



## **OPPORTUNITY FOR A HIGH-LEVEL NERC / SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT POLICY PLACEMENT FELLOWSHIP**

**Improving the uptake and impact of NERC science into / and on Scottish Government (Rural and Environmental Science and Analytical Services) policy and practice.**

Closing date: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Interview date: w/c 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015

### **The Appointment**

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Scottish Government's Rural and Environmental Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) division are seeking a senior member of the environmental science community to take on a key role linking NERC science with policymaking at the highest level.

This part-time senior Fellow will act as a conduit between NERC and the Scottish Government, working to improve knowledge exchange by developing and implementing processes to identify, translate and feed-in NERC's research to the Scottish Government policy and practice in a timely and appropriate manner, prioritising areas which will have most impact on policymaking and practice. The Fellowship will be for a 12-month period initially, and the Fellow will be expected to spend most of their fellowship time (approx. 3 days per week) in Scottish Government offices. The structure of Scottish Government's Rural and Environmental Science and Analytical Services division is found in Annex A.

This post is being offered as part of the NERC policy placement fellowship scheme aimed at supporting the science-to-policy processes between government departments and NERC. To support this aim, the post-holder will be expected to interact on a regular basis with NERC's Policy Innovation Manager and other key NERC staff including Heads of Discipline, other relevant Innovation Managers and NERC scientists.

Policy placement fellows have proved most valuable, significantly enhancing links between NERC science and evidence and policy teams in government and regulatory bodies, and enabling better evidence-based policymaking in specific areas.

Based in RESAS, the Fellowship will have opportunities to work closely with both the Chief Scientist, Rural Affairs, Food and Environment, as well as two key Policy Directorates - Environment & Forestry, and Agriculture, Food and Rural Communities, focussing on areas where NERC research and capabilities can be utilised to deliver the highest potential impact, and how SG, its partners, and NERC can strengthen those connections both now and in the future..

The placement will be jointly funded by NERC and Scottish Government. The Fellow will remain employed by their present employer. The fellowship will cover salary costs (see guidance notes for details) and arrangements will be made to cover reasonable travel and subsistence expenses. The award is managed under the NERC KE Policy Placement Scheme which aims to promote knowledge exchange between academic organisations and public sector partner organisations and to provide partner organisations with research-informed evidence to develop and review policy.

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/schemes/placements/>

### **Job Purpose and Description**

The main purpose of the role is to strengthen the uptake of science into policy such that existing and emerging scientific knowledge is rapidly and effectively translated for policymakers. It will also provide an

important mechanism for Scottish Government policy needs to feed back into NERC strategy and will assist in NERC's strategic planning and scoping of partnership activities within the SG and its agencies.

The successful applicant will need to work with Scottish Government and NERC staff at the highest level to:

- a. benefit Scottish Government by making improved and maintaining connections to sources of evidence across the NERC community;
- b. benefit NERC by identifying key policy needs to ensure better uptake and impact of its science; and
- c. forge longer-term, high-level strategic links and engagement framework between SG and NERC.

This approach will help ensure that NERC and SG benefit from the development of long term relationships across their communities at the highest level between policymakers and scientists, and a step change in the Scottish Government/NERC partnership - putting into practice LWEC principles of co-design, co-production and co-delivery of research, as well as developing together best evidence of impact – narratives that will help both organisations.

This is important both for NERC in its reporting to BIS, and to Scottish Government for its delivering its commitment on evidence-based-policy-making.

The experience will also benefit the post-holder in terms of enabling them to be more effective in their work in future, build on relationships made, and pass on lessons learned throughout NERC.

**Particular duties will include:**

Identifying topics and themes where evidence generated from NERC-funded science can make the most impact on the SG and RESAS commitments in relation to:

- seeking opportunities for the alignment of SG and NERC strategic approaches, priorities and opportunities.
- Supporting the development of the evidence base: analysing evidence sources used at present by different policy and evidence teams in Scottish Government (and key partners) in relation, for example, to:
  - the implications of decisions relating to animal and plant health for the natural environment;
  - optimising decision-making for the Land Use Strategy through models and measurement;
  - translating the science that underpins ecosystem services into practical policy actions;
  - urban living, including atmospheric pollution and health.
- brokering links with NERC-funded scientists and relevant data/evidence sources to inform Scottish Government engagement with wider evidence programmes.
- Acting as a strategic link between NERC and the SG to scope and initiate measures to ensure a longer-term sustainable strategic framework for how NERC and SG (and their agencies and Centres of Expertise (CoE)) will work together.

**The key outcomes will be:**

- Stronger operational links between relationship managers in SG and NERC
- An agreed strategic framework document outlining the future approach to partnership working, knowledge brokering and evidence provision between NERC and SG.
- A review of the current approach to CoEs, that includes proposals based on best practice models taken from around the world. to help shape potential future CoE developments

**Skills required**

The successful applicant should ideally have a strong scientific background with good understanding of the policymaking process and excellent inter-personal and communication skills. The following skills are expected:

- Experience / capability of working at a senior level and ability to draw on specialist knowledge to help shape policy approach; and
- Expert knowledge and research experience in the ecosystems services approach, as well as a broad understanding of NERC and UK and Scottish Government (especially RESAS) remits and responsibilities.
- 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 understanding of the policymaking process and the different mechanisms for science to feed into policymaking.
- 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.
- Strong analytical skills to recognise what science-policy linkages have the most potential for impact, and interpret key policy needs that NERC science can address.

### **Reporting and monitoring**

The fellow will report to the NERC Director of Science and Innovation and SG's Chief Scientist Rural Affairs, Food and Environment at bilateral meetings twice per year. In addition to this there will be ongoing monitoring by nominated NERC and SG contacts. The fellow will need to provide interim and final reports according to a set template and schedule, which will 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.

### **Eligibility**

Fellowship will be taken up by those in senior level posts (equivalent to NERC Band 3 level). Only in exceptional circumstances may we appoint a less experienced applicant.

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.

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/researchgrants/grantshandbook.pdf>

### **Funding**

The award will pay:

Salary, NI/Superannuation at 100% cost

Travel and Subsistence costs at 100% cost;

25% of indirect costs at 80% FEC

## How to Apply

Applications should be submitted through the [Joint electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#). Please read the [Guidance on Submitting Application](#) before completing application in the system. The specific policy placement being applied for should be clearly indicated on the project title section of the application form.

### Attachments required:

1. Case for Support- no more than 4 sides of A4 the font size should be no smaller than Times New Roman or Arial point size 10. Please indicate how you would propose to address the opportunities and challenges presented by this position and how your experience and skills will enable you to achieve this.
2. CV of up to two pages A4 – the font size should be no smaller than Times New Roman or Arial point size 10;
3. Details of two nominated referees (preferably one from academia, and one with a user background);
4. A statement of approval from their employer agreeing to their release and accepting the conditions of the scheme;
5. A separate 'Justification of Resources' including Travel and Subsistence on one page of A4 (maximum).

Once you have submitted to Je-S, it is essential that you email [innovation@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:innovation@nerc.ac.uk) to alert NERC of your application. The closing date for applications is 16:00 on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015. Please ensure that all of the guidance and links to supporting information are read in advance of making the application.

### Interview and Assessment Process

An acknowledgement of receipt will normally be sent to the applicant within a week after submission. Applications will be processed within NERC and prepared for a selection 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.

## Timetable

**Closing dates for applications: 16.00 on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

**Interviews: w/c 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

**Results: w/c 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2015**

**Expected start date of Placement Fellowship: October 2015**

## Contacts

For further information on the role, or an informal discussion contact Liam Kelly, Head of Strategic Science, RESAS (email: [liam.kelly@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:liam.kelly@scotland.gsi.gov.uk), 0131 2442300) or Sasha Leigh, Policy Innovation Manager, NERC (email: [snbl@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:snbl@nerc.ac.uk), Tel: 01793 442634)

For queries on the Policy Placement Scheme and application process, contact Maricon Alojado, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Operations Manager ([maloj@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:maloj@nerc.ac.uk), Tel 01793 411579)

## **Background**

### **NERC**

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is the leading funder of independent environmental science, investing £330M a year in research, training, capabilities and innovation in the UK universities and research centres.

NERC invests public money in world-leading science, designed to help us sustain and benefit from our natural resources, predict and respond to natural hazards and understand environmental change. NERC's vision is to place environmental science at the heart of the responsible management of our planet. To achieve this, NERC works in partnership with business, government, civil society, the public and the wider research community to shape the environmental research and innovation agenda. Our science provides knowledge, skills and technology that deliver sustainable economic growth and public wellbeing.

NERC is committed to working in partnership with government departments and devolved administrations to facilitate utilisation of NERC's research, and access to NERC's capabilities, as a robust evidence-base for environmental policy development and regulation.

### **Scottish Government**

The Scottish Government continues to be an important funder of science in the area of rural affairs, food and the environment. We are the third largest public sector funder of R&D on agriculture and food combined in the UK.

We invest more than £50 M a year to support a broad suite of research, ranging from investigations on urban air quality to studies designed to help understand the behaviours that lie behind consumer choices on food. Our core funding is focussed on agriculture, food, environmental change and rural communities.

Our investment in science is distinctive in the UK because we support the capability to create interdisciplinary research at a national scale to ensure the delivery of genuine science-driven impact.

That investment also helps support the training of some of the next generation of scientists working across the rural sphere, maintains vital scientific infrastructure and research platforms, including collections of plants and soils that are globally unique, and also allows us to work in partnership with others to maximise the impact of the research we do here in Scotland.

We ask a lot from the research we fund; we expect it to be excellent science, respected by the wider research community, but at the same time accessible to a wide range of stakeholders, informing and supporting our policy making processes. Our investment is made on the basis that access to excellent science, and scientists with the skills to interpret scientific evidence from a range of sources, will help the Scottish Government fulfil its single purpose, and in doing so have a positive impact for Scotland as a whole.

## Annex A: RESAS Organogram