



Teagasc PhD Walsh SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

“Influence of evaluation capacity and practices of agriculture research institutes on the impact of research activities”

Walsh Scholarship Number: 2022025

The Project

There is an increasing need to show evidence of the beneficial outcomes of national public investments in agricultural research. To date, impact evaluations predominantly focus on intended results of planned, clearly demarcated interventions, i.e. projects for accountability purposes notwithstanding the longstanding critique regarding their limited value for understanding problems, learning to create potential solutions collectively and system change. To have an impact on complex problems, research institutes need to acknowledge the multitude of influential factors causing an inherent unpredictability of the change process and an attribution problem in the practice of evaluation. Therefore, in this research, the following question will be answered: *How do external demands and internal drivers influence the evaluation capacity and evaluation practices of agriculture research institutes and what does this mean for the impact of their daily research activities in the light of broad institutional missions.*

The Opportunity

This is an exciting opportunity to carry out postgraduate research with a strong international component. The focus of the Walsh Scholar's PhD research will include:

1. Carrying out a comparative case study of research evaluation perspectives, goals, capacity and practices at three agricultural research institutes (Teagasc-Ireland, AgResearch-New Zealand, and INIA-Uruguay).
2. Implementing an in-depth Teagasc case study of two to three portfolios of research activities to understand the relationships between evaluation capacity, evaluation practices and impact.
3. Using an action research approach, help institute personnel and other relevant actors to reflect on the intermediate outcomes of the research about standing evaluation practices.
4. Supporting a learning process to exchange research findings and experiences among the three research institutes and promote institutional learning in their own networks.

Award

The scholarship will commence no later than autumn 2022 and is full-time. The funding is €24,000 per annum, includes University fees of up to a maximum of €6,000, and is tenable for 4 years. The scholar will be registered with Wageningen University & Research and will be located in the university for years 1 and 4 and at Teagasc (Athenry, Co. Galway or Ashtown, Dublin) for years 2 and 3. She/he will work under the supervision of Dr Barbara van Mierlo, Wageningen in association with Dr. Kevin Heanue, Teagasc Ireland. Other members of the supervisory team are Cees Leeuwis, Wageningen University, James Turner, AgResearch, Maeve Henchion and Aine Macken Walsh, Teagasc. Training will be provided by the Wageningen School of Social Sciences.

Requirements

Applicants require a Masters degree in a relevant social science discipline with a broad and interdisciplinary interest. Applicants should have a good understanding of the agriculture research, issues related to agri-food systems and the impact of research. The successful candidate will be self-motivated and prepared to work as part of a team and independently. A full driving licence, valid in Ireland and The Netherlands is also desirable. Candidates whose degree was not taught in English must meet the University's English language requirement.

How to apply?

Please submit your application online at [Scholarship Sandwich PhD position: Influence of evaluation capacity and practices of agriculture research institutes on the impact of research activities - WUR](#)

Closing date for applications: 31st March 2022. First round of interviews will take place on April 8th 2022.

For clarification/informal discussion please contact either:

- Dr Barbara van Mierlo, Wageningen University & Research. Email: barbara.vanmierlo@wur.nl
- Dr Kevin Heanue, Teagasc. Email: kevin.heanue@teagasc.ie