



## Research Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Assistant

### EcoFoodSystems Project

### Agriculture & Bioeconomy Research Centre, Ryan Institute

### College of Science & Engineering

### Ref. No. University of Galway 332-22

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for a full-time fixed-term position as a **Research Monitoring Evaluation & Learning (MEL) Assistant** with the EU/IFAD-funded EcoFoodSystems project in the research group of Prof. Charles Spillane within the Agriculture & Bioeconomy Research Centre at the Ryan Institute at the University of Galway.

This position is funded by the **European Union (EU)** and is available from immediately to Project contract end date of 30/09/2026.

**Project Title:** Climate-resilient agroecological transitions of food systems (EcoFoodSystems).

**Objectives & overview of the project:** The research and innovation goal of the EcoFoodSystems project is to develop a systems-based approach for agroecological transitions of urban and peri-urban food systems for improved health and climate resilience, with corresponding decision-support tools and multi-stakeholder platforms to facilitate coordinated, landscape-scale transitions to navigate associated benefits and trade-offs for both rural and urban communities within city region food systems. The EcoFoodSystems project will engage in development and co-creation of sub-national decision-support dashboards and decision-support tools in collaboration with city regional stakeholders, end-users, and beneficiaries in the food systems of selected city regions in Ethiopia, Vietnam and Colombia. See: [www.ecofoodsystems.org](http://www.ecofoodsystems.org)

By 2050, more than two thirds of the world population will be living in urban areas, the majority living in cities. Food systems serve diverse farmer and consumer constituencies with differentiated impacts on sustainability, economic growth, social inclusion and nutrition. A rural-urban food systems transition focus is critical to ensuring sustainable rural development in concert with transitioning of food systems in city regions towards more sustainable, resilient, and healthy dietary outcomes. The EcoFoodSystems project places particular emphasis on linking national to subnational food systems (including data systems for decision-support) in each of the three countries to generate data and knowledge for more effective decision-making that enables climate-resilient agroecological transitions of food systems.

Led by the University of Ireland Galway, with global partners including CIAT-Bioversity Alliance, Wageningen University and Research (WUR) and RIKOLTO, the EcoFoodSystems project builds from previous food systems activities and processes in Ethiopia, Vietnam and Colombia. EcoFoodSystems will: (1) Develop a systems and evidence-based approach for priority-setting and targeting of landscape, value chain, community and farm scale agroecological intensification interventions/innovations that enable socially-inclusive food system and nutrition transformations; and (2) Co-create scaling strategies for agroecological innovations to enable City-Regional food systems transitions that improve sustainability, nutritional security and climate resilience in each country with relevant stakeholders.



### **Job Description:**

The successful candidate will be responsible for the providing expert support to Research Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning work in the overall project, under the direction of the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators, to support the design, development and implementation of high quality and robust monitoring, evaluation, learning and communication processes and systems that uphold EcoFoodSystems project reputation to generate research and innovation outcomes that are critically reflective, analytical and impactful.

### **Duties:**

- To support the team in establishing and implementing a robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system for the EcoFoodSystems project that facilitates the project's goals.
- To design and conduct with EcoFoodSystems researchers baseline surveys against which research progress and impacts of the EcoFoodSystems project can be measured.
- To support learning processes such as reflection and review processes, Theory of Change development and iteration, log frames, Activity Matrices and results frameworks.
- Assist in design of performance plans for the project and monitoring of the implementation process to track milestones and report on progress of the selected performance indicators for outputs.
- Participate actively in project review and planning meetings and in reporting on performances and effectiveness of interventions.
- Be responsible for data and research progress indicator collection, analysis and communication from all researchers and partners in the EcoFoodSystems project.
- To help with development of M&E & learning components for new programme proposals, including M&E budgets.
- To conduct the collation and analyses of MEL data.
- Be willing to travel globally, including to partner countries and sites, to work with researchers, partners and stakeholders on EcoFoodSystem activities.
- Ensure consensus amongst the EcoFoodSystems researchers and innovators towards a common MEL-C goals of the project.
- Draft reports for funding agencies and engage in development of proposals for additional funding.
- Keeping appropriate records as directed and in line with Funder/University policy.
- Working closely with Professor Spillane and other members of EcoFoodSystems research team on an on-going basis to support the efficient functioning of the EcoFoodSystems project.

The EcoFoodSystems Monitoring Evaluation Learning (MEL) Officer will be supervised by Prof. Charles Spillane.

### **Qualifications/Skills required:**

- Degree of relevance to (MEL) monitoring, evaluation and learning of research programs.
- Professional research monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) skills, with demonstrated proficiency in relevant methodologies, tools, and techniques; professional certification in MEL is an advantage.
- Knowledge of MEL methodologies both quantitative and qualitative.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and organisational skills.
- Experience in designing and implementing MEL activities for research, innovation and scaling activities, ideally in an international development context.



- Willingness to travel to partner countries for project activities.
- Understanding of international agricultural research and food systems activities, needs and priorities, particularly of donors, multilateral orgs (e.g. IFAD), national systems, CGIAR system, value chains, stakeholder groups and beneficiaries.
- Data management, data analysis and scientific/report writing skills.

**Desirable Requirements:**

- Experience or interest on topics of relevance to the EcoFoodSystems project (e.g. food systems, scaling pathways, dietary transitions, environmental footprinting and modelling, data and policy analysis, impact pathways).
- Experience in international agricultural or agrifood systems development arena is an advantage.
- Experience in big data, smart cities and use of large datasets for enabling decision making by governments, companies, consumers and all stakeholders, particularly in context of developing countries.
- Excellent written and oral communication, editing, and reporting skills.
- Skills in data analysis and visualisation tools such as R, SPSS, Tableau etc.
- Ability and willingness to work in and promote diverse multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary environments.

Employment permit restrictions apply for this category of post

**Salary:** Research Assistant point 1 €28,701 – point 13 €38,390 per annum pro rata for shorter and/or part-time contracts (public sector pay policy rules pertaining to new entrants will apply).

**Start date:** Position is available from 10.02.2023

**Continuing Professional Development/Training:**

The University of Galway provides continuing professional development supports for all researchers seeking to build their own career pathways either within or beyond academia. Researchers are encouraged to engage with our Researcher Development Centre (RDC) upon commencing employment – see [www.universityofgalway.ie/rdc](http://www.universityofgalway.ie/rdc) for further information.'

Further information on research and working at University of Galway is available on [Research at University of Galway](#)

For information on moving to Ireland please see [www.euraxess.ie](http://www.euraxess.ie)

Further information about EcoFoodSystems project is available at [www.ecofoodsystems.org](http://www.ecofoodsystems.org)

**NB:** Garda vetting is a requirement for this post (as appropriate to Child Protection Policy)

**To Apply:**

Applications to include a covering letter, CV, and the contact details of three referees should be sent, via e-mail (in word or PDF only) to Prof. Charles Spillane [Charles.spillane@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:Charles.spillane@universityofgalway.ie)

Please put reference number **University of Galway 332-22** in subject line of e-mail application.



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HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

**Closing date for receipt of applications is 5.00 pm 31.01.2023**

We reserve the right to re-advertise or extend the closing date for this post.

The University of Galway is an equal opportunities employer.

All positions are recruited in line with Open, Transparent, Merit (OTM) and Competency based recruitment

**(Please advise HR if you wish to use any funding agency logos. These will be included at the end of advert)**

