

## **OPPORTUNITY FOR NERC POLICY PLACEMENT FELLOWSHIP IN DEFRA**

### **Review of the Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme's Ecosystem Effects Work for Value to National and International Policy development**

#### **The Appointment**

Over the forthcoming year, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) wishes to strategically review its portfolio of recent and current research on the impacts of air pollution on ecosystems. This is in order to ensure future evidence needs for policy development are met. Defra is looking for a scientist with the appropriate expertise to lead this review as a temporary fellowship.

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Defra welcome applications for a temporary specialist **Fellow** to work with Defra on its Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme (ALE), based in London (Ergon House, 17 Smith Square, SW1) for a period of approximately six months on a part time (25 -30%) basis. The 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. The post-holder will interact on a regular basis with NERC science managers and theme leaders for Environment Pollution and Human Health, Biodiversity and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and with the knowledge exchange team.

**Closing date for applications: Tuesday 31st August 2010**

**Potential interview dates in the week commencing Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September**

**The application form and guidance notes can be found on the [NERC fellowship placement webpage](#).**

For further information contact:

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Such placements have proved most valuable, significantly enhancing links between NERC science and science evidence and policy teams in government, enabling improved science evidence for UK policy. The value to post-holders has also been high. Previous placement fellows have benefited from developing a clearer understanding of how government works in delivering evidence-based policy, an understanding of handling the day-to-day pressures of delivering directed science

and of communicating with senior officials and ministers, whilst developing strategies for delivering evidence for policymaking in the longer term.

The Fellow will remain employed by their present employer and arrangements will be made to cover travel and subsistence expenses on a case-by-case basis.

### **Job Purpose and Description**

The Defra Atmosphere and Local Environment (ALE) Programme work plan includes assessing, controlling and managing air pollution and its impacts across the UK, in addition to influencing international agreements addressing atmospheric pollution. ALE runs an extensive science and evidence programme, including research into the impacts of atmospheric pollution on vegetation and ecosystems.

Over the forthcoming year, we wish to strategically review our portfolio of recent and current research on the ecosystems impacts of air pollution in order to ensure future evidence needs for policy development are met. The ALE Programme is looking for a scientist with the appropriate expertise to lead this review. The review must be completed during the current financial year ending March 2011

It is envisioned that this project will comprise of three stages and specifically the post will involve:

- (1) reviewing the existing and recently completed work – assessing the quality of the science, whether projects have achieved their objectives, and working with the policy teams to assess how well the projects have contributed to policy development;
- (2) Organising a workshop of the science base and the relevant policy leads to discuss the effectiveness of the work, its communication and future policy directions and priorities
- (3) Assessing the outcome of the workshop and through discussions with stakeholders, proposing recommendations as to future evidence needs in this area from a policy perspective (both UK and internationally) and highlighting priorities for future studies, means of improving the communication of the research programmes evidence base to policy leads and identifying opportunities to partner with existing national or international science initiatives.

### **Background**

The over-arching purpose of Defra is to protect the environment for future generations, make our economy more environmentally sustainable, and improve our quality of life and well-being. Two priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment and to deal with environmental risks.

As part of this remit, Defra's Atmosphere and Local Environment Programme works to control and manage air quality across the UK, including an extensive programme of atmospheric pollution science and research. This includes research into monitoring and modelling air pollution, the health impacts of pollutants, and how pollutants affect the natural environment. For example, oxides of sulphur, oxides of nitrogen and ammonia can lead to both terrestrial and aquatic acidification, whilst nitrogen oxides and ammonia can also lead to eutrophication which damages biodiversity.

Research of this nature feeds into negotiations on international agreements such as the EU's National Emissions Ceilings Directive, and the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

NERC funds world-class science in universities and research centres that increases knowledge and understanding of the natural world, through independent research and training in the environmental sciences. NERC's current strategy defines seven themes under which its science will be delivered: climate system, biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, earth system science, natural hazards, environment pollution and human health, and technologies. NERC interacts and works regularly with a wide range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, to support the science to policy process and help develop appropriate ways to address environment issues.

### **Skills required**

The successful applicant should ideally have a strong scientific and policy background with a broad understanding of science and knowledge of research activity sources. A strong interest in driving forward the research agenda to serve policy and operational needs is essential, as are a degree of lateral and creative thinking. The following skills are expected:

- Knowledge and research experience in a relevant field is essential
- An understanding of NERC and Defra remits.
- Good communication, networking and presentation skills.
- Ability to work strategically across disciplines and an appreciation of the policy and regulatory context of research.
- Good project management skills, and an ability to work independently as required.
- Leading and influencing – effective communication including providing strong leadership, engaging staff, delivery partners and wider stakeholders
- Collaboration – driving co-operation within and beyond Defra.
- Thinking with vision – being able to see the bigger picture beyond Defra (including UK, EU and global issues), setting agendas and driving strategic direction.
- Making things happen – being outcome focussed, able to prioritise and well organised.

- Delivering in partnership – building, maintaining and promoting effective partnerships, engaging and managing delivery partners effectively.

### **Essential specialist expertise**

The scientist will preferably have an ecology background, not necessarily with specific research experience in atmospheric pollution, and preferably have some experience of delivering government-commissioned research projects.

**Please Note:** Any potential conflicts of interest with existing research partners should be minimised and clearly identified in all cases. Applications cannot be accepted from people with established links to Defra in the field of air pollution.