



Cabinet Office



## **Knowledge Exchange Fellow**

Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) / Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS)

**Information Webinar: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

**J-es Closing date: 4pm Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**Interview date: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018**

### **1. Summary**

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), in partnership with the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) of the Cabinet Office, is inviting applications for a Knowledge Exchange (KE) Fellowship, which will address how policy makers in the resilience and national security fields can draw on NERC science to protect the people of the UK.

The Fellowship offers an opportunity to work at the heart of national risk assessment and resilience policy-making, working within the National Risks team, which leads on the National Risk Assessment (NRA) and National Risk Register (NRR). The Fellow's role will be to

- identify opportunities where environmental science can enhance national risk assessment and inform resilience and security policy challenges,
- strengthen access to and uptake of science, enabling existing and emerging scientific knowledge to be rapidly and effectively translated for policy makers, and
- develop and foster sustainable connections between CCS, NERC and the wider environmental science community to inform future collaboration, investment and ensure the latest science continues to inform policy-making.

The Fellow will enable CCS to take into account the latest environmental science, demonstrating the value and impact of environmental science within national risk assessment and resilience policy making. In addition, the Fellow will create sustainable links between CCS, NERC and the wider environmental science community to enable better alignment with the needs of the resilience practitioner community.

The Fellowship is for a senior environmental scientist for a 2-year period initially, with a possibility of extension. The Fellow will spend most of their Fellowship time within CCS offices in London. The Fellow will be funded by NERC, at 80%FEC, with considerable in-kind contributions from the Cabinet Office. The Fellow will remain employed by their present employer.

An information webinar will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 to introduce the work of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and to explain the requirements and aims of the fellowship.

**The closing date for applications is 4pm on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

## **2. Policy context**

The Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) sits within the National Security Secretariat in the Cabinet Office and works in partnership with government departments, agencies, the devolved administrations and a wide range of external stakeholders (including international partners) to enhance the UK's ability to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from civil emergencies. The CCS has a reputation as a global leader in the field of risk management and emergency response.

CCS provides advice and briefing to the Prime Minister and the National Security Adviser on the UK's resilience and, particularly during a civil emergency, on response and recovery measures. CCS also operates the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) crisis management facility.

CCS' policy responsibilities with particular relevance to this role are:

- The National Risk Assessment (NRA) and National Risk Register (NRR) which identify and assess risks to national safety and security arising from terrorism, major industrial accidents and natural hazards, over 5 years.
- The National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA), which identifies global risks to UK security interests over a 5 to 20 year timeframe.
- Leading a cross-government resilience capabilities programme to improve public sector response to such emergencies.
- Development of policy for secure and resilient national infrastructure, and corporate resilience in the private sector.

The purpose of the National Risk Assessment (NRA) is to inform how the UK develops its capability to cope with and recover from events severe enough to be civil emergencies. The NRA informs many aspects of Government policy, including the National Resilience Capabilities Programme and local response planning. It is reviewed and produced biennially and is made available to the public via the National Risk Register.

The NRA is a key conduit of science into policy, particularly environmental science. Several of the most significant risks relate to the environment - floods, Icelandic volcanic eruptions, long cold or hot spells, and space weather. It is vital that robust, science-based evidence informs the approach to risk assessment and resilience policy-making. The NRA continues to develop and improve to take account of changes in the theory and practice of risk assessment, the needs of users as well as our understanding of the underlying science. The Fellow will enable CCS to take into account the latest environmental science and feed directly into further improvement of the NRA.

CCS works closely with the Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA) and the Government Office for Science (GO-Science) who draw in expertise from the wider science community to inform government policy on resilience issues. The Knowledge Exchange Fellow will therefore also work closely with GO-Science, who will play a role in the recruitment of the Fellow and in the development and realisation of a plan of work.

## **3. Fellowship role and outcomes**

This appointment is for a senior environmental scientist to act as a Knowledge Exchange Fellow embedded in the National Risks team at Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS), which forms part of the Cabinet Office's National Security Secretariat.

The Fellowship offers an opportunity to work at the heart of national risk assessment and resilience & security policy-making by playing a central role in helping CCS improve scientific input into policy development and contributing directly to the National Risk Assessment.

The Fellow will:

- identify opportunities where environmental science can enhance national risk assessment and inform resilience and security policy challenges;
- strengthen access to and uptake of science, enabling existing and emerging scientific knowledge to be rapidly and effectively translated for policy makers; and
- develop and foster sustainable connections between CCS, NERC, GO-science and the wider environmental science community to inform future collaboration, investment and ensure the latest science continues to inform resilience policy-making.

It is envisaged that the successful applicant will work with CCS to develop a work plan for the Fellowship, which will involve activities such as:

- improving the visibility of current science input into the work of the CCS and working with senior management within CCS to better understand the science needs of the directorate,
- identifying where research/expertise from the environmental science community can address these science needs and support national risk assessment,
- strengthening and maximising the value of mechanisms through which CCS access science expertise (e.g. by guiding CCS on how to scope the right question to ask, how to frame the exchange and how to validate and quality assure the outputs),
- mapping current links between CCS, NERC, GO-science and the wider environmental science community (including the Natural Hazards Partnership) and contributing to a more coordinated approach to the use of science evidence in resilience policy-making,
- identifying opportunities for NERC and the other Research Councils to better align their activities with the needs of the resilience practitioner community,
- contributing to improvements in specific areas identified by the CCS such as: understanding the likelihood of various risk scenarios; addressing cognitive biases, operationalising and quantifying uncertainties in risk assessments, identifying analytical frameworks and models to better understand interactions in complex systems; commissioning risk scenarios. (It is noted this will depend on the specific skills and experience of the successful candidate.)

Outcomes of the Fellowship should include:

- improved access, uptake of, and use of environmental science by the CCS enabling them to take into account the latest environmental science and be a more informed user of science;
- demonstrable contribution of environmental science to the robustness of the NRA and the National Security Risk Assessment, showcasing the value and impact of NERC science;
- an improved understanding of the current risk picture which will help protect the people of the UK at home and in our Overseas Territories, and cement the UK's reputation as a global lead in disaster risk assessment; and
- sustainable strategic links between NERC Research & Innovation, CCS and GO-Science, which enable and inform future collaboration.

A position inside the Cabinet Office provides a unique vantage point from which to observe the making and enacting of policy in the UK. It will transform the understanding of any scientist interested in the use of science in policy. In addition, work on the National Risk Assessment and resilience capability building is intellectually challenging and socially rewarding. The post-holder will broaden their knowledge of environmental science, and also cultivate a wide range of contacts in UK science and policy. Finally, they will be able to identify research topics that combine feasibility and impact, to develop into a portfolio of research.

#### **4. Skills & experience**

Applicants are expected to hold senior level posts (at Professorial level or equivalent). The successful applicant should have a strong scientific background with good understanding of the policy-making process. Excellent inter-personal and communication skills are particularly important, as the working at the centre of government in the Cabinet Office involves a fair amount of partnering and influencing in order to deliver cross-government priorities through a vast network of stakeholders.

Other skills the ideal candidate will possess are:

- experience / capability of working at a senior level and ability to draw on specialist knowledge and understanding of the broader research base, to help shape policy;
- expert knowledge and research experience in natural hazards or other areas of high complexity and uncertainty, such as climate science;
- excellent communication, networking, influencing, negotiating and facilitation skills;
- ability to work strategically across policy disciplines and an appreciation of the policy context of research;
- good written communication skills and experience in communicating orally and in writing to a lay audience;
- an ability to translate science knowledge to policy makers and policy evidence needs into scientific projects;
- ability to build, maintain and promote effective partnerships; and
- strong analytical skills to recognise what science-policy linkages have the most impact potential, and interpret key policy needs that NERC science can address.

Technical knowledge of resilience and national security is not required.

The funders will consider appointing a less experienced applicant (below Professorial level) provided they have a track record in science research relevant to the work of CCS, several years' experience in a permanent academic position, and experience of the science-policy interface.

As the Fellow will have access to sensitive information, the successful candidate will need to undergo a vetting process in order to achieve the appropriate level of national security clearance. More information on the vetting process can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

#### **5. Eligibility & Funding**

The applicant must be resident in the UK and be employed by an eligible UK Research Organisation (Higher Education Institution, Research Council Institute or a recognised Independent Research Organisation) as stated in the [NERC Research Grants Handbook](#).

This fellowship will be paid at 80% FEC, as per the standard research council approach (please refer to the NERC grants handbook). Salary, travel, subsistence and overheads can be included in the costs applied for. Capital costs and equipment will not be covered. This Fellowship can request additional funding for specific workshops/events once the grant is underway and the workplan has been agreed.

Applications can be for between 50% and 80% FTE, and the successful applicant will be expected to spend most of their Fellowship time within the CCS offices in London. There is flexibility in the timing of these periods in CCS offices to accommodate the Fellows existing commitments.

The Cabinet Office will provide the following:

- working space for the Fellow within the Civil Contingencies Secretariat;
- access to the required ICT infrastructure and to Cabinet Office information;
- HM Government security vetting sponsorship (including covering associated costs) – it is expected that the Fellow will undergo at least Security Check (SC) clearance, with the option for undergoing Developed Vetting (DV) if required;
- access to relevant networks of stakeholders from across HM Government; and
- a senior policy adviser acting as knowledge translator to assist the fellow in maximising the impact of the placement.

## 6. Reporting

The Fellow will work closely with CCS and GO-science through regular meetings and report to CCS and NERC at bi-lateral meetings twice per year. In addition, the fellow will need to provide a written report to NERC on a yearly basis and via ResearchFish to capture impact and outcomes. The Fellow may also be asked to provide information for NERC's needs e.g. publications or be invited to talk about their experiences at NERC events.

NERC KE Fellows are required to operate as part of a network of KE Fellows that encompasses both Open and Directed KE Fellows. The successful applicant will be expected to link with other NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellows to share best practice and to participate in the NERC Knowledge Exchange Network, which meets once or twice a year (travel for these can be costed into the proposal). A mentoring service and training is available. Current Knowledge Exchange Fellows are listed on the KE Fellows webpage.

## 7. How to Apply

Applications should be submitted through the [Joint electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#).

**Select Council: NERC**

**Select Document Type: Fellowship Proposal**

**Select Scheme: Knowledge Exchange Fellowship**

**Select Call/Type Mode: KE Fellows (open call)**

The specific fellowship being applied for should be clearly indicated on the project title section of the application form ('Cabinet Office High level KE fellowship').

All attachments, except those provided by 3rd parties, must comply with the agreed font and type styles (Minimum Font: pt11 Arial).

### The attachments we require are:

- **Case for support** – Please describe the challenges and opportunities that working at the science-policy interface brings and indicate how your experience and skills will enable you to address these. (4 sides A4 max)
- **CV** – please attach your CV (2 sides A4 max)
- **Justification of Resources** – (2 sides A4 max) explain what you need funds for. You may not know what costs the KE Fellowship will incur because to a large extent it will depend upon the work plan agreed in collaboration with NERC and CCS. These Fellowships can request to have their budgets increased after the Fellowship is underway if it is required.
- **Head of Department Statement** – (2 sides A4 max) It is helpful for the selection panel if the HoD's statement can explain where the KE Fellow would fit into broader university department or school KE objectives and existing partnerships. It does not necessarily need to be the HoD, someone who can give a strategic viewpoint will also be suitable. This supporting person may need to attend the interview with the applicant or be available at the end of a phone.
- **Work plan** – Please upload a blank document, as the work plan will be agreed between the successful applicant and CCS once the fellowship starts.
- **Letters of Support** – Please upload a blank document

**The closing date for applications is 4pm on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018.** Please ensure that all of the guidance and links to supporting information are read in advance of making the application.

### 8. Interview and Assessment Process

Applications will be processed within NERC and prepared for an interview panel. Short-listed applicants will be invited for interview.

Applicants will be assessed based on evidence of their experience and competencies, as described in this Announcement of Opportunity, and on their performance at interview.

### 9. Information webinar

An information webinar will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 to introduce the work of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and to explain the requirements and aims of the fellowship. There will be opportunities to ask questions. Please email Katie Hart if you would like to join ([katrt@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:katrt@nerc.ac.uk)). Attendance at webinar is not a pre-requisite for funding.

### 10. Timetable

Information webinar: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Closing dates for applications: 4pm on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Interviews: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018

Results: End February 2018

Expected start date of Fellowship: ASAP after the interviews, to be negotiated with successful applicant.

## 11. Contacts

For further information on the role, contact: Nestor Alfonzo Santamaria, Senior Risk Policy Adviser, Civil Contingencies Secretariat (e: [NationalRisks@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:NationalRisks@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk), t: 0207 276 6371) or Ruth Hughes, Senior Programme Manager, NERC (e: [rugh@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:rugh@nerc.ac.uk), t: 07876 545945)

For queries on NERC KE Fellow scheme: Katie Hart, NERC (e: [katrt@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:katrt@nerc.ac.uk), t: 07825 342519)