

## Call for applications

### PhD contract in sustainable finance - 2024-2027

Deadline for proposals: May 17, 2024

[Aix-Marseille School of Economics](#) (AMSE) and fintech [WeeFin](#) are offering a three-year PhD contract in the field of sustainable finance. The aim of the PhD project will be to decode and decompose environmental indicators in order to maximize their use, relevance and usefulness for financial players.

The thesis will be carried out under an [French industrial fellowship programme \(CIFRE\)](#) based on a cooperation between WeeFin and AMSE. The PhD student will be enrolled in the [Doctoral School of Economics and Management](#) at the University of Aix-Marseille, and will be part of the [AMSE doctoral program](#). He/she will be based at WeeFin's premises in Paris.

#### Context

The climate crisis has considerably altered the priorities of economic analysis. The new challenges for economics and finance are to deepen our understanding of the economic and financial mechanisms needed to support the ecological transition, and to devise integrated solutions at international level. Faced with the challenges of the energy transition, financial players can no longer confine themselves to maximizing short-term economic profit. The aim of sustainable finance is to develop financial activities that improve the long-term interests of society as a whole. This will require the development of new financial instruments and innovations, with far-reaching implications for markets, investors, intermediaries and companies.

Among the tools available to financial players are *Environmental, Social and Governance* (ESG) criteria. These criteria, along with all the other sustainability indicators, make it possible to analyze and integrate sustainable development and long-term issues into a company's strategy and investment decisions.

#### Issue

Assessing the impact and ambition of a sustainable investment strategy remains a complex process, for several reasons. Firstly, there is no single sustainability indicator that measures all environmental and social realities. Secondly, these indicators, taken separately, remain imperfect (e.g. choice of one methodological approach rather than another, unavailability of raw data, use of estimation models, etc.). Finally, sustainability indicators can be used for a variety of purposes: to guide investment decisions made by financial players, to monitor the achievement of their long-term ambitions, to measure their real impact. These indicators thus link intentions (short-term) to ambitions (long-term) and objectives (real impact). As such, they must be clearly defined and broken down in order to:

- Measure their impact on investment decisions and financial intentions (double materiality: impact and risk);
- Identify and model the key dimensions linking a sustainability indicator to an intention, ambition and objective;
- Measure the relative gap between intention, ambition and objective, in order to identify areas for improvement and warn of greenwashing risks.

#### Tasks

The thesis project will address the following research questions:

- Which sustainability indicators should be chosen to support corporate investment strategies, according to various climate scenarios? In the medium and long term, companies and investors risk misalignment due to insufficient ambition.

- What are the best indicators to help financial players make better investment decisions? In the short term, investors risk misaligning their investment decisions, which could lead to financial controversies.

## WeeFin – AMSE partnership

This call for proposals is part of a WeeFin-AMSE agreement for an industrial fellowship ([CIFRE](#)) funded by the [French ANRT Agency](#):

- ✓ [Aix-Marseille School of Economics \(AMSE\)](#):

AMSE is a center of excellence in economic sciences, comprising a scientific research laboratory and a graduate school in economics & finance (Master, PhD). AMSE's core expertise includes financial market risk analysis from a financial and extra-financial perspective. AMSE's will to specialize in sustainable finance is reflected in the opening of a new master's degree entitled "Financial Risks in Sustainable Finance" (120 ECTS). This offers a new approach to finance, providing a foundation in traditional financial theory with the skills to carry out sustainability and digitization analyses in various sectors: banks, corporations, investment funds, asset managers.

- ✓ [WeeFin start-up](#):

WeeFin is a leading company in the field of sustainable finance, voted "Fintech of the Year 2023" by the French-speaking *Finance Innovation network*. WeeFin supports its institutional customers - asset managers, pension funds, banks - in their drive towards sustainability best practices, thanks to its SaaS technology platform "ESG Connect", which facilitates the collection, aggregation and analysis of ESG data. WeeFin enables financial institutions to deploy and manage ambitious ESG strategies, while meeting regulatory requirements. Based in Paris and London, the company is currently accelerating its development in Europe.

## Thesis supervision

- [AMSE](#) : Christelle Lecourt (thesis director), Sullivan Hué (co-supervisor).
- [WeeFin](#) : Grégoire Hug (CEO), Léo Fargeas (RD Director).

A thesis monitoring committee will be made up of Grégoire Hug and Léo Fargeas (WeeFin), as well as Renaud Bourlès, Christelle Lecourt and Sullivan Hué (AMSE).

The PhD student will work at the WeeFin offices in Paris. Every 3 months, a stay at Aix-Marseille University's School of Economics will enable him/her to take part in the [activities of the AMSE doctoral program](#): back-to-school meetings, doctoral seminars, thematic seminars, training courses.

## Requirements

- Master's degree in finance or economics (or equivalent diploma), at a level comparable to that of AMSE. Students in the process of obtaining a Master's degree may apply (the Master's degree must be awarded in October 2024 at the latest).
- Excellent skills in finance, quantitative techniques (applied mathematics, statistics, econometrics) and programming.
- Fluency in English (written and spoken). Knowledge of French would be a plus.
- No nationality requirement. Candidates may be graduates of Aix-Marseille University or any other university.

## Conditions

A full-time employment contract will be signed with WeeFin, for a period of 3 years. The proposed annual salary is €42,000 (gross, i.e. excluding social security contributions and income tax).

Registration fees for the doctoral degree will amount to €400/year.

## Application documents

- Detailed CV.
- Cover letter.
- Detailed transcripts of Bachelor's and Master's degrees.  
Candidates who do not have their grades for the current year should ensure that their institution sends them directly. The certificate of successful completion of the Master's degree will be sent to the AMSE doctoral program secretariat as soon as it is received.
- At least one letter of recommendation (from someone outside AMSE), sent directly and confidentially to [bernadette.vouriot@univ-amu.fr](mailto:bernadette.vouriot@univ-amu.fr).

## Application procedure

- Please send documents in PDF format no later than **May 17, 2024** to:  
AMSE doctoral program secretariat: [bernadette.vouriot@univ-amu.fr](mailto:bernadette.vouriot@univ-amu.fr)  
The mail must be entitled « FIRST NAME\_LAST NAME\_WEEFIN\_PHD Application ».  
Files must be compiled in the order listed above, as one single PDF file entitled « FIRST NAME\_LAST NAME\_WEEFIN PHD Application.pdf ».
- Selected candidates will be invited to video-conference interviews in June, in the presence of representatives from WeeFin and AMSE.
- Final decisions: **July 8, 2024**

## For more information

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