



2020/21 BES Policy Fellowship with the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Northern Ireland

The British Ecological Society is committed to making the best scientific evidence available to decision-makers, and supporting members to build their policy engagement skills and enhance the impact of their work. The BES Policy Fellowship offers an ecologist the chance to spend up to six months on a placement embedded within a Northern Ireland government department or agency, applying their scientific expertise to a practical policy challenge. The 2020/21 Fellowship will be hosted by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The Fellowship will provide a prestigious opportunity for BES members to gain first-hand experience of working within government, improving their policy knowledge and awareness, developing their science communication skills, and building their professional networks at an exciting and crucial time for environmental policy. The Fellowship will also help to foster wider links between the ecological and policy communities, and support policy development informed by outstanding science.

Nature of the Fellowship

Eligibility

Applications to the BES Policy Fellowship will be open to any BES member with two or more years' research experience post-PhD. The Fellowship is only open to those who have UK Citizenship or an **existing** visa to work in the UK for the duration of the Fellowship.

Placement

In 2020/21, one Fellowship will be available, offering an individual project within DAERA's Northern Ireland Environment Agency (Natural Environment Division). Potential project areas are listed below, but there is some flexibility to adapt them to take account of the research interests or career plans of the successful applicant, emergent policy needs and timing of the placement.

Possible work areas:

- A. Valuing nature – (i) explore the links between natural capital assets and ecosystem stocks, ecosystem service flows and processes, and attributing their benefits and value to society in Northern Ireland (human health and well-being, climate change adaptation and mitigation, economic development etc) (ii) explore methodologies for mapping and modelling the

function of ecological systems and associated ecosystem services to inform new policy interventions and measure their effectiveness, (iii) identify deficiencies in data natural capital assets, ecosystem stocks and processes, to better inform valuation of interventions and outcomes .

- B. Developing mapping tools and data to support nature recovery area or networks (NI or island of Ireland as a single biogeographic region). Working with NIEA/DAERA, local authorities, NGOs and the research community (and potentially the National Parks and Wildlife Service in ROI) to compile data on landscape scale projects across Northern Ireland, and identifying areas of opportunity for ecosystem restoration and habitat creation
- C. Examine the key drivers/indicators of biodiversity loss in Northern Ireland and make recommendations for long-term monitoring and surveillance programmes, biodiversity indicators and potential policy interventions and measures, including consideration of the Lawton principles (role of protected areas, nature recovery areas).
- D. Nature-based solutions – examine the potential for, and effectiveness of nature-based solutions to addressing societal challenges (in Northern Ireland/island of Ireland).
- E. Peatland habitats – develop mapping tools and examine data sources to determine peatland restoration potential and projects at a landscape scale, and establish the ecosystem services and benefits which could be accrued and methodologies for measuring effectiveness and outcomes.
- F. Climate change/Biodiversity – (i) examine the pressures and threats for Northern Ireland’s biodiversity/habitats and species associated with climate change and the role the natural environment will play in climate change mitigation and adaptation; (ii) Advise on evidence necessary to inform nature-based policies and programmes to deliver climate and ecological resilience and address both the climate and biodiversity challenges.

The Fellow will be encouraged to spend 40% of their time over the course of the placement based in DAERA’s offices (this may be subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions). However, we are aware that the fellow may have teaching and/or childcare commitments which will require more flexible working. Please mention any flexible working needs in your application.

DAERA will provide a named line manager for the Fellow. The placement would ideally be based in DAERA offices in Belfast, with travel to attend meetings and events in Northern Ireland. However, please note that homeworking may be required due to any COVID-19 restrictions.

The Fellow will remain employed by her/his home institution for the duration of the placement.

Duration

The Fellowship will last between three months (full-time) and six months (part-time), with the precise duration of the placement to be determined between DAERA, the Fellow and the Fellow’s home institution.

Start Date

The Fellowship will ideally begin in November 2020, with the exact start date to be agreed between DAERA, the Fellow, and the Fellow's home institution.

Other Requirements

The 2020 Fellow will:

- Complete a defined project for DAERA within the agreed deadline.
- Contribute to related work on evidence management, analysis and policy development as a member of the NIEA Natural Environment Division.
- Support external academic engagement activities undertaken by DAERA (e.g. assisting with workshops with external stakeholders, helping to organise small seminars ("bite-size sessions") bringing experts from a range of institutions into the Department, representing aspects of DAERA's work at external academic meetings).
- Submit a mid-placement progress report to the BES and DAERA, outlining progress against agreed objectives.
- With support from the BES and DAERA, arrange at least one knowledge exchange event (to be held at DAERA/BES/host institution as appropriate) to discuss the outputs and learning from the project with a wider policy and/or scientific audience.
- Actively share the knowledge and experience gained through the Fellowship with the wider BES membership (e.g. through two articles on the BES website or in the Niche, and a presentation at the BES Annual Meeting).
- Ensure all communications, outputs and products are approved by DAERA before publication.

The host organisation (DAERA) will:

- Provide a named line manager for the Fellow for the duration of the placement.
- Identify a defined project for the Fellow, with clear objectives and success criteria, and an appropriate scope and timeframe.
- Provide facilities including desk space and a laptop configured for DAERA networks (please note, this may be subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions).
- Provide a suitable induction programme for the Fellow and opportunities to engage in policy development.
- Provide feedback at the end of the placement in line with standard practice in the host organisation.
- Where full publication of the work undertaken by the Fellow is not possible, provide an impact report outlining how the results have been used.

The BES will:

- Identify and offer opportunities to engage more widely with the BES's policy work during the Fellowship.
- Provide funding for the duration of the placement as outlined below.
- Support the Fellow to organise at least one knowledge exchange event to discuss the outputs and learning from the project with a wider policy and/or scientific audience.

Conditions of work

All Fellows must adhere to their employer's and DAERA's requirements of independence from political or commercial interest through the placement. Fellows will need to give undertakings to respect a confidentiality agreement, specifying that information on policy advice and internal debate will not be disclosed without prior written agreement of the host organisation. Fellows will be required to seek security clearance as necessary for access to government office buildings and IT equipment. Insurance for the Fellow will be covered by the Fellow's institution.

Funding

A maximum of £20,000 is available from the BES to support the Fellowship. Applicants are asked to specify and justify the amount of funding requested and how it would be spent.

Eligible expenditure includes:

- Salary costs for the applicant, including national insurance and superannuation, but not estates or indirect costs.
- Travel and subsistence, including accommodation.
- Other factors

Facilities, including laptop and office space (hot desking) will be provided by DAERA (may be subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions).

Application Procedure

Applications will open on 27th July 2020. Applications will be via the grants portal on the BES website. You will need to register into our online grants system, complete your contact details, and navigate to 'Your Applications'.

<https://bes.flexigrant.com/>

Alongside the application form, candidates will be asked to provide:

- A CV.
- A letter of support from the Head of Department/School at the applicant's home institution indicating that they agree to the applicant taking time away from their normal duties to complete the Fellowship according to the requirements and conditions set out above.
- An equality and diversity monitoring form.

Initial shortlisting will be conducted by a review panel consisting of the BES Policy Committee Chair, one representative of DAERA, the BES Policy Manager and two other members of Policy Committee. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview, with the interview panel comprising the BES Policy Manager, one representative of DAERA and one member of the Policy Committee.

Applicants will be judged on the following criteria:

- Motivation for and interest in the Fellowship.
- Science communication, collaboration and team working skills relevant to policy engagement.
- Scientific expertise relevant to the placement project.
- Skills necessary to widely share the outputs and learning of the Fellowship.
- Strong research record.