2019 IIASA/NERC Collaborative Research Fellowships

Announcement of Opportunity

Three year Research Fellowships

Issued on: 29th May 2019
Full Applications deadline: 16:00 on 7th August 2019

1. Summary

The IIASA & NERC collaborative research Fellowships programme provides three years of support for promising young researchers to deliver challenging research and support the development of long-term collaborative working relationships between the UK and International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) research communities.

Fellows will be expected to spend their time equally between their UK research organisation and IIASA over the lifetime of their award. In addition to completing a programme of research linked to the remits of both NERC and IIASA, fellows will be required to undertake network-building activities to establish sustainable, collaborative and interdisciplinary relationships between UK and IIASA researchers. Fellows are to be supported in these activities by a senior researcher who will act as both mentor to the fellow and help to facilitate network-building activities.

It is expected that this announcement will lead to the funding of at least two fellowships that addresses the scope of the programme. Up to £1m is available for this call.

Normal individual eligibility applies and is in section C of the NERC Grants Handbook.

The closing date for proposals is 16:00 on 7th August 2019.

2. Background

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Background

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is part of UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), and is the UK’s main body for funding and managing research in the environmental sciences. NERC supports some of the best environmental science research in the world as well as essential PhD training and innovation programmes to ensure that the UK is able to take full advantage of the wealth of scientific knowledge that it creates. NERC invests £330
million in research and innovation each year, tackling major issues such as climate change, environmental influences on human health, the genetic make-up of life on Earth, and much more. NERC’s research and innovation covers the full range of atmospheric, Earth, biological, terrestrial and aquatic sciences, from the deep oceans to the upper atmosphere and from the poles to the equator.

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
IIASA was established in 1972 as an independent international research organisation based in Austria. IIASA’s interdisciplinary research focuses on finding solutions to the complex, interconnected global problems confronting humanity ranging from achieving global food security to transitioning to sustainable energy systems. Underpinning these studies is systems analysis - one of the few research tools with the breadth and depth to explore complex problems across multiple sectors, countries, and timeframes.

The United Kingdom joined the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in June 2015, represented by the three research councils, the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC), the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), and NERC.

UK national interests are integrally connected to complex global systems that impinge on the country, its economy, and its people. Current collaborations between IIASA and the UK are enhancing UK expertise in developing and applying systems analysis especially integrated assessment models. Establishing multinational and multidisciplinary teams of researchers is a key building block in IIASA’s work and a number of such collaborations currently exist.

However, to ensure the long-term future of UK expertise in this area and build on successes to date, it is important that the next generation of research leaders receive appropriate support. These researchers must not only have the opportunity to undertake challenging and interdisciplinary research but also be equipped with the skills, experience and connections to deliver impact at the international level at which many challenges exist. To be effective, these researchers must be part of a connected, sustainable and collaborative research community operating across borders and disciplines.

This programme is to support the development of excellent early career researchers working across both NERC and IIASA remits, and to build and foster long-term collaborative relationships between the NERC and IIASA research communities. All Fellowships will be in research areas within the joint scope of NERC and IIASA and have a demonstrable connection with the evidence and understanding needs of UK and global policy.

This Fellowships programme is currently restricted to applications within NERC remit but future UKRI-level activities may arise depending on the success of this programme.

### 3. Scope

Programme objectives
The overarching objective of this call is to support the development of excellent early career researchers working across NERC and IIASA remits and to work towards establishing long-term collaborative links between the wider NERC and IIASA research communities beyond the lifetime of these awards. This Fellowship programme has been developed by NERC and IIASA to:

i. Support the development of skills for early career environmental scientists in a subset of systems analysis and applied statistics in topics of relevance to policy.

ii. Build and foster sustainable collaborative, interdisciplinary relationships between the UK and IIASA research communities.

iii. Develop and support capacity building of interdisciplinary systems researchers that could establish themselves as the next generation of research leaders working across both NERC and IIASA remits.

The research proposal should include information on how the project will benefit from the research environments of both institutions and how the proposal interfaces the fellow’s own research interests with the remit of NERC and within the IIASA research agenda.

Applicants must consider the above programme objectives when preparing their application.

**Application requirements**

This programme will support research Fellowships for early career researchers in areas of relevance to both NERC and IIASA research remits. All awards will be of three years’ duration and will be held at eligible UK research organisations following a competitive application process delivered by NERC in collaboration with IIASA.

Applicants will be required to deliver a programme of collaborative research across their award-holding UK research organisation and IIASA, making use of IIASA facilities, resources, and collaborative relationships to deliver their research. Applicants must also undertake a programme of network building activities alongside their research with the intention of fostering long-term collaborative relationships between their UK research community and IIASA.

To ensure these awards are truly collaborative, all fellows will be required to split their time between IIASA and their UK host institution over the lifetime of their award.

The fellow is encouraged to spend up to 50% of the fellowship at IIASA and as a minimum they will need to spend at least one year of the fellowship at IIASA. The fellow’s time at IIASA can be organised as one continuous stay or split into various shorter stays.

All applicants will be required to demonstrate within their application the commitment of a UK-based senior researcher who will both support them as a fellow in the role of a mentor, and also actively contribute to the development and success of collaborative activities between the UK and IIASA research communities. Further information concerning the
person specification for this position and the funding available to support the involvement of the senior researcher is detailed in Section 5.2 below.

All applicants will be required to demonstrate within their application the commitment of an IIASA research program which will support and mentor them during their time at IIASA. Once applicants have formulated a draft outline of their research for the Fellowship, the applicant should contact the relevant IIASA research program representative to discuss its fit with the IIASA research agenda and obtain a letter of support from the IIASA research program director which must be included with the final application. This document should be submitted using the Letter of Support attachment.

Applicants are expected to address how they will achieve the above activities over the lifetime of their award within the Case for Support section of their application.

4. Programme requirements

4.1 Programme funding

£1M is available to support research Fellowships through this call. Each Fellowship application can request up to £480k (80% fEC).

4.2 Implementation and delivery

All Fellowship awards must have commenced by June 2020. A timetable of the call process is available at the bottom of this document.

All Fellowships supported through this call will be of three years full-time duration.

All Fellowships may be held full or part-time and NERC welcomes applications from candidates who wish to work on a part-time/flexible basis in order to combine domestic responsibilities with a career. The duration of a Fellowship award will be adjusted to accommodate any extensions required as a result of any periods of part-time working.

The fellow is encouraged to spend up to 50% of the fellowship at IIASA and as a minimum they will need to spend at least one year of the fellowship at IIASA. The fellow's time at IIASA can be organised as one continuous stay or split into various shorter stays.

In addition to undertaking their research programme, all Fellowship award holders will be required to lead on network-building activities between their UK research community and IIASA researchers. Applicants are not expected to operate across all of NERC and IIASA remits when undertaking these activities and can focus on linking the research communities relevant to their expertise. However, it is expected that network-building activities will be cognisant of opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and look to engage with these communities where possible to maximise the impact of any programme of network building.
Network-building activities, their legacy, and the role of the fellow in delivering them must be detailed within the Case for Support section of the application. Funding can be requested to support these activities.

All Fellowship applicants will be required to demonstrate within their application the commitment of a senior academic who will both support the fellow in the role of a mentor, and also actively contribute to the development and success of network-building activities between the UK and IIASA research communities. Fellows may request up to a maximum 0.05 FTE of senior researcher time over the lifetime of the Fellowship award to assist with network building. The salary cost for the senior researcher should be included under “Other – Directly Incurred” section on the JeS form. The Estates and Indirect costs associated with the senior researcher should be included in the usual sections of the JeS form. Funding may be requested to cover Travel and Subsistence costs of the Senior Researcher; these costs should be included in the usual sections of the JeS form. All costs associated with the senior researcher must be clearly justified within the Justification of Resources document.

All Fellowship applicants will be required to demonstrate within their application the commitment of an IIASA research program to support and mentor the fellow while they are at IIASA. Funding for the time of the IIASA mentor does not need to be requested as these costs are provided as part of IIASA’s contribution in-kind to the Fellowship.

4.3 Knowledge Exchange and Impact

Knowledge exchange (KE) is vital to ensure that environmental research has wide benefits for society, and should be an integral part of any research.

All applicants must consider how they will or might achieve impact outside the scientific community and submit this with their application as a Pathways to Impact statement, with associated delivery costs where relevant. Pathways to Impact activities do not have to be cost-incurring; it is not a requirement to include funded activities. Any funds required to carry out any proposed, outcome-driven activities identified within the Pathways to Impact must be fully justified within the Justification of Resources statement.

The Pathways to Impact will identify those who may benefit from or make use of the research, how they might benefit or make use of the research, and methods for disseminating data, knowledge and skills in the most effective and appropriate manner.

An acceptable Pathways to Impact is a condition of funding. Grants will not be allowed to start unless unacceptable Pathways to Impact are enhanced to an acceptable level within 1 month of notification of the panel outcome.

4.4 Data Management

The NERC Data Policy and IIASA data policy must be adhered to, and an outline data management plan produced as part of application development. NERC will pay the data centre directly on behalf of the programme for archival and curation services, but applicants should ensure they request sufficient resource to cover preparation of data for archiving by the research team.
4.5 NERC Facilities

Prior to submitting a proposal, applicants wishing to use a NERC service or facility must contact the facility to seek agreement that they could provide the service required. Applicants wishing to use most NERC facilities will need to submit a mandatory ‘technical assessment’ with their proposal. This technical assessment is required for aircraft but not for NERC Marine Facilities (NMF – Shiptime and/or marine equipment) and HPC. For NERC, this means a quote for the work which the facility will provide. A full list of the Facilities requiring this quote can be found on the NERC website. The costs for the service or facility (excluding NMF and HPC costs) must be included within the Directly Incurred Other Costs section of the Je-S form and also within the facilities section of the Je-S form. Further information on NERC services and facilities can be found on the NERC website.

4.6 IIASA Facilities

Successful applicants will be part of the IIASA guest scholarship program which provides visiting guest scholars with office space, IT equipment and support, Library services, secretarial support in programs, support to find housing in Austria, and support to receive the necessary legal permissions for any nationality to live and work in Austria for the period of the Fellowship. Funding for all of the above does not need to be requested as these costs are provided as part of IIASA’s contribution in-kind to the Fellowship.

For their time at IIASA, applicants will need to budget for the following mandatory cost: (1) health insurance and accident insurance while at IIASA; (2) travel to and from IIASA at the beginning and end of stay(s), plus shipment of personal effects and scientific materials if required. In addition, the applicants should consider budgeting for the following optional costs: (1) travel and attendance at conferences and workshops outside of IIASA as these will facilitate international network building activities;

Please note IIASA does not do lab-type research nor do its researchers typically undertake field work, therefore neither of these activities are available at IIASA. Applicants should also understand that they are not eligible for any Austrian social security benefits during their time at IIASA.

4.7 Reporting requirements

As with all NERC grant holders, there will be a requirement to report research outcomes through UKRI reporting systems; this is required annually and continues for up to five years post grant end.

4.8 Publication output

The IIASA Open Access Publications Policy must be adhered to and requires all researchers at IIASA to deposit a complete version of each peer-reviewed research article that they author into the IIASA institutional repository (PURE) to make it freely accessible within 12 months of its online publication date.
1. Application process

Closing Date: 7th August 2019

Full application must be submitted using the Research Councils’ Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). Applicants should select Application Type - ‘Fellowship Application’ and then select the Scheme – ‘Research Fellowship’ and the Call – ‘IIASA NERC Research Fellowships 2019’.

The call will close on Je-S at 4pm GMT on 7th August 2019 and it will not be possible to submit to the call after this time. Applicants should leave enough time for their application to pass through their organisation’s Je-S submission route before this date. Any application that is incomplete, or does not meet NERC’s eligibility criteria or follow NERC’s submission rules (see NERC Grants Handbook), will be office rejected and will not be considered.

All attachments, with the exception of letters of support and services/facilities/equipment quotes, submitted through the Je-S system must be completed in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any application which has used either of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11-point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the scientific case. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them.

Applicants should ensure that their application conforms to all eligibility and submission rules, otherwise their application may be rejected without peer review. More details on NERC’s submission rules can be found in the NERC research grant and Fellowships handbook and in the submission rules on the NERC website.

Applications for this call should be submitted in Fellowship Grants format following the requirements outlined in Section F of the NERC research grant and Fellowships handbook.

Please note that on submission to council ALL non-PDF documents are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

Additionally where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc), the document should be converted to PDF prior to attaching it to the application.

No associated studentships can be requested under this call.

5.2 Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants are expected to hold a doctorate by the start date of the Fellowship or to be able to demonstrate equivalent research experience and/or training.
These Fellowships are for early career researchers who are transitioning to / establishing independence. Senior researchers are not permitted to apply.

There are no eligibility rules based on years since PhD.

Applicants should not have a permanent academic position (or equivalent in institutions other than universities).

Applicants should use the person specification detailed in Table 1 to assess and justify their suitability for the scheme with reference to the objectives of the programme. Applicants must clearly demonstrate these criteria within the Case for Support section of their application and will be assessed for their fit to programme objectives.

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<th>Factor:</th>
<th>What the assessment will look for:</th>
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| Research & Innovation Excellence | • Excellence of the research and innovation  
• Importance, novelty and feasibility of the proposed programme of work  
• Overall potential of the Fellowship to establish or maintain a distinctive and outstanding research/innovation activity |
| Applicant & their Development | • Be recognised to be of high standard relative to their career stage and on a trajectory to become a world-class research leader  
• Clear evidence of independence and thought leadership  
• Demonstrate an ability to be a clear communicator and disseminator of knowledge and innovation; and ability to develop new relationships and influence across multiple disciplines and sectors  
• A broad understanding of the research / innovation landscape at both the national and international level |
| Impact & Strategic Relevance | • Importance and potential impact of the research / innovation for society and / or the economy  
  o What are the potential short or long-term impacts?  
  o Are the pathways to achieving this impact well understood? |

Senior Researcher

The Senior Researcher is expected to be of sufficient standing within their community to facilitate and support the achievement of significant outcomes with regards network building between the NERC and IIASA research communities. They will be required to support the fellow when planning and delivering the proposed network building activities and act as a key contact point between the communities to bring these groups together, and establish long-term and sustainable relationships.
In addition, the Senior Researcher must support the fellow in the role of mentor throughout the lifetime of their Fellowship award. A key objective of these Fellowships is to establish award holders as recognised independent researchers and leaders within their field so mentorship must be appropriate to facilitate this. The suitability of the Senior Researcher to act as mentor and the steps to be taken to support this relationship must be detailed within the application Case for Support. The Senior Researcher should also provide a letter of support confirming their role as mentor for the fellow.

*UK Research Organisation*
NERC research and Fellowship grants for all schemes may be held at approved UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), approved Research Council Institutes (RCIs) and approved Independent Research Organisations (IROs). Full details of approved RCIs and IROs can be found on the UKRI website.

Applicants may be involved in no more than one application submitted to this call in the role of fellow. Senior researchers may be involved in any number of applications in the role of mentor and network-building facilitator.

2. **Assessment Process**

The assessment process for applications to this programme will be considered using a two-stage assessment process.

All applications received will be assessed by independent experts through an assessment panel process. An expert panel of international experts, IIASA researchers and members of the NERC Peer Review College will review submitted applications and make recommendations on which should go forward to the next stage. Applicants will be notified whether or not their application will progress to the second stage.

For applications put forward to the second stage the applicants will be invited to an interview panel, where they will have the opportunity to present their research proposal and discuss their research and professional development with the panel.

The assessment criteria to be used are detailed below:

- Research Excellence
- Suitability of Applicant
- Impact and Strategic Relevance

Feedback will be provided to both successful and unsuccessful applicants following the stage of assessment at which a decision is made concerning their application.

NERC and IIASA will use the recommendations of the interview panel along with the overall call requirements and the available budget in making the final funding decisions.

3. **Timetable**

Summary of key dates:
• Announcement published: 29th May 2019
• Deadline for submission of full applications: 7th August 2019
• Assessment panel meeting: w/c 30th September
• Interview panel meets: w/c 18th November 2019
• Latest start date for projects: June 2020

4. Contact

For all enquiries, please contact Fellowships@nerc.ukri.org

For general enquiries about postdocs at IIASA: Aleksandra Cofala at cofaleks@iiasa.ac.at

To discuss research proposals with IIASA research programs, please select the relevant person from this list:
http://www.iiasa.ac.at/web/home/education/postdoctoralProgram/Apply/Post_Doc_Program_Representatives.en.html