



**The Charles Darwin Foundation for the Galapagos Islands
is seeking to hire
Senior Researcher – Environmental Geography
Ecological Restoration Program**

Position title:	Senior Researcher
Employment type:	Full-time
Application deadline:	November 30, 2026
Start date:	January 4, 2027
Duration:	1 year, with annual renewal based on performance.
Reports to:	Principal Investigator

Introduction

The Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) is an international nonprofit organization founded in Belgium in 1959, with its operational base in the Galapagos Islands, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located 1,000 kilometers off the coast of Ecuador. All research projects operate from the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) on Santa Cruz Island, with the mission of *addressing the greatest threats and challenges facing Galapagos through scientific research and conservation action to safeguard one of the world's most important natural treasures.*

Position Overview

The Charles Darwin Foundation conducts several terrestrial ecosystem restoration projects focused on restoring ecological resilience. These projects implement a range of restoration measures, including species reintroductions, invasive species control, and assisted natural regeneration. They also establish biodiversity baselines and monitor ecological resilience indicators across several areas of the Galapagos Islands.

Position Objective

The objective of this position is to develop, implement, and manage the spatial planning and remote monitoring component of CDF restoration projects, including supervision of a field implementation team.

Although funding has been secured for the initial years, the researcher is expected to raise funds to support the program's long-term continuity, both by writing research proposals and by seeking philanthropic support.

Responsibilities

The selected candidate will be responsible for four main areas:

- a. Strategic vision and leadership
- b. Administrative work



- c. Fieldwork
- d. Data analysis, interpretation of results, and publications.
- e. Fundraising and grants

a. Strategic vision and leadership

- Work closely with other researchers in the team to design spatial planning, prioritization, and remote monitoring strategies for the team's restoration projects.
- Lead a cohesive team in the field and in the office to oversee mapping, spatial planning, and monitoring activities.
- Supervise junior team members, thesis students, and/or volunteers.

b. Administration

- Collaborate and develop close working relationships with other CDF departments, including Education, Communications, and Fundraising.
- Work with the Galapagos National Park Directorate (GNPD) and other strategic local partners to achieve the program's objectives.
- Build strong relationships with local stakeholders, including NGOs, educational institutions, government agencies, and community groups. Promote community participation to ensure that the program responds to local needs and the institutional strategy.
- Oversee project activities related to strategic spatial planning and remote monitoring, including work plans and tasks assigned to staff, students, and volunteers.
- Contribute to annual operating plans (POA), annual research proposals for GNPD permit approval, and progress reports as required by authorities and/or donors.
- Develop, strengthen, and implement ecosystem monitoring systems.
- Regularly evaluate and report on project results and impacts.
- Comply with all regulations and field permit requirements established by the Galapagos National Park Directorate (GNPD).

c. Fieldwork

- Collect ground control points and reference data using high-precision GPS.
- Operate drones for monitoring, surveying, and photogrammetric missions in remote and hard-to-access areas.
- Collect data on the occurrence of priority species and ecological dynamics using digital georeferenced data forms and field GIS applications.
- Coordinate workshops and guided field visits with student groups, park rangers, and local communities to develop participatory maps.

d. Data analysis, interpretation of results, and publications

- Represent the organization at academic conferences, workshops, and other national and international events; share project progress and build strategic partnerships with the other researchers involved.
- Lead and contribute to peer-reviewed publications related to restoration efforts undertaken within the project.

e. Fundraising and grants

- Identify funding opportunities to support the long-term continuity of restoration and



monitoring projects, including grant proposal development and suitable philanthropic activities, in close coordination with the fundraising team.

- Seek opportunities to obtain high-resolution satellite imagery and specialized software licenses.
- Write and submit research proposals to secure funding for the restoration program.

Minimum Candidate Profile

Qualifications

- PhD in Geography, Geomatics, or a related discipline.
- At least 5 years of research experience in the field, preferably involving research projects on spatially explicit planning, landscape ecology, and the spatial identification and prioritization of areas of high ecological value or areas for restoration.
- Understanding of the challenges of integrated, multiscale spatial planning in environmental management and sustainability, especially in the Galapagos context.
- A proven publication record, including at least one first-author publication, in environmental geography, strategic spatial planning, remote monitoring, or related fields.
- Experience developing structured metadata and applying geographic data quality standards (ISO 19000 family), including the use of feature catalogs from official Ecuadorian institutions (desirable).
- Demonstrated experience in the design, implementation, and interoperability of environmental and territorial monitoring systems applied to ecosystems (desirable).
- Ability to coordinate the integration of geographic data with National Environmental Information Systems, ensuring their usefulness in monitoring conservation projects (desirable).

Requirements

- Full proficiency (fluency) in spoken and written Spanish and English.
- Excellent writing skills in both languages.

Technical Skills

- Strong experience processing and analyzing satellite and drone imagery.
- Ability to design baselines, monitoring methodologies, and environmental and territorial indicators.
- Advanced proficiency in Python, R, and JavaScript for geospatial data analysis and processing, including the development, optimization, and documentation of scripts to efficiently process large volumes of spatial data.
- Experience processing, structuring, and managing diverse geospatial formats and standards.
- Experience in regression analysis using geographic data, ecological niche modeling, and critical habitat delineation through the integration of environmental variables and field data.
- Experience using platforms such as Google Earth Engine (GEE) and Microsoft Planetary Computer to access, process, and analyze large-scale geospatial data.
- Experience integrating workflows across desktop GIS, analytical environments such as Jupyter and Google Colab, Python libraries, spatial databases, and field data collection tools.
- Ability to implement, optimize, and update machine learning and GeoAI models to



automate and optimize complex geoprocessing workflows and analyze spatial information (desirable).

Soft Skills

- Proven ability to design and articulate a clear research agenda, develop new strategies, and inspire others to generate and implement innovative ideas that support CDF's Science Strategic Plan.
- Ability to work in a dynamic environment offering numerous opportunities as well as unforeseen events and challenges, with limited logistical resources and geographical isolation.
- Willingness to travel frequently and, at times, for extended periods to remote areas of the archipelago.
- Strong teamwork and interpersonal relationship skills.
- Strategic thinking and strong organizational skills.
- Initiative and creativity.

Working Conditions

- The Senior Researcher in Environmental Geography will be based at the Charles Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador.
- Salary and benefits will be negotiated according to the candidate's qualifications.
- The successful candidate is expected to work 40 hours per week, from 07:45 to 12:30 and from 14:00 to 17:15. This schedule may change depending on project activities, such as field trips.
- The researcher must observe and comply with the rules and regulations of the Galapagos National Park.

Why Join the Charles Darwin Foundation

- Join a globally respected, mission-driven organization dedicated to preserving one of the planet's most iconic ecosystems.
- Lead a **unique, innovative, and ambitious restoration initiative** alongside key partner institutions.
- Collaborate with scientists, conservationists, and philanthropists from around the world.
- Help advance vital research and conservation in the Galapagos Islands, with regional and global impact.

Restrictions

Please note that the provincial government of the Galapagos Islands prohibits bringing domestic pets (companion animals) into the Galapagos Islands.

Interested in Applying?

Interested candidates should use the following link to submit their application and the required documents: <https://forms.gle/YhAsFAPpBVDKvedM9>

- A cover letter detailing relevant experience (maximum 2 pages).
- An updated CV.
- Contact details for three professional references (names, email addresses, and telephone numbers).



- Copies of at least two relevant peer-reviewed publications related to this position's description.

For further information, please contact us at: recursos.humanos@fcdarwin.org.ec

Application deadline: November 30, 2026.

The Charles Darwin Foundation is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.