

TEAGASC PHD WALSH SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Supporting farmers to co-innovate for sustainability: an action research approach to the Waters of LIFE

Walsh Scholarships Ref Number 2023057

Background

This Walsh Scholarship addresses a major implementation challenge of Ireland's Agri-Food Strategy 2030 and the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which is to stimulate, support and enhance schemes that target different local/regional conditions in how sustainability measures are oriented and deployed. In a context where it is recognised that 'top-down', 'one-size-fits-all' approaches are insufficient in responding to environmental/biodiversity conditions at local and regional levels, the locally (or regionally) led approach is identified as crucial for responding to local problems and opportunities for sustainability. This is reflected in the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme. A policy approach to operationalise locally-led initiatives is the use of multi-actor coalitions, involving all the relevant actors (scientists, local government, third sector organisations and, importantly, end users such as farmers), to combine their (localised) knowledges to co-design measures and implementation approaches.

The action research proposed in this WS proposal focuses on the Waters of LIFE, an EU LIFE Integrated Project (IP), which aims to help reverse the deterioration of Ireland's most pristine waters through a Results Based Payments Scheme (RBPS). Implementing a cyclical, action research approach, it aims to identify the successful operationalisation features and group dynamics that lead to more positive and higher impact outcomes for sustainability. The action research will support the Waters of LIFE to implement actions to support the various scenarios of the multi-actor innovation process and to assess and iteratively enhance it all along the process. Learnings from the action research process, conducted through a lengthy period in the field, will take the form of 'good practices' that are transferable to other projects seeking to mobilise and support the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System actors and end-users of locally-led programmes and schemes. This project will directly inform the effectiveness and future design of more participatory dimensions of national programmes, such as future iterations of the Common Agricultural Policy, Water Framework Directive recommendations and Teagasc's Signpost Farm Programme.

Requirements

Applicants should have an undergraduate or postgraduate degree or equivalent in a relevant discipline (gender studies; sociology; political science, agricultural science or similar). The successful candidate should be highly motivated with enthusiasm to develop analytical and field research skills. Non-native speakers of the English language require a minimum score of IELTS 6.0 for entry to the post-graduate programme.

Award

This PhD Walsh Scholarship is a joint project between Teagasc and University College Dublin. The student will be registered at University College Dublin, working under the supervision of Prof James Kinsella in association with Teagasc supervisors (Dr Áine Macken Walsh & Dr Daire Ó hUallacháin). This is a structured PhD programme for 4 years, with the PhD student completing 30 ECTS during their PhD programme. Students select modules in consultation with their supervisor and further information on the PhD programme is available [here](#). The scholarship funding is €25,000 per annum and includes University fees of up to a maximum of €6,000 per annum and is tenable for 4 years.

Further Information

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Prof. James Kinsella jim.kinsella@ucd.ie

Application Procedure

Please submit a Curriculum Vitae and letter of interest to Dr Áine Macken-Walsh and Prof. James Kinsella

Closing date: 31st May 2023