



**UK Research
and Innovation**

LANDSCAPE DECISIONS FELLOWSHIPS

Announcement of Opportunity

First issued on: 28 November 2019

Revised on: 21 February 2020

Full Proposals deadline: 4pm on 26 March 2020

1. Summary

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) are inviting proposals to this call of the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) programme on Landscape Decisions: Towards a new framework for using land assets. This is a four-year multidisciplinary programme jointly delivered by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC); the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC); the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC); the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) on behalf of UKRI, with policy support from Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra).

The programme will address the challenge of delivering better, evidence-based decisions within UK landscapes through research collaboration with policy, business and land management partners to deliver an interdisciplinary decision-making framework to inform how land is used. This fellowships call aims to support the development of a new Landscape Decisions community from a diverse research and user base, facilitate multidisciplinary research synthesis across the Landscape Decisions Programme Work Packages, translate solutions and innovations in Landscape Decision support tools into the policy context.

Applications are invited for three types of fellowships: Research Synthesis, Research Translation, and Community Engagement Research. The outcomes of activities undertaken during the fellowships are expected to lead to new and improved understanding from the synthesis of research from different disciplines, the uptake of research outcomes in policy-making and applications, and new and innovative methods for participatory and inclusive landscape decision processes.

Whilst fellows will be largely independent, they are considered an integral part of the Landscape Decisions programme and will be expected to work and interact significantly with the existing funded projects including other fellows and the [Programme Coordination Team](#) funded under the programme. The fellowships will support successful researchers and innovators to establish their independence and/or support career transition towards the emerging multidisciplinary field of landscape decisions. Career development support will be offered to facilitate this transition.

Total funds of up to £1m are available for this call, from which UKRI expect to fund at least 4-5 fellows, which can be either part or full time. Fellowships will be funded at 80% FEC.

This call is open to researchers and practitioners from any discipline but they should have strong expertise and interests in decision-making at the landscape level. Applicants can be at any career stage but are expected to have a PhD by the start date of the Fellowship or be able to demonstrate equivalent professional experience gained in a user or stakeholder organisation.

Applications to this call are not limited to individuals currently in receipt of funding from the Landscape Decisions programme.

All fellowships must start by 1 October 2020 and last between 12 and 24 months.

2. Background

2.1 Strategic Priorities Fund

The [Strategic Priorities Fund](#) (SPF) has been set up to build upon the vision of a 'common research fund' set out in Sir Paul Nurse's [independent review](#) of the Research Councils. The fund will drive an increase in high-quality multi- and interdisciplinary research and innovation, ensure that UKRI's investment links up effectively with Government departments' research priorities and opportunities, and ensure that the system is able to respond to strategic priorities and opportunities.

2.2 Landscape Decisions: Towards a new framework for using land assets.

At individual, community, regional and national levels, we are required to make complex and polycentric decisions on our landscapes involving multiple stakeholders. Making landscape-scale decisions now has a timely political imperative; about one third of the more than 800 pieces of EU environmental legislation will need to be transposed into UK law after EU-Exit. At the same time, the UK Government has set out ambitious, long-term aspirations for its management of the environment through the 25 Year Environment Plan. Together the complexity and political developments provide a unique opportunity for the UK to think differently about a long-standing frontier challenge about how we use land.

A landscape and the ecosystem services it provides are the product of environmental processes, human needs, social and cultural interactions and values, economic decisions, and flows of people, ideas, commodities and the practices associated with them. Our landscapes are and will change continually across spatial and temporal scales as a result of shifts in natural systems such as water, air, climate, and biodiversity, which in turn are influenced by each other and interactions with human society. These changes are expected to accelerate over the next few decades and into the future.

Research collaboration with policy and land management partners is required to deliver an interdisciplinary decision-making framework to inform how land is used in the UK for the benefit of the environment, society, and individual well-being.

The Landscape Decisions programme will deliver new decision-making capabilities for policy makers and other users at landscape scales that integrate information across all relevant disciplines. Current approaches to landscape decisions do not capture the complex ways in which we utilise landscapes nor the benefits we realise from these uses. To understand this gap requires a holistic and whole systems approach, which addresses the competing demands on decision-making for multi-functional landscapes. As an example, these competing demands could include allocations at a regional scale between productive agriculture, catchment water management, forestry, supply of quality housing, power generation, and protection of natural and cultural heritage. The primary output of the

programme will be new understanding of landscape-scale decision-making that can be used to develop decision frameworks in future activities.

The programme is structured across three work packages:

- 1) Developing new mathematics**
- 2) Building new model solutions**
- 3) Stimulating new thinking and communities**

These work packages are inter-related and unified by overarching activities that together will provide the programme outcomes:

- A move towards a holistic framework for land-use decision-making.
- The emergence of a new community from the diverse research base, capable of articulating and underpinning a new decision framework.

To move towards a holistic decision-making framework requires activities that develop a new community from the diverse research base. Landscapes need to be considered as highly complex systems of flows (such as products, commodities, services, finance, people, ideas) that are subject to non-linearity, interactions, sensitivities, and uncertainty. Robust and difficult policy decisions need to be made at different spatial and temporal scales that will impact on the flow and quality of ecosystem services that benefit our economy, our societal health and well-being, and our livelihoods. A challenge lies in capturing the complexity of how landscape systems react to decision points over multiple temporal and spatial scales (such as management or policy interventions) including feedback loops between system components. Improved understanding of interdependencies between system components is needed to:

- (i) capture trade-offs between the quality of the environment, the needs of different social groups, their health and well-being, and the economy due to political and financial interventions; and
- (ii) consider the cultural, aesthetic and heritage consequences of interventions in the long-term.

3. Scope

3.1 Programme objectives

The primary aim of this Landscape Decisions Fellowships call is to support the development of a new Landscape Decisions community from a diverse research and user base through multidisciplinary research synthesis across the Landscape Decisions Programme Work Packages, translating solutions and innovations in Landscape Decision support tools into the policy context, and engaging a diverse cross-section of local communities and land users in the thinking about Landscape Decisions and decision-making.

The fellowships will also support successful researchers and innovators to establish their independence and/or support career transition towards the emerging multidisciplinary field of landscape decisions.

3.2 Call Scope and proposal requirements

All Landscape Decisions Fellows will be required to work closely with one or more projects funded under the Landscape Decisions Programme and/or other relevant landscape decision research. Information on how to do this can be found in 4.2.1. The fellowships will form part of the Work Package Three – *Stimulating new thinking and communities* but could relate to all three Work Packages.

Successful fellows could address a number of challenges; examples may include, but are not limited to, the following (in no particular order):

- How to ensure landscape decisions are climate-resilient;
- How landscape decisions can support the UK's 2050 net zero emissions target;
- The role of mathematics, big data and artificial intelligence within landscape decision making;
- How decisions on multifunctional landscapes can be taken under uncertainty to improve environmental land management;
- The engagement of diverse social and institutional groups with landscape decision making;
- The role of individual emotions and values, and/or finance in landscape decision making.
- How to ensure landscape decisions take account of local/regional place-based factors including those of a socio-political and economic nature.

The outcomes of the activities are expected to lead to new and improved understanding from the synthesis of research from different disciplines, the uptake of research outcomes in policy-making and applications, and new and innovative methods for participatory and inclusive landscape decision processes.

Defra are supportive of this programme as outcomes could be of benefit to supporting the evidence needs in a number of strategic priority areas, which are outlined in the Defra Group ['Statement of Need'](#) document. It should be noted that whilst proposals aligning with these strategic priorities are welcome, it is not a requirement and proposals that are not of direct relevance to them will not be penalised.

Three types of Fellowships are available under this call.

3.2.1 Research Synthesis Fellowships

Fellows will be required to implement an independent programme of multidisciplinary research synthesis linked to one or more of the constituent projects and activities in the Landscape Decisions Programme or other relevant landscape decisions research.

Research synthesis activities should review research outcomes and insights from different disciplines from within and beyond the Landscape Decisions programme and reflect on policy or land-user recommendations and/or academic breakthroughs in our understanding of landscape decision-making processes for multifunctional landscapes. Fellows are expected to submit one or more research publications as first author to peer-reviewed journals resulting from the research synthesis undertaken through their fellowship.

By the end of the fellowship, fellows will deliver a **research synthesis report** on their chosen subject area for publication on the Landscape Decisions Programme website.

3.2.2 Research Translation Fellowships

Fellows will be required to either:

- a) work alongside and spend significant time at end-user/stakeholder organisations to implement an independent programme of translation of research outcomes from landscape decision research projects into policy-relevant tools, applications, knowledge bases, infographics, data repositories or systems, or
- b) work alongside an academic research group as a practitioner with a clear plan to translate research outcomes into policy-relevant applications (see section 5.2 for eligibility details).

Research translation activities should include significant co-development and co-delivery with user organisations to ensure socio-economic or environmental impact. Mechanisms for achieving this may include deepening existing partnerships, developing new relationships, analysing case studies of research translation from UKRI-funded research into

practice, and providing briefings and reports suitable for policymakers. Fellows are expected to describe how their programme of work connects with one or more of the constituent projects and activities in the Landscape Decisions Programme or other relevant research.

By the end of the fellowship, fellows will deliver a **research translation report** (including evidence of impact) on their chosen activity for publication on the Landscape Decisions Programme website. Research translation activities should transform pre-operational research outcomes from the Landscape Decisions programme or other relevant research into policy-relevant applications, tools or systems for landscape decision-making to enhance multifunctional landscapes.

3.2.3 Community Engagement Research Fellowships

Fellows will be required to implement an independent programme of research based on engagement with land users or communities related to landscape decision making. This may be undertaken through a range of arts, humanities, social and political science, and digital methods, including, for example through co-design and co-production, citizens' juries, citizens' committees, digital ethnography, living labs and participatory art.

Activities should be designed to explore landscape decision-making by a diverse range of social groups and institutions, considering issues such as how people access and make use of landscapes, how they arrive at decisions related to their engagements with landscapes, their opinions about the operation of landscape decision-making, the role of values, emotions and embodied practices and how environmental services delivered by multifunctional landscapes can be made accessible to a wider, more diverse group of people. This may include consideration of the multiple layers of motivations for making landscape decisions, including economic, emotional and environmental factors.

Fellows should demonstrate an awareness of other relevant community engagement initiatives and networks and consider how their fellowships will connect and add value to these activities and avoid duplication.

By the end of the fellowship, fellows will deliver a **series of community engagement events** and a **community engagement report** for publication on the Landscape Decisions Programme website. They will have submitted one or more research publications to peer reviewed journals resulting from the analysis of the community engagement events undertaken through their fellowship.

4. Programme requirements

4.1 Programme funding

Total funds of up to £1m are available for this call. Fellowships will be funded at 80% FEC.

4.2 Implementation and delivery

All fellowships must start by 1 October 2020. UKRI anticipate funding at least 4-5 fellows.

Fellowships may be held full- or part-time and UKRI welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds including those who wish to work on a part-time basis in order to combine domestic responsibilities with a career.

All applicants must be employed by an eligible host organisation for the duration of the fellowship to receive funding. Eligible host organisations include UK Higher Education Institutes, eligible Independent Research Organisations or Public Sector Research Establishments (PSREs) (see 5.2 Eligibility for details).

4.2.1 Linking with Landscape Decisions Programme Coordination Team and Constituent Projects

All Landscape Decisions Fellows will be required to work closely with one or more projects from the Landscape Decisions Programme and/or other relevant research. For information about grants funded under the Programme please refer to [NERC Grants on the Web](#) and [UKRI Gateway to Research](#). A list of grants that have been awarded but are yet to start is in Appendix 1. These grants will appear on UKRI Gateway to Research when they start.

Support for contacting suitable funded projects from the Landscape Decisions Programme is available from the [Landscape Decisions Programme Coordination Team](#) (landscapes@le.ac.uk).

All fellows will be expected to actively engage with the PCT and interact with other fellows as a cohort. Fellows are expected to attend dedicated meetings and events convened by the PCT and plan networking activities with relevant projects funded under the Landscape Decisions programme. Fellows should budget for attending two Landscape Decisions programme events in Leicester (four days in total) per year of the fellowship. The PCT will also offer development support to the fellows to enable them to transition to become leaders in the emerging multidisciplinary field of landscape decisions.

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.

A separate Pathways to Impact statement is not required, but applicants should still consider how they will or might achieve impact outside the scientific community and include this as part of their Case for Support. Impact activities do not have to be cost-incurring, but relevant costs can be included and must be fully justified within the Justification of Resources statement.

All fellows will be expected to coordinate their knowledge exchange activities (if relevant) with the Landscape Decisions Programme Coordination Team.

4.4 Data Management

The [UKRI Data Policy](#) must be adhered to, and an [outline data management plan](#) produced as part of proposal development. Applicants should refer to [NERC](#) and [ESRC](#) data centres for details. UKRI 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.

All fellows will be expected to coordinate their data management activities (if relevant) with the Landscape Decisions Programme Coordination 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 Programme management

The Programme Board (PB) will provide the strategic direction for the programme and will be the ultimate decision-making authority. The PB will be chaired by a representative of NERC and will include representative(s) from the other programme funders and relevant users/stakeholders as required.

The programme will have an independent Programme Steering Committee (SC) that will provide strategic advice to the Programme Coordination Team and PB to ensure the delivery of the programme objectives.

The [Programme Coordination Team \(PCT\)](#) will address the varied challenges and perspectives of the programme, and integrate its package of work with other new and ongoing activities within the programme in a cohesive way. All projects funded under the programme are encouraged to engage with the PCT and participate in relevant PCT-led coordination and integration activities such as workshops where possible.

4.7 Reporting requirements

As with all NERC grant holders, there will be a requirement to report through the UKRI reporting system; this is required annually and continues for up to five years post grant end. Grant holders may also be asked to provide additional progress updates to the PCT, the Programme Board and Programme Steering Committee as needed.

5. Application process

5.1 How to apply

5.1.1 Full Proposals

Closing Date: 4pm 26 March 2020

Full proposal must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). Applicants should select Proposal Type – 'Fellowship Proposal' and then select the Scheme – 'Research Programme Fellowship' and the Call – 'Landscape Decisions Fellowships'.

Applicants must clearly indicate at the top of the Summary section of their Je-S application form which fellowship they should be considered for: 'Research Synthesis Fellowship', 'Research Translation Fellowship' or 'Community Engagement Research Fellowship'.

The Landscape Decisions Fellowships call will close on JeS at 4pm on 26 March 2020 and it will not be possible to submit to the call after this time. Applicants should leave enough time

for their proposal to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before this date. Any proposal 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 (see section 5.2 Eligibility for variation to these rules relating to this call).

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 proposal 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 proposal conforms to all eligibility and submission rules, otherwise their proposal 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.

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 proposal.

No associated studentships can be requested under this call.

Proposals for this call should be submitted in Fellowship Grant format following the requirements outlined in Section F of the [NERC research grant and fellowships handbook](#). Please note the following variation to the requirements:

- **A Case for Support (up to 8 sides A4)** should include previous Track Record (up to 2 sides A4), and Description of Proposed Activities and Vision for the Fellowship (up to 6 sides A4).
- **A Letter of Support (up to 2 sides A4) from the Head of the Department** (or equivalent) of the host organisation where the fellow will be employed is **mandatory** for all fellowship applications. The letter should demonstrate the availability of structured institutional support, including infrastructure and facilities, funds to support research, and support for personal development of the fellow, including mentoring and training as appropriate to the level of experience and career stage of the fellow.

The latest start date for projects funded under this Announcement of Opportunity is 1 October 2020.

5.2 Eligibility

This call is open to researchers and practitioners from any discipline but they should have strong expertise and interests in landscape decisions.

Applicants can be at any career stage but are expected to have a PhD by the start date of the Fellowship or be able to demonstrate equivalent professional experience gained in a user

or stakeholder organisation. Applicants with a permanent academic position (or equivalent in institutions other than universities) are also eligible.

Practitioners currently employed at end-user/stakeholder organisations should be employed at an eligible host organisation for the duration of the fellowship (see below).

Fellowship awards must be held by a [UKRI eligible](#) research organisations or Public Sector Research Establishments (PSREs) meeting the criteria below. UKRI grants may be held at approved UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), approved Research Council Institutes (RCIs) and approved Independent Research Organisations (IROs). PSREs with 10 or more researchers with PhDs (or equivalent) are eligible to apply. If PSREs wishing to apply have not previously applied for UKRI funding and are not currently designated IRO status they will be required to complete an [eligibility form](#) to ensure they have the required research capacity, systems and controls in place to manage the research and grant funding. PSRE applicants should contact avril.allman@nerc.ukri.org at the earliest opportunity to discuss their interests in applying.

The fellowship applicant must be the Principal Investigator and may only submit one proposal to this call. Co-Investigators or other named researchers are not allowed.

6. Assessment Process

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

All applications received will be assessed by independent experts at a sift panel. An expert panel of academics and users 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 fellowship proposal and discuss with and answer questions from the panel.

The assessment criteria to be used are detailed below:

- Excellence of Proposal – quality and novelty of the proposed research synthesis, research translation or community engagement activities
- Suitability of Applicant – relevant experience and potential of the applicant, potential benefit of fellowship for their career development/transition
- Fit to Scheme

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

UKRI will use the recommendations of the interview panel along with the overall call requirements and the available budget in making the final funding decisions. UKRI reserve the right to use the recommendations to create a balanced portfolio across the three types of fellowships and programme work packages.

7. Timetable

- Announcement published: 28 November 2019
- Deadline for submission of full proposals: 26 March 2020
- Sift panel meets: May 2020
- Interview panel meets: June 2020
- Latest start date for projects: 1 October 2020

8. Contact

For general enquiries relating to this call, please contact Landscape Decisions Programme team: landscapedecisions@nerc.ukri.org

For specific queries regarding support for contacting suitable funded projects from the Landscape Decisions Programme, please contact [Landscape Decisions Programme Coordination Team](#): landscapes@le.ac.uk.

Appendix 1

List of grants awarded under the Landscape Decisions programme and yet to start.

These grants will appear on UKRI Gateway to Research when they start in early 2020.

Other funded grants can be found on [NERC Grants on the Web](#) and

[UKRI Gateway to Research](#).

| Grant Reference | PI Name | Research Organisation | Project Title |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| AH/T005971/1 | Dr Ben Anderson | Keele University | Decommissioning the Twentieth Century: Energy Landscapes, Heritage, and Community |
| AH/T006013/1 | Dr Annie Tindley | Newcastle University | Community Empowerment and Landscape Decision Making frameworks in Scotland: improving outcomes for people and nature |
| AH/T00603X/1 | Dr Rachel Hewitt | Newcastle University | Women In The Hills, c. 1800 to Present |
| AH/T006048/1 | Professor Lynn-Sayers McHattie | Glasgow School of Art | Design Innovation and Land-Assets (DI&L) |
| AH/T006056/1 | Dr Niamh Downing | Sheffield Hallam University | HydroSpheres:Co-Design for Landscape Decision-Making |
| AH/T006064/1 | Dr Richard JONES | University of Leicester | Enhancing UK Flood Resilience: Past Floods, Present Threats, Future Responses |
| AH/T006080/1 | Dr Clare Hickman | University of Chester | Inclusive Landscapes Network |
| AH/T006102/1 | Dr Jo Vergunst | University of Aberdeen | Creative landscape futures: making decisions with the arts and humanities |
| AH/T006110/1 | Dr Jeremy Burchardt | University of Reading | Changing landscapes, changing lives: how can narrative and biographical perspectives improve landscape decision making? |
| AH/T006137/1 | Dr Richard Brook | Manchester Metropolitan University | The Landscapes of Post-War Infrastructure: Culture, Amenity, Heritage and Industry |
| AH/T006145/1 | Dr Anna Hicks | NERC British Geological Survey | Landscapes of the Mind |
| AH/T006153/1 | Professor Ian Gregory | Lancaster University | Revealing Long-Term Change in Vegetation Landscapes: The English Lake District and Beyond |
| AH/T006161/1 | Mr Simon Arthur Read | Middlesex University | Imagining the measure of change: art, science and the estuary community |
| AH/T006188/1 | Professor Claire Parkinson | Edge Hill University | Multispecies storytelling: more-than-human narratives about landscape |
| AH/T006196/1 | Dr Katharine Earnshaw | University of Exeter | Field\work |
| AH/T00620X/1 | Dr Jonathan Last | Historic Bldgs & Mnts Commis for England | Lincolnshire Wolds Landscape Network |
| AH/T00634X/1 | Professor Candice Satchwell | University of Central Lancashire | Connecting disadvantaged young people with landscape through arts |

