

MSc scholarship: MSc in Aquaculture and Fisheries Management at the Department of Zoology & Environmental Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, with research contributions from the bilateral project between Sri Lanka and Norway

About the position

The two fully funded MSc positions are supported by the bilateral project “Improved management of the marine resources in Sri Lanka, Phase III 2025-2028”, a collaborative research project between the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), Sri Lanka, and the Institute of Marine Research (IMR), Norway. The duration of the 2-year MSc study period will run from August 2025- August 2027. The bilateral project, runs jointly among NARA, the Ministry of Fisheries, Aquatic and Ocean Resources and the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR) in Sri Lanka

About the 2- year MSc degree

During the first year, the program will include lectures, seminars, assignments, laboratory work, field studies and outreach.

During the second year, each candidate is expected to carry out a research project of 12 months duration on a selected topic for the MSc thesis, under the supervision of a senior member of the academic staff at the University of Kelaniya, and senior research scientists at NARA and/or IMR.

The University of Kelaniya offers:

A full-time course in M.Sc. Degree in Aquaculture and Fisheries Management conducted by the Department of Zoology & Environmental Management of the University of Kelaniya. This course has been designed to provide adequate scientific knowledge and thorough training in the fields of aquaculture and fisheries management and promote sustainable management practices, tools, and novel techniques for the different aspects of aquaculture and fisheries.

The duration of the M. Sc. course is two academic years **(24 months/SLQF level 10)**. The medium of instruction is in **English**. During the two-year period the student is required to earn a total of at least **60 credits** of which at least 30 credits should be earned each year.

For more information see the below given link:

[Department of Zoology and Environmental Management - MSc in Fisheries and Aquaculture](#)

The bilateral project offers:

In addition to financial support, the bilateral project offers samples/data and guidance related to the research topics given below. The data obtained by the research surveys in Sri Lanka and FAO operated vessel “R/V Dr. Fridjof Nansen” will be made available for the MSc thesis upon request.

- i) **Environmental monitoring** – physical and chemical oceanography, drivers of primary productivity e.g. upwelling - climate impact studies
- ii) **Identification of vital spawning and nursery grounds of key fish species** - ichthyoplankton (fish eggs and larvae) diversity (morphological and molecular approaches), distribution, and reproductive biology
- iii) **Fish biology and ecology** - abundance, distribution, diversity (morphological and molecular approaches), distribution, and their key drivers
- iv) **Catch statistics from fishing fleets** – changes in species composition, length distributions, catch per unit effort (CPUE)
- v) **Data explorations** – visualization and statistical analyses

A co-supervisor from Norway specialized on the above themes will be appointed.

The project will cover all expenses involved in fulfilling the MSc degree. Further, a 1-month travel to Norway (for each of the candidates), in the 2nd years of the MSc (2026-2027) is included in this offer upon successful completion of the 1st year.

Required qualifications

A Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree with Second-Class Honors in Biology, Fisheries & Marine Sciences or in related fields.

The applicant should be a permanent employee at NARA, Ministry of Fisheries, or DFAR.

Desired skills

- Experience in fish biology and ecology
- Skills in statistical analyses e.g. basic programming R skills or similar programs
- Ambition to publish high-quality articles in peer-reviewed journals
- Ability to work independently and effectively as a member of an interdisciplinary scientific team
- Goal-oriented and proactive on progress reporting
- Strong practical, analytical and writing skills in English

We offer:

- A full study package (admission and tuition fees) of the MSc candidate. The funds will be directly transferred to the University of Kelaniya
- An allowance of approximately 735,000 LKR will be paid for accommodation and living expenses during the one month stay in Norway. Travel costs will be covered by the bilateral project.
- The project will assist in finding accommodation in Norway during the period of the candidate's stay
- A challenging, creative, and international working environment within one of Europe's leading marine research institutions

Additional information

A committee consisting of three representatives from NARA, IMR, and an independent University will evaluate and rank the applicants. Preference will be given to candidates involved in the bilateral project. The project is committed to create an inclusive environment that values diversity and gender balance, hence, encourage all appropriate candidates to apply. The candidates selected should sign a contract with the respective institutions on agreed terms (commitments and guarantees) to fulfilling the MSc degree.

For more information and questions on the application process, contact Dr. Prabath Jayasinghe (Head, Marine Biological Resources Division, NARA, Colombo 15), mobile + 94 71 4415788; prabath_jayasinghe@yahoo.com

Applications should be submitted electronically via email to Dr. Prabath Jayasinghe with the following attachments through official channel.

- Cover letter summarizing relevant skills and motivation to apply for the MSc position (1 page)
- CV (summarizing education, positions and academic/research work and scientific publications)
- Certified copies of the Bachelor's degree, transcripts of records
- Two letters of recommendation
- A copy of the Bachelor's degree thesis
- Copies of publications and academic/research work that the applicant wishes the evaluation committee to review
- Names and contact details of 2 references (name, relationship to the candidate, e-mail and telephone number)
- Letter giving full permission to participate in the 2-year MSc course from the candidates host institution in Sri Lanka

- The bilateral project does not provide any financial support during the study period in Sri Lanka.

The application submission to the MSc fellowships is a twostep process:

Initial submission: deadline for the bilateral project application submission: 20th July 2025

Final submission: deadline for the University of Kelaniya application submission: 7th August 2025

Final selection will be carried out by the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. The two candidates selected by the bilateral project are requested to forward their formal applications to the University of Kelaniya before the deadline of 7th August 2025. A copy of the application submitted to the University of Kelaniya should also be sent to email: prabath_jayasinghe@yahoo.com.