAS*.

Jinlong Liu is Wu Yuzhang Distinguished Lecture Professor, School of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, and Director, China-Brazil Joint Research Centre for Exchanges and Mutual Learning among Civilizations, and Director, Centre for Forest, Environmental and Resources Policy, Renmin University of China. Dr. Jinlong Liu earned his BS in forestry sciences and MS in Agroforestry from Nanjing Forestry University, and a Ph.D in Rural Development Sociology from Wageningen University. In his about 40 years academic career, he has been studying the issues of community based natural resources management, forest transition, natural resources governance and policy, local community and traditional knowledge, and policy study related to forest management, climate and biodiversity in China, as well as in various countries from East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. He is Co-Coordinator of IUFRO Forest Policy and Economic Division (Division 9), leading author for Global Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Assessment, Global Transformative Change Assessment (IPBES). He is leading author for UNEP GEO (Global Environment Outlook) 7, Honorable Professor at Hongkong University; and Guest Professor at the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group, Wageningen University.

Georg Winkel is Professor and Chair of the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. He holds an MSc (Forest Sciences, 2000) and a PhD (Forest and Environmental Policy, 2006) from University of Freiburg, Germany. Previously he has been working at the University of Freiburg (2006-2015) and the European Forest Institute, Joensuu (2015-2107) and Bonn (2017-2021). Next to working for EFI, since 2018, he is an associate professor at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Bonn, and he was an associate professor at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, University of Freiburg, Germany (2017-2021). In 2011, he spent one year as a DFG research fellow at the University of California, Berkeley. His main research interest relates to understanding how societies shape forests and nature and vice versa, and how this translates in forest and nature conservation policy and governance.

Wil de Jong is currently Guest Professor at the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group, Wageningen University. He holds a Ph.D. from the same university. He lived and worked in Peru, Indonesia, Japan and Germany and undertook research in these countries as well as in Bolivia, China, India, and Vietnam and was engaged in several global forestry related studies. Key topics of his research include local forest use and management, forest transition, forest restoration, forests and climate change, scenarios, forests and transformative change. He has taught undergraduate and graduate courses



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in Japan, China, Germany and invited lectures in all the countries in which he has worked.

Lingchao Li is professor and deputy dean of School of Economics and Management at Beijing Forestry University. He focuses on research field of forest policy and economics, including economic globalization and forest transition, forest governance and land use change analysis. He is also deputy dean of the National Institute of Forestry and Grass Economics and Trade of Beijing Forestry University, and deputy director of the 9.03.01 working group of IUFRO. He has chaired more than 20 scientific research projects, including the National Natural Science Foundation project, the Beijing Social Science Foundation project et al. He has published more than 50 academic articles in peer-reviewed journals such as Land Use Policy and Forest Policy and Economics. Dr. Li has won more than 10 scientific awards, including the second prize of Liang Xi's Forestry Science and Technology Award and the second prize of the Science and Technology Award of the China Circular Economy Association.

Metodi Sotirov is Senior Researcher and Associate Professor in Forest and Environmental Policy at the University of Freiburg, Germany. He holds an MSc in Forest Sciences (2002) from the University of Forestry in Sofia, Bulgaria, and a PhD in Forest and Environmental Policy Sciences (2009) from the University of Freiburg, Germany. After postdoctoral research visit at Yale University, School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, CT, USA (2012), Metodi served as a Faculty Associate to Yale's Governance, Environment and Markets (GEM) Initiative (2013-2019). Metodi is a Deputy Coordinator of IUFRO's Working Party on Integrated Cross-sectoral Policy. Beyond academia, he has worked as a Senior Researcher "Forest and Society" at the Federal Thünen Institute on International Forestry and Economics in Hamburg, Germany (2019), Senior Consultant "Forest Policy and Environmental Governance" with the private consultancy UNIQUE forestry and land use Ltd. in Freiburg (2015-2016), and as Deputy Head of Unit "International Cooperation" at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Bulgaria (2002-2005). His research focuses on actor-centred policy analysis of transformative change towards biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation and adaptation, sustainable forest management as well as legal and deforestation free timber and agricultural supply chains, with particular emphasis on national, European, and global levels. He is academic coordinator of University of Freiburg's "Environmental Social Sciences". Next to PhD student supervision, Sotirov coordinates and teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in "Global Natural Resource Policy", "European forest and environmental policy", "Nature protection policy", and "Forests and Global Change". He is a guest lecturer with AgroParisTech Nancy in France, and the University of Applied Sciences for Agriculture, Forests and Food Bern in Switzerland.



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Tentative programme

Date	Activity am	Activity pm
11.07.2026		Registration. Welcome event. Presentation of all participants. Expectations of participants. Outline of the summer school program. Practical information.
12.07.2026	Lectures: Global forest frontiers; forest transition; deforestation and drivers; forest restoration.	Lectures: Forest governance and policy of China, Europe, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia.
13.07.2026	Group work related to the lectures on China, Amazon, Europe. Identify and explain commonalities and differences in forest governance and policies, weaknesses and opportunities	Introduction of the Roadmap (COP 30); planning of group work. Planning of group assignment related to the Roadmap. Dinner off campus.
14.07.2026	Group work on the COP 30 assignment	Presentations of individual research plans and feedback.
15.07.2026	Group work on the COP 30 assignment	Presentation of research of participants and feedback.
16.07.2026	Participation in an international conference on integrated forest management hosted by Chinese Academy of Forestry	
17.07.2026	Reflections and discussions on international conference. Group discuss and present findings.	Presentations of research plans and feedback.
18.07.2026	Departure to and arrival at Xiaolongshan State Forest Farm, Gansu Province. Introduction to State Forest Farms.	
19.07.2026	Field visits on State Forest Farm. Evening discussions on field visits.	
20.07.2026	Return to Beijing.	
21.07.2026	Presentations of contribution to COP 30, feedback, final revisions.	Presentations of research plans and feedback.
22.07.2026	Reflections on the summer school. What we have we learned. Major take home lessons. What was missing.	Leisure – explore Beijing.
23.07.2026	Departure	



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Figure 1: Xiaolongshan, Gansu



Figure 2: The Palace Museum, Beijing

How to apply

Provide the following documentation:

- a filled-out application form (see below);
- a support letter from your employee or university supervisor/sponsor;
- an up to date curriculum vitae;
- an abstract (max 300 words) on your current research (plans)

Students of UFMG need to send an email to csr@csr.ufmg.br for an internal selection process to be recommended to Renmin University. All other applicants need to send the required documents to the following emails: jiayiwang@ruc.edu.cn and liujinlong@ruc.edu.cn.



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The application deadline is May 15, 2026. The selection will be on a rolling basis, and the results will be announced progressively. To ensure your participation, we strongly advise you to submit your application as early as possible. The number of places is limited to 30. Selection criteria include academic merits/fit of research, geographical balance and gender balance.



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Information of Participant

Participant Full Name:	
Date of Birth:	
Sex:	
Nationality:	
Passport Number:	
Name of Organization/University:	
Position/Title:	
Email:	

Application Form