Ref URPP-GCB-GSS-17-01: Feedbacks between biodiversity and climate through plant traits and light interaction.

We are looking for a motivated candidate, willing to perform highly interdisciplinary research. We therefore invite applications for a PhD position on the following topic: the forecast for biodiversity under climate change requires understanding of biological mechanisms and their interaction with climate through carbon and energy fluxes. In this project, we will investigate functional traits related to the light environment, at intra-specifc, inter-specific and community scale. We will investigate constraints within the trait-space and how these constraints regulate the interaction of light with vegetation. Finally, we will experimentally test how light-related traits change under a global change driver (i.e. drought) and how these changes feed back to the atmosphere in the Arctic tundra.

The successful applicant will be based in Zurich and embedded in a supervisory team including Gabriela Schaepman-Strub (→ http://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/staff/member/schaepman_strub_gabriela.html), Pascal Niklaus (→ http://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/staff/leaders/niklaus.html), and Bernhard Schmid (→ http://www.ieu.uzh.ch/en/staff/member/schmid_bernhard.html). You will work in the Department of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies which hosts several research groups working on a variety of topics assessing the key drivers of global change and biodiversity.

To apply, all applicants must have a completed Master's degree in Environmental Science, Geography, Biology, Ecology or a closely related science field. Applicants must be ready to perform field work in the Siberian tundra at very low living standard and be highly motivated to design and run statistical analysis and apply a physics-based model. Experience in statistical analysis, trait analysis, and a background in radiative transfer theory and modelling are an asset. A high standard of written and spoken English is required. The position can start as soon as a suitable candidate is found. Salaries correspond to the UZH regulations of PhD salaries.

Please send your application (including position reference URPP-GCB-GSS-17-01) as one single PDF file (motivation letter, complete CV, and names of 2 references) to → isabel.schoechli@uzh.ch. Selection of candidates will begin 1 May 2017. For further questions, please contact → gabriela.schaepman@ieu.uzh.ch.