

Consumer understanding of the bioeconomy and bio-based products

TEAGASC 4 YEAR PHD WALSH FELLOWSHIP
Walsh Fellowship Number: 2018204

Teagasc & University College Dublin

BEACON Bioeconomy Research Centre is a newly established Science Foundation Ireland Research Centre performing both blue skies and industry focused research to build and support the development of Ireland's bioeconomy. The Centre brings together a team of researchers from across a range of disciplines including biotechnology, systems and synthetic biology, chemistry, chemical and bioprocess engineering, agri-food, agriculture, animal and human nutrition, marine, business and social sciences.

The centre represents a national collaboration between University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, Teagasc, National University of Ireland, Galway, University of Limerick and industry partners.

Project Details:

Background

Globally, the bioeconomy accounts for 13% of world trade. Within the EU it provides 18.6 million jobs and a €2.2 trillion turnover. It offers Ireland significant economic benefits, an opportunity to create additional natural bio-value, to address issues such as climate change, food and water security, soil degradation, and rural development, and to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The development of national policy statement on the bioeconomy, led by the Department of the Taoiseach, highlights its potential significance for Ireland. Consumer demand will be critical in realising opportunities. Thus it is timely to seek to understand consumers' current understanding of the bioeconomy and its associated terms, and their awareness and potential attitudes towards bio-based products, so as to support the development of a consumer-friendly lexicon relating to the bioeconomy and thereby facilitate science communication and informed consumer decision-making regarding bio-based products.

By adopting a mixed method approach to the research, this study will gain better understanding of consumers' understanding and interpretation of the bioeconomy including concepts and lexicon used. It will engage with other BEACON projects to identify inputs/source materials, technologies and products/ services that may have consumer acceptance challenges and require assistance in terms of effective engagement with consumers (to inform decision making and to avoid out of hand rejection).

Ultimately, it will inform the science community in their framing of scientific messages related to the bioeconomy to the public and also inform key company strategic decisions related to marketing, communication, and brand development of bio-based products.

Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants should have or expect to have a good primary degree (First or Second Class Honours) in an appropriate discipline (e.g. Marketing, Business, Psychology, Sociology, Geography, Linguistics). A Masters in an appropriate discipline is desirable. The successful candidate should be highly self-motivated and be prepared to undertake fieldwork using a range of data collection techniques.

How to apply:

Further Information/Applications

Dr Maeve Henchion, Dept. of Agrifood Business and Spatial Analysis, Teagasc, Food Research Centre, Ashtown, Dublin 15, Ireland Phone: +353 (0)1 8059515 email: maeve.henchion@teagasc.ie

Dr Eoin O'Neill, UCD Earth Institute, UCD Planning & Environmental Policy, Richview, Belfield, Dublin 4, Phone: +353(0) 1 716 2674 email: eoin.oneill@ucd.ie

Interested candidates are requested to submit an electronic copy of Curriculum Vitae and a letter of interest simultaneously to Dr. Eoin O'Neill and Dr. Maeve Henchion by 5 pm Monday June 11th 2018. Interviews will be held with potential candidates shortly thereafter.

Funding Notes

This four year Teagasc Walsh Fellowship forms part of a joint research project between the Department of Agrifood Business and Spatial Analysis, Teagasc and the Earth Institute in UCD. The student will be based in UCD for the first year to undertake course work and will be subsequently based at the Teagasc Food Research Centre at Ashtown, Dublin 15. S/he will be co-supervised by Dr Maeve Henchion and Dr Eoin O'Neill. The Fellowship will start as soon as possible after 1st of September 2018 when the most suitable candidate is appointed. The Fellowship comprises an annual stipend of €18,500 and a €5,500 fee contribution per annum, and is tenable for 4 years.