



Open Call: Chair in Decarbonisation and Finance

We are delighted to announce an open call for the position of Chair in Decarbonisation and Finance as part of the "Research Collective for a Sustainable World" initiative (SWIFT), which aims the establishment of a multidisciplinary collective of researchers specialized in energy/climate transitions, both in technical, economic, and social aspects.

The Chair will be situated within the Centre for Economic and Social Studies on the Environment and the Centre for European Research in Microfinance at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The Chair will research financial pathways for decarbonization, develop policy tools, and support critical debate on these matters.

Chair description

The successful candidate will be embedded in the ULB-VUB Urban Socio-Environmental Transformations Research HUB at USQUARE campus where a critical mass in the study of finance and society is in place. In this interdisciplinary context the Chair will chart existing funding gaps and societal and environmental needs of households and industry regarding decarbonization, study potential and pitfalls of existing decarbonization funding strategies by private institutions (e.g. banks, asset managers), community owned institutions (e.g. cooperative banks, crowdfunding platforms) and public institutions (e.g. publicly owned banks, regional and national investment funds) in Belgium, learn from international cases, models, and strategies, and will evaluate the potential of various financial and governance models. Together with stakeholders, the Chair also intends to develop concrete policy tools that, when implemented, can support decarbonization.

The candidate will analyze both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Quantitative sources include balance sheet and portfolio data, key risk/return metrics, etc. Qualitative sources include investor relations documents for individual organizations as well as industry-wide documents, public policies (in Belgium/Europe), as well as primary data on investment strategies, governance models collected through interviews and surveys. Critical confrontation of narratives and numbers at the policy, industry and organizational level will help to identify gaps and potential contradictions in current funding approaches. The analysis of viable strategies in other (European) contexts can inform scenario-building regarding the implementation of financial models and strategies to decarbonize. The candidate will also seek to co-produce such pathways with key stakeholders in policy, public institutions, and the industry.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Research Leadership:** Lead cutting-edge research on the nexus between finance, societal and environmental challenges, with a focus on the role of private, community-owned, and/or state-owned financial institutions.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Work closely with other thematic chairs within the SWIFT initiative, promoting a multidisciplinary approach that bridges engineering, environmental, social, and economic perspectives.
- **Education and Mentorship:** Supervise or help to supervise two PhD students, guiding their research in alignment with the goals of the chair. This will involve developing their projects to ensure they contribute meaningfully to the overall research agenda.
- **Innovation and Impact:** Drive financial and governance innovation that supports the energy transition while considering broader societal impacts. This includes collaborating with industry and policymakers to implement sustainable finance policies.

Application Requirements:

Candidates interested in applying for this position are expected to submit the following:

1. **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** A comprehensive overview of your academic and professional achievements.
2. **Motivation Letter (2 pages max):** A statement of your interest in the Chair in Decarbonisation and Finance, detailing how you plan to contribute to the project and your vision for the future of financing decarbonization.
3. **Two references.**
4. **The application file (template attached) covering:**
 - Previous teaching (if any), research experience (1 page).
 - A 5-years research project within the scope of the Chair, indicating the synergies with the SWIFT initiative (3 pages).
 - A research vision discussing the key research areas you intend to focus on and how they align with the goals of the SWIFT initiative, as well as the plan to integrate and mentor PhD researchers (1 page).
 - A discussion on strategies for fostering collaboration within SWIFT and with external partners (1 page).

Desired Qualifications:

- **Academic Background:** A PhD in Finance, Management Studies, Economics, Economic Geography, Political Sciences, or related is required.
- **Experience:** A proven sustainability track record and experience leading multidisciplinary projects will be considered a significant advantage.

Evaluation Process

Selection will follow a two-stage process. The SWIFT collective will review the application packages, and shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview.

The candidates will be evaluated based on their scientific expertise, the innovativeness of their project proposal, and their ability to work within and contribute to a multidisciplinary research environment. A clear and compelling vision for mentoring PhD

students and integrating their research into the broader goals of the Chair will be a key consideration.

We encourage applications from candidates who are passionate about driving the future of sustainable finance and eager to make a lasting impact on how finance can support decarbonization processes.

What we offer:

- A pleasant and friendly working environment within an institution with strong societal values.
- A dynamic work environment on a green and easily accessible university campus.
- Ongoing training and development opportunities.
- A salary scale in line with the FWB scales that considers experience.
- Benefits (possibility of joining hospitalization insurance, supplementary pension, contribution to travel expenses, etc.).

Equal Opportunities Policy:

ULB's and VUB's personnel management policy is focused on diversity and equal opportunities. We recruit candidates based on their skills, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, origin, nationality, beliefs, or disability.