UGRLS Project Proposal: Livelihoods, ecosystem services and the social relations of conservation in the Dominican Republic

1. Research Project Leader: George Holmes

2. Scholarship Project Supervisor: George Holmes

3. Working title of Scholarship Project: Household surveys on resource use and attitudes to conservation in the Dominican Republic

4. Period of Scholarship Project Work: July- August 2017

5. Summary of the research to which the Scholar will contribute: The creation of protected areas (national parks and reserves) is a key strategy to conserve biodiversity, but they can both benefits and costs to local communities. As yet, we do not fully understand how new kinds of protected area that are emerging might affect local communities, and how local communities might react. This project looks at the shifting relationship between conservation, particularly national parks and other protected areas, and local communities in the Dominican Republic. It would consider how the creation and expansion of protected areas has affected local communities and their livelihoods, particularly by affecting their ability to access ecosystem services, and how local people have been able to influence the rules and strategy of protected areas. It links to parallel research projects in Madagascar.

6. Summary of the work to be undertaken by the Scholar:

   The Scholar would contribute to detailed knowledge of how local communities are interacting with two adjoining protected areas in the southern part of the Dominican Republic. Over two summers, they would undertake household surveys (co-designed by the project leader) of local communities living in and around Jaragua National Park and Sierra de Bahuruco National Park, Dominican Republic, and assist the project leader in undertaking other surveys. These would explore local use of natural resources, local attitudes and experiences of conservation regulations and other related topics. The Scholar would also assist in the analysis of the data from the fieldwork, and writing up the results.

   Students should have excellent Spanish language skills, and a willingness to work independently in rural Latin American settings.

7. Detail of the work to be undertaken by the Scholar: (See no. 8).

   It is expected that the second stage of fieldwork, conducted in summer 2018, would involve a greater degree of independent working. The exact nature of this second stage of research would depend on the outcomes of the first stage of the research

8. Detail of the Leadership development to be undertaken as part of the project:

   The Scholar will be expected, following training and guidance, to undertake research in the rural Dominican Republic, implementing household surveys and other tools. They would in the latter stages be expected to work without immediate supervision, and to deal with any challenges that might emerge from doing research in such a rural context.

9. Outputs expected of the Scholar including the final report:

   At the end of the first stage of fieldwork, it is expected that the research would produce sufficient data to contribute to a paper in a leading scientific journal. This would be co-authored by the project team, including the Scholar. The later stages of fieldwork would lead to further papers.
10. **Details of supervision arrangements**  Prior to departing on fieldwork, it is expected that the Scholar would meet every two weeks (on average) with the project leader or another member of the team to develop their knowledge and understanding. During the first period of fieldwork, the Scholar would initially work alongside the project leader, and subsequently work independently, communicating regularly with the project leader to update progress and developments.

11. **Resources required for the Scholar to undertake the project:**

   The Scholar would require resources to pay for transport (return flights) to the Dominican Republic, as well as internal travel and some accommodation and subsistence costs. It is likely that these may slightly exceed the £1500 budget, in which case additional funding will be sought from the research account of the project leader.