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# Tackling the Nature Crisis Fellowship

Welsh Government are inviting proposals for a Fellowship role to, work within the Climate Change and Rural Affairs (CCRA) Department to analyse the evidence base for tackling the nature crisis in Wales. This position aims to support the development and understanding of what reversing the decline of biodiversity could look like in the future, given proposed substantial land use changes and embedded climate change. This analysis is crucial in the work to produce legally binding targets which is a Welsh Government Priority,

*“****Biodiversity*** *– Agree that targets…have a role to play in helping to protect and restore biodiversity for species and habitats in our terrestrial and marine environments."*

The Co-operation Agreement 2021

The aim of the work is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the existing evidence and new research needed to inform the evidence base for developing a baseline and protocol for measuring biodiversity in the future and contribute to understanding of the actions needed across Government to support nature recovery.

This position will work in a multi-disciplinary evidence team supporting a wider programme to contribute to delivering robust, evidence-based decisions within Welsh environment and agriculture policy. The team works through research to promote collaboration between policy, business and land management partners to deliver desired policy outcomes. Being based in the evidence team will give the Fellow a team of evidence and analysis experts to draw on, however, it is expected that the Fellow will be working closely with the Welsh Government and NRW biodiversity policy teams throughout the tenure.

The outcomes of activities undertaken during the Fellowship are expected to lead to new and improved understanding of biodiversity data and data analysis to improve policy decisions and actions to deliver positive outcomes for nature.

Applications are invited for proposals from Post-doctorate Researchers to Senior Researchers and the role is open to candidates to create their own proposal for how a Fellowship may function. The Welsh Government is able to support this as a part-time or full-time role.

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).

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| **HOST ORGANISATION DETAILS AND OUTLINE OF ROLE ON OFFER:** |
| **Organisation name** | [Welsh Government](https://gov.wales/about-us) – Climate Change and Rural Affairs (CCRA) Department |
| **Department** | Strategic Analysis branch within the CCRA Strategic Evidence Unit. The Fellow will be a member of this team but will work closely with the biodiversity policy team and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) |
| **Contact(s)** | Ann.Humble@gov.wales and/or Karen.Stothard@gov.wales |
| **Role description** | ‘Tackling the Nature Crisis’ Fellowship |
| **Research project title** | Biodiversity Targets: Measuring the impact and success of Biodiversity policy actions  |
| **Duration of placement** | 12-18 months, with a minimum of three days/week on average |
| **Proposed start date** | September 2023 *To note* - there is scope to start the fellowship earlier if circumstances allow.There may also be some flexibility around the start date. |
| **Funding** | Welsh Government will provide funding equivalent to candidate’s employment with their academic institution; to an indicative budget of £120,000 full-time. |
| **Working schedule** | The host is flexible regarding this aspect and can be negotiated to ensure best fit for both host and researcher. Periodic attendance at meetings in Welsh Government Offices will be a requirement.Minimum of 3 working days per week on average. |
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| **RESEARCH SPECIFICATION** |
| **Summary of research area and policy context**It is a time of momentous change within Government in the UK. Leaving the EU gives the different Governments the opportunity to chart their own path. However, all UK Governments are dealing with impacts and the aftermath of a pandemic and looming climate and biodiversity emergencies. All of these factors combined with limited resources, means that Governments need to be more focussed and the need to deliver policies that are effective has never been greater. Negotiations at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) agreed a new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in December 2022. The framework sets out an ambitious and measurable plan to implement broad-based action to bring about a transformation in society’s relationship with biodiversity and to ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled.Whilst society is beginning to get to grips with the actions needed to tackle climate change, the understanding of the scale of what is needed to tackle the biodiversity crisis is barely understood. The proposed Fellowship is part of a long-term project that Welsh Government is undertaking to explore what is required to reverse the decline of biodiversity in Wales. Our [Programme for Government](https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/programme-for-government-update-december-2021.pdf) seeks to embed our response to the joint crises in all we do and is seeking to put in place a statutory duty and targets to protect and restore biodiversity. Plans for tackling climate change propose to change land use and farming systems substantially, combined with the baked in climate change commitments, means that the future of biodiversity in Wales is likely to be different to that of the past. This Fellowship seeks to support policymakers in understanding the implications for nature recovery programmes and to explore ways to improve measurements of biodiversity to better understand how biodiversity is responding to climate change. This work will inform the action needed to support the recovery of nature in this changing environment. This programme of work will influence policy actions across the CCRA department and the Government more widely, as the Welsh Government seeks to tackle both crises simultaneously. The Welsh Government has a strong and modern policy and legislative base from which to build the actions needed to tackle the biodiversity crisis. The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) has promoted the need for biodiversity to be considered in all policy decisions. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 lays out the principles to be adopted for managing the Welsh environment. The Natural Resources Policy and Nature Recovery Action Plan set out the key policy ambitions and actions. The legislative framework requires that Government takes a holistic ecosystems approach enabling Wales resources to be managed in a more proactive, sustainable, and joined-up manner. Achieving ecosystem resilience lies at the heart of our approach; the DECCA (diversity, extent, condition and connectivity and adaptability) framework outlines our approach to assessing ecosystem resilience.Welsh Government is committed to embedding our response to biodiversity and climate in all we do. The conclusion of the Biodiversity Deep Dive in October 2022 outlines key recommendations we can take to achieve the 30x30 target, ensuring that 30% of our terrestrial, marine and freshwater environment is protected for nature’s recovery. It will be extremely important that the baseline evidence, indicators and targets developed through this work are nested within the Welsh Government Natural Resource Management (NRM) Framework and align with the Wellbeing of Future Generations indicator suite. The NRM Framework consists of an iterative relationship between three key products: 1. The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR);
2. the Natural Resources Policy (NRP); and
3. Area Statements which guide delivery on the ground.

Close working with our Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR Research Fellow), who is developing an Outcome-Indicator Framework for SMNR in Wales, intended to become a core component of SoNaRR, will be essential. Particularly to ensure that the biodiversity indicators and targets developed sit within this and can be reported on through SoNaRR.**Expected outputs**Policy teams across Government are embedding biodiversity action into their policies, however this work has raised questions regarding a baseline from which to start measuring the impact of our actions and more challengingly, what will success look like? This role is aimed at collating the evidence needed for answering these questions. This role will be asked to:* Examine existing evidence base to suggest a methodology for setting a baseline.
* Analyse existing evidence collection measures and methods to make recommendations for new ways of measuring biodiversity to enable Government to measure progress towards multiple biodiversity objectives in an uncertain environment.
* Identify areas for new research to support this work. The evidence gaps analysis will be used to influence Research Councils, Defra and commission our own research programmes.
* Develop an evidence base for biodiversity action to support the nature recovery plan to 2050.
* Consider how this work links with the Marine biodiversity targets, monitoring methodologies and reporting requirements.

The new Kuoming-Montreal Agreement sets ambitious CBD targets. Welsh Government is therefore looking to develop a suite of biodiversity targets, including the proposed target of ‘30 x 30’, (30% of the land and water protected for nature by 2030). This role will be part of the team developing a set of proposed targets for consideration by the Government.* Working within the policy team in developing suitable, future-proof biodiversity targets.
* Working with NRW and other monitoring capability within the Welsh Government on how these targets will be measured and monitored.
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| **OUTLINE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES** |
| The Fellow will be based within the Strategic Analysis branch within the CCRA Strategic Evidence Unit. The Fellow will be a member of this team whilst working closely with the biodiversity policy team and NRW. The post will engage with policy teams across the department and Government to support them in embedding nature recovery in their policy development. The post will also need to engage with the biodiversity monitoring community as the project proceeds. When providing ecological science input into policy development the Fellow would: 1. Act as an expert biodiversity and ecological scientific advisor to Policy teams, advising them and assisting them to consider the latest ecological science and insight into developing policies to support nature recovery.
2. Provide scientific analysis to the biodiversity team to support them in delivering biodiversity policy and support them in advising other policy teams on how to understand the impacts on biodiversity of their policies.
3. Undertaking and evidence review of biodiversity in Wales to develop proposals for determining a baseline for measuring progress against current and future biodiversity targets.
4. The evidence review should also be used to consider how current monitoring systems could be updated to deliver the multiple outputs for the different levels of biodiversity commitments.
5. Work with policy teams to develop ways of measuring success in delivering for nature.
6. Work with the biodiversity policy team in developing targets for biodiversity that are reflective of the above work programme.
7. Support the biodiversity policy team in engaging external stakeholders in this programme of work.
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| **Expected benefits for successful applicant:** |
| This is a unique opportunity to work within Government to influence and shape how biodiversity outcomes are measured and shape how the Government is tackling the nature crisis. It offers the opportunity to directly apply scientific expertise to actions on the ground, whilst developing an insight into the complexities of balancing different policy outcomes desired by Government. As an embedded academic in government, it will give a unique insight into government priorities and how evidence is used on policy making, enabling greater insight for the Fellow and their institution to improve the impact of their research.The scope of work will lead to experience of:* Input into emerging policy development focusing on tackling the nature crisis;
* Input into a programme of work simultaneously tackling the climate and nature crises.
* An understanding of the policy making process and the role of evidence within it;
* Direct influence on the generation of new policies, standards and regulations in Wales;
* Working with policy decision makers and Ministers;
* Opportunities for in-house training and development;
* Working as part of the team engaging with a diverse group of stakeholders from government, regulators, industry and the third sector in delivering a substantial change in biodiversity policy in Wales.
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| **External Stakeholder Engagement:** |
| As part of the Fellowship you would be expected to engage with UK Government, particularly DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), the JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) and UKRI (UK Research & Innovation); as well as the Devolved Administration departments and colleagues in public and regulatory bodies such as NRW (Natural Resources Wales). The Welsh Government will be reporting against international Frameworks as part of the UK so, in some instances of efficiencies, evidence sharing and joint activities may be considered. Liaison with academia via you own networks and the Environment Platform Wales would also be expected. We anticipate that the first phase of this work will lead to a number of more detailed areas of focus (some of which may be taken forward by the same Fellow or subsequent Fellowships).  |
| **Welsh Government support:** |

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| Attendance at meetings in the main Welsh Government office in Cathays Park, Cardiff, and/or regional office locations across Wales (partly depending on the successful candidate’s location) may be required. Access to relevant Welsh Government advisors, analysts and policy colleagues will be available to support this role. |

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| **Fellowship outputs:** |
| In the first 2 months of the role, the candidate will be expected to develop a programme plan of work and agreed outputs for the contract period. It is expected there will be a certain amount of flexibility in the programme to accommodate priority shifts.The successful candidate will report and discuss progress to the steering group on a monthly basis. The role is required to undertake a review of the evidence base and consider current and emerging biodiversity targets and commitments in developing a baseline for measure biodiversity in Wales.This work needs to consider the main drivers of the decline in biodiversity, current measures of biodiversity and how biodiversity may respond in a future environment. The work may result in research suitable for scientific publication, but it is not an expectation of the role. Possible areas of scientific research the successful candidate could address; Improve understand how individual, public or organisation respond to policy interventions;Review frameworks or methodologies for measuring biodiversity;Develop options or models for improving the impact of policy interventions within WG;Translating policy needs into research questions; Interpreting and communications science to non-specialist. |
| **PERSON SPECIFICATION** |
| **Education** * Post-doctoral Mid-career / Senior academic researchers

**Experience** * Applied research in a strategic area of environmental or social science
* Experience demonstrates complex systems and ability to bring together diverse forms of evidence (social, natural science etc.)
* Previous experience of co-production with policy makers, ideally on system level evidence, evaluation, and/or applications of outcome-indicator frameworks.
* Wales specific knowledge and experience or can demonstrate knowledge of similar contexts.

**Skills / Abilities** * Ability to engage widely and quickly build effective working relationships
* Ability to communicate complex information succinctly and in an engaging manner
* Ability to work flexibly in an applied evidence environment (i.e. to be able to make considered trade-offs and be pragmatic where necessary)
* To think creatively and bring new and innovative approaches to bear.
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| **Funding** |
| The post will be funded by Welsh Government and subject to agreement of project costings submitted by the applicant. |
| **Conflicts of interest** |
| These may include for example, commercial interests that may conflict with proposed area of study and/or applicant’s membership of lobbying groups. |
| **APPLICATION PROCESS** |
| This Fellowship appointment process will be managed by Environment Platform Wales on behalf of Welsh Government. Applicants should submit the following documents in response to this research specification to andy.schofield@epwales.org.uk1. CV and cover letter setting out academic experience
2. Project proposal and methodology (drawing on the context outlined above)
3. Project costings and pricing
4. Letter of support from your academic institution

**Deadlines**The deadline for submitting the above documentation is close **Friday, 26th May 2023**. **Criteria*** Awareness of Welsh policy landscape and devolution
* Track record in undertaking ecological or biodiversity research projects
* Understanding of monitoring and evaluating biodiversity methodologies
* Ability to write concise reports
* Ability to present research findings succinctly
* Ability to communicate in Welsh an advantage but not essential.

Applicants can be at a Mid- or Senior-Researcher stage of their career or be able to demonstrate equivalent professional experience gained in a stakeholder organisation. Applicants with a permanent academic position (or equivalent in institutions other than universities) are also eligible.Applicants can be at any career stage but are expected to have a PhD by the start date of the Fellowship position or be able to demonstrate equivalent professional experience gained in a stakeholder organisation. Applicants with a permanent academic position (or equivalent in institutions other than universities) are also eligible. 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 eligible. |
| **WELSH GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT** |
| **Equality**It is our policy to promote and integrate equality of opportunity into all aspects of our business including appointments. We welcome applications from individuals regardless of age, marriage (including equal/same sex marriage) and civil partnership, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, disability, race, religion or belief or pregnancy/maternity.If you have an impairment or health condition, or use British Sign Language and need to discuss reasonable adjustments, or wish to discuss how we will support you if you are to be successful, please contact: Head of Strategic Analysis Ann Humble by email: ann.humble@gov.wales as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.**Welsh Language**The Welsh Government is a bilingual organisation and Welsh language skills are considered an asset to the organisation. We encourage and support the use of individuals Welsh language skills.**General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**This privacy notice tells you what to expect when you contract the Welsh Government and provide us with your personal information: <https://gov.wales/welsh-government-privacy-notice#section-8567> All of the information you provide during this selection process will only be used for the purpose of progressing your application, or to fulfil legal or regulatory requirements if necessary. |
| **ASSESSMENT PROCESS** |
| The assessment process for applications to this call will be considered using a two-stage assessment process. **Stage one**Applicants may approach Welsh Government to discuss the specification in advance of their final submission. Please contact either: Welsh Government: Ann Humble (Head of Strategic Analysis) ann.humble@gov.wales *or*Karen Stothard (Head of Biodiversity)Karen.stothard@gov.walesAll applications received will be assessed by an Independent Expert Panel of Government researchers and users convened by Environment Platform Wales. The panel will make recommendations on those suitable to progress to stage two of the application process.The assessment criteria to be used are as follows and **please note** are not weighted: 1. Understanding of the analytical needs of the host and an ability to grasp and respond to these effectively at pace Subject matter or methodological expertise relevant to the requirements of the specific fellowship
2. The ability to translate complex information and analysis into meaningful narrative for a non-academic audience, verbally and in writing
3. An understanding of the challenges and opportunities of co-production and collaboration including with non-academics and the ability to design and lead activity that supports effective knowledge exchange between research and policy
4. Value for money including where relevant for wider institutional mentorship and support

The grading scale used at assessment stage is given at **Annex 1** Applicants will be notified of the outcome of Stage One of the application process. **Stage Two** For applications that progress to Stage Two, applicants will be invited to attend an interview panel and present their proposed approach for further discussion with the panel. All interviews will be undertaken via the Microsoft Teams platform and will be used to further probe against the assessment criteria. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of Stage Two of the application process and provided with feedback on request.* Welsh Government will use the recommendations of the interview panel along with the overall call requirements and the available budget in making the final funding decisions.
* Welsh Government reserve the right to use the recommendations to create a balanced portfolio for this Fellowship opportunity.
* Welsh Government Vetting Checks will be required to be carried out with the successful candidate prior to any appointment being made.
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| **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND READING** |
| Please contact Head of Strategic Analysis, Ann Humble and/or Head of Biodiversity, Karen Stothard by email: Ann.Humble@gov.wales and/or Karen.Stothard@gov.walesUseful documents to consider (not exhaustive):* [Written Statement: Biodiversity Deep Dive (3 October 2022) | GOV.WALES](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fwritten-statement-biodiversity-deep-dive&data=05%7C01%7CBiodiversityDeepDive%40gov.wales%7Ca675b75f1a114abfe34808daa652898b%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C638005172217636674%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=qLQ2TdB0AsbmFZ%2BjEbYpL%2BxJ0SbFzBW%2BZCX1pCbPgRY%3D&reserved=0)
* [COP15: Final text of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework | Convention on Biological Diversity (cbd.int)](https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222)
* [Natural resources policy | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/natural-resources-policy)
* <https://gov.wales/written-statement-brexit-and-our-land-summary-responses-and-our-response>
* <https://gov.wales/agriculture-wales-bill>
* <https://gov.wales/low-carbon-delivery-plan>
* <https://gov.wales/nature-recovery-action-plan>
* <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/02/food-system-impacts-biodiversity-loss/02-how-todays-food-system-drives-biodiversity-loss>
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**ANNEX 1**

