



EPA Doctoral Scholarship Scheme Opportunity

“Payments for Ecosystem Services: Conservation of Freshwater Habitats through Agri-Environment Schemes”

Background

- Maintaining good conservation status of freshwater habitats is essential to providing recreational and aesthetic experiences together with regulation of water quality and quantity.
- Changes in land use has resulted in multiple pressures being exerted on freshwater habitats, with the intensification of agricultural posing the greatest threat in many catchments.
- This has been driven by the desire to increase agricultural productivity, but has been characterised by a lack of awareness of the impacts of these changes on the functioning of the freshwater ecosystem and/or the impact on human well-being.
- As a result recreational, aesthetic and regulatory ecosystem services, provided by freshwater habitats, have largely been excluded from policy and land-use decision making processes.
- The aim of this PhD is to adopt a payment for ecosystem services approach to agri-environmental schemes, designed to address the favourable conservation status of key freshwater aquatic habitats and species. This will be done through a combination of literature review, data collation and analysis as well as the design and collection of new datasets.

Requirements

Applicants should have a good primary degree (First or Second Class Honours) or M.Sc. in an appropriate discipline (Environmental Science, Environmental Economics, Ecology etc). Due to the multi-disciplinary nature of the research applicants should demonstrate an aptitude for working across a range of disciplines while specialising in selected areas. As use of Geographical information Systems (GIS) will be an essential tool for the successful completion of this PhD, the successful candidate should demonstrate some experience of its use within his/her degree (s) and/or professionally. In addition, he/she should be highly self-motivated and have excellent communication skill. A full EU driving licence is also required.

Award

The PhD Scholarship is a joint research project between University College Dublin (UCD), The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), Teagasc and the University of Ulster (UU). The student will be based in the Agri-Environmental Branch of AFBI, located in Belfast Northern Ireland, under the supervision of Dr. Donnacha Doody and Dr. Diane Burgess and registered for a PhD in University College Dublin, under the supervision of Dr Helen Sheridan. In addition, Dr Daire Ó hUallacháin (Teagasc) and Prof Phil Jordan (UU) will also be members of the supervisory panel to ensure the required expertise is available to the student. The fellowship provides a stipend of €22,000. University fees are paid by the student from the stipend which is tenable for 3 years. The Fellowship will start as soon as possible after 1st of April 2013 and/or when the most suitable candidate is identified thereafter.

Further Information/Applications

Dr. Donnacha Doody, Agri-Food and Bioscience Institute, Newforge Lane, BT9 5PX, Belfast.

Tel. +44 (0) 2890 255346 Email: donnacha.doody@afbini.gov.uk

Dr. Helen Sheridan, School of Agriculture & Food Science, Agriculture and Food Science, Belfield, Dublin 4

Tel: +353 1 7167010 Email: helen.sheridan@ucd.ie

Application Procedure

Submit an electronic copy of Curriculum Vitae and a letter of interest simultaneously to:

Dr. Donnacha Doody (donnacha.doody@afbini.gov.uk)

Dr. Helen Sheridan (helen.sheridan@ucd.ie)

Closing date

31st May 2013