

Phd Research Opportunity

Adaptive co-management as a model for participatory governance in planning for climate change in the coastal zone

Applications are invited for a three year PhD studentship on Adaptive Co-Management (ACM) as a model for participatory governance in planning for climate change in the coastal zone. The project is grant aided under the Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE) Programme 2007-2013, with the support of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The successful candidate will be based in the Coastal and Marine Resources Centre (CMRC), University College Cork <http://cmrc.ucc.ie>.

The aim of this research is to study the feasibility of applying adaptive co-management as a model for participatory governance in planning for climate change adaptation. The proposed approach will accommodate decision making where uncertainties and vulnerabilities are high, whilst taking existing democratic structures into consideration. The study will focus on the coastal zone, where climate change can cause extreme impacts (e.g. coastal erosion, flooding and sea level rise) and accordingly can lead to conflict amongst stakeholders. Findings will be disseminated to the wider environmental decision making community.

Specifically, the objectives of the project are to:

- Examine the experience of participatory democracy worldwide and in Ireland in the context of environmental risk and resource management with a specific focus on planning for coastal communities;
- Scope and identify specific issues, stakeholders and multi-levels of governance in the context of climate change adaptation, where uncertainty and vulnerability is high through a series of multi-scalar case studies;
- Explore the potential to adapt the innovative approach of ACM to an Irish scenario and develop the ACM toolkit (including guidelines, frameworks, software and indicators);
- Verify the feasibility of the ACM toolkit in the coastal zone through existing democratic structures and approaches;
- Make the ACM toolkit available as an on line resource, disseminate findings to policy makers and planners and communicate findings to the wider environmental research community.

The research methodology will consist of 5 work packages, which set out a detailed description of the work, including stakeholder workshops. A number of case studies will form the basis of the study including Cork Harbour, Bantry Bay and the Corrib Gas Field. The feasibility of the approach will be verified within existing democratic structures, including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Water Framework Directive Structures and the Critical Infrastructures Bill.

Candidate: The PhD student will require the following skills profile:

- Relevant masters degree in geography or environmental science
- Knowledge of participatory governance, environmental decision making, public participation, conflict resolution and statutory processes such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, Water Framework Directive and environmental policy
- Interest in dealing with stakeholder groups, policy makers, planners and environmental managers
- Excellent & oral and written skills
- Team working credentials
- Experience of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and an interest in web communication technologies

Duration, fees and stipend: Duration is for 3 years, fees will be covered at EU level only. Additional stipend @ €14,000/year tax free.

Application: The closing date for applications is **30th January 2009**. Candidates should submit their *curriculum vitae* including nominated referees via email to Grainne Lynch: grainne.lynch@ucc.ie.