Announcement of Opportunity: Knowledge Exchange Fellow for Green Infrastructure (Urban)

The Natural Environment Research Council is inviting Knowledge Exchange (KE) Fellowship proposals that address the issues and opportunities around green infrastructure (GI) for planners in building it into investment decisions for developments in urban areas. The GI KE Fellow will work with both public and private sector developers working in urban areas in the UK or in developing economies on the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list.

One of the key features that prevent GI being a fundamental part of the decision making and planning process is the challenge around planners obtaining robust evidence that the GI works and will yield long term benefits. As part of this they will need to be able to assign a “value” to the GI that can offset other costs elsewhere.

The aim of the Knowledge Exchange Fellowship is to increase and accelerate the uptake and impact of NERC funded research output by supporting translational and knowledge exchange activity which delivers direct tangible and demonstrable benefits to end users, particularly local policymakers and businesses such as planners, landscape architects and other consultancies to support the development of green infrastructures. These are however just examples and applications should not be restricted to these types of user. Proposals may support and enhance initiatives that are being undertaken at a local or regional scale. Candidates are encouraged to devise their own programme of work and to demonstrate how that will generate long term impact.

The KE Fellowship programme may generate little or no commercial return, but it is expected to deliver impact.

The Research Councils UK definition of impact is:

“The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. This occurs in many ways – through creating and sharing new knowledge and innovation; inventing groundbreaking new products, companies and jobs; developing new and improving existing public services and policy; enhancing quality of life and health; and many more.”

Closing Date: 4pm 27 April 2017
Interview date: 20 June 2017 in Birmingham

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**The definition of Green Infrastructure is:**

Green Infrastructure (GI) promotes multifunctional, connected green spaces. The European Commission defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as: “a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services. It incorporates green spaces (or blue if aquatic ecosystems are concerned) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in rural and urban settings”.

Please note that this KE Fellowship will focus on urban green infrastructure

1. **What can this GI KE Fellowship do?**

Green Infrastructure (GI) can link and strengthen various ecosystems in urban areas. It consists of spatially or functionally connected areas which maintain ecological coherence as an essential condition for healthy ecosystems. Its added value however comes from broader investments in natural capital with a view to ‘greening' existing infrastructure and strengthening the functionality of ecosystems for delivering goods and services as well as mitigating and adapting to climate change effects, and enhancing the quality of life (health, tourism, conserving historic and cultural heritage).

Under this call, NERC welcomes proposals that build on NERC funded research to develop:

- decision support tools around the value of GI and the effectiveness of differing GI approaches
- models to allow demonstration of value of GI
- Innovative approaches that could assist in the development of new business models and processes underpinning GI.
- case studies where planners have successfully used and sustained GI in developments

Green Infrastructure includes but is not restricted to:

- sustainable urban drainage systems
- ecosystem services (use of natural capital for hazard alleviation)
- reforestation zones,
- green bridges and green roofs,
- green urban areas,
- innovative planning approaches for intelligent, multi-purpose land use.

KE Fellowship proposals submitted in this current round (Deadline Thursday 27 April) are expected to start between 1 August 2017 and 1 March 2018 and to last for up to three years with candidates applying to spend between 40% and 80% of their time on the fellowship. Any career stage and salary level may apply with the expectations of achievement adjusted accordingly.
Please note this is a “Directed Knowledge Exchange Fellowship” as NERC has chosen the topic. It will be funded at 80% FEC. The GI KE Fellow will be expected to liaise with NERC Head Office Innovation Group and other KE Fellows working in the area of GI and Natural Capital valuation.

2. **Partners**

Successful KE Fellowships require strong user engagement in establishing and conducting project activity, and providing evidence to this effect is essential. We prefer KE Fellows to work with a number of users rather than focusing on a single user.

3. **Eligibility Criteria**

This opportunity is open to applicants based in UK higher education institutions (HEIs), NERC research centres and independent research organisations (IROs) approved by NERC, providing that the science the work builds on was funded by NERC.

Private, public and third sector organisations or institutions are eligible as end users and partners in proposals.

Research council institutes and HEIs are not eligible as end-users.

Applications should fall within the NERC science remit and primarily have the approach of gaining impact from NERC funded research. A small element, up to around 20%, can be based on other funded research and be in other remits.

4. **How to apply**

Please read the ‘Further guidance’ document and the ‘Jes guidance’ supplied. Follow the route indicated for 80% FEC funding. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

5. **Contact**

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