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COLLOQUIUM NEWS

Last colloquium

The fifth Environmental Researchers Colloquium took place in University College Cork on 13-15 January 1995. It was attended by over 410 delegates, including many young people working in the environmental area (notably post-graduate students), making this probably the largest annual meeting in the environmental area in Ireland. The colloquium was divided into topic areas ranging from ecotoxicology to forestry to ornithology. There were 95 oral, and 62 poster, presentations. Authors were given the opportunity to revise their abstracts for publication in the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy; Biology and Environment. About 60 % of the abstracts were finally submitted, and it is intended to have these published by the end of 1995. The colloquium cost £7,400, and was generously sponsored by URGE, EPA, UCC, Guinness, Ffyes, Jannsen, and the ESB. As part of the colloquium there was the formal launch of the Environmental Association of Ireland, and a Council was elected.

Dr John O'Halloran for the organising committee.

Next colloquium

Venue: University College Dublin.

Dates: Evening of Friday 12 January 1996 until lunchtime Sunday 14 January 1996.

Offers of papers: If you wish to give a paper, either as a talk or poster, you must submit an abstract by Friday 13 October 1995 (a memorable date!).

Contact: Anne Johnson, Environmental Institute, Richview, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14.
Tel . 01 - 269 7988; fax - 283 7009.

ADVERTISING

With the prior approval of the council, the newsletter will include advertisements. A half page ad will cost £40. An advertising brochure will be included with the newsletter for £75 (or more if it significantly increases mailing weight).

Members names and addresses will not be provided to commercial concerns.

ENVIRONEWS is distributed free to members of EAI

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EAI AFFAIRS

The Council officers for 1995

Chair Prof. E. Colleran, Vice-chair Prof. P. Giller, Secretary Dr J. Good, Treasurer Dr J. O'Halloran, and Editor Dr M.J. Costello.

EAI Membership

In March 1995 there were 153 members, including 51 at the reduced subscription rate (mainly students). Sixty members availed of the reduced subscription to the Royal Irish Academy journal *Biology and Environment*.

To join send your name, address, and membership fee to the Treasurer, Dr J. O'Halloran, Dept. Zoology, University College, Cork.

Constitution

Following comments from members (at the inaugural AGM and in writing afterwards) concerning the draft constitution, the Council has prepared a second draft. Comments are welcomed on this draft, and they should be posted to the Secretary. Should Council proceed to register the association as a limited company or charity, further changes would be necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICATIONS

Environment Bulletin

An essential, and free, source of information on a wide range of environmental activities in Ireland. The emphasis is on national and local government developments, including environmental regulations, events, funding, statistics, and other news. To get on the mailing list contact Mr Fergus Doyle, Environment Awareness Section, Dept. Environment, Custom House, Dublin 1.

Biology and Environment

This is the dramatically revamped version of the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. It has both an attractive colour cover and layout, and a series of papers concerning aspects of Irelands environment. Because all papers are rigorously reviewed by two anonymous referees and the editors before acceptance this ensures scientific high standards. The editors encourage the submission of papers on all aspects of Irelands environment. The EAI has negotiated a special subscription rate to B & E for its members in 1995. Normally £25 per annum, EAI members may receive the journal for £20. EAI asks members to avail of this reduced subscription as if there is insufficient demand the Academy may not renew the reduced rate.

EDMED

The Irish version of the "Extended EDMED" computerised directory of marine environmental data on two PC-compatible diskettes has been published by the Irish Marine Data Centre. Contact Orla Ni Cheileachair at IMDC, 80 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2; fax 01-4757104; E-mail orla.ismare@eurokom.ie.

World Wide Web

Those who have access to the Internet will have discovered the "World Wide Web". This is like an information board on which people and institutes can place information and this is accessed by either one searching through keywords on "Mosaic" (a search facility for the Web), or if you know an address code by typing this in directly. For example, information on all EU research programmes can be accessed by typing <http://www.cordis.lu/> at the prompt. CORDIS is also available free on CD-ROM and is frequently updated. Contact CORDIS by tel. +352-34.981240, fax -981248, e-mail helpdesk@cordis.lu.

Please send brief reviews of other environmental publications (with a copy if possible), be they books, magazines, or electronic (diskettes, WWW) which may interest members to ENVIRONEWS.

PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS

Registration and / or Accreditation

Role of EAI

It is one of the aims of EAI to promote good professional practice in environmental work in Ireland. How EAI will do this, and whether it will become involved in registration or accreditation, is up to its members. Registration is a procedure whereby ones peers recognise ones competency in an area, and accreditation is where standards of competency are legally required to practice. These two options are not mutually exclusive, and EAI could facilitate either or both for a sector of its members if it wished. However, before one embarks on either of these options, it may be worth establishing a code of ethics for environmental workers (commercial practice and research) in Ireland. The development of such a code may pave the way for more binding procedures in the future.

Setting standards

If it is decided to establish a Registration or Accreditation procedure careful thought will need to be given as to what qualifications and experience to accept. For example, a first degree in an environmentally related subject may not be sufficient, but this plus relevant work experience or a higher degree may be. Making these decisions for established professions which recruit from vocationally orientated courses (e.g. engineering, dentistry, pharmacy) may be straightforward. However, considering the wide range of training of existing environmental researchers and consultants, and their equally wide range of work, establishing standards will be difficult. Undoubtedly, there will have to be an element of trust that environmental professionals will not practice outside their area of competence.

Employer recognition

Most importantly, it would be essential that government authorities and other employers of environmental professionals would recognise the significance of Registration and Accreditation. Such recognition may take the form of their requiring persons submitting tenders for contracts to have certain professional standards recognised by EAI. Indeed, prior consultation and agreement with their representative bodies would be a key element to successful implementation of professional standards.

Overseas work

In view of the limited size of the Irish market, environmental professionals based in Ireland may wish to tender for work abroad, both within the European Union and beyond. It would thus be advantageous for Registration and Accreditation obtained in Ireland to be recognised overseas. This may be possible by either mutual agreements with similar bodies overseas, or EAI facilitating Registration by an overseas organisation rather than forming its own Register. The latter may also have financial consequences in that while the costs to EAI in Register management may be reduced, a fee would almost certainly be payable to the overseas organisation.

In future newsletters, it is intended to publish information on professional bodies active in the environmental area in Ireland as such information becomes available.

How much should environmental consultants charge?

This suggestion may start a debate but here goes. The costs involved in environmental work may be divided into Time, Overheads and Expenses. However, despite the best cost estimates, one must still be competitive and perhaps negotiate a lower price than one might wish to ensure obtaining a contract. One may afford to charge this lower price by accepting a lower annual salary, or working evenings, weekends and taking less holidays. This is particularly the case where one is building a reputation. Persons who have established a reputation as being able to do good work on time, or as having a rare expertise, may be able to afford to charge a higher price.

1. Time

Start by setting a reasonable annual salary (gross + employers contribution to PRSI and pension) for ones qualifications and experience. If one then allows for bank holidays and about 25 days leave, there are 225 working days (about 1700 hours) p.a. If one day in five is spent in a non-earning activity, such as tendering, company management, or study, there are about 175 earning days (1300 hours) p.a. In conducting a contract, time spent in both meetings, fieldwork, labwork, deskwork and preparation for these activities is chargeable. Two examples are given below, one being perhaps an experienced professional with special expertise in an area, and the other a less specialised environmental professional (e.g. recent MSc graduate). These examples suggest that minimum prices for an environmental consultant would range from £35 per hour and £250 per day, with £15 per hour and £110 per day for an assistant.

	RATE	EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2
Salary	Annual, gross	£25,000	£15,000
Employers PRSI	@ 12.5 %	3,125	1,875
Employers Pension	@ variable: 13.5 % 5.0 %	3,375 ---	--- 750
Total salary	Annual	31,500	17,625
175 earning days	Daily	180	100
1300 earning hours	Hourly	24	14
Overheads on time	@ 40 % total salary	12,600	---
	@ 10 % total salary	---	1,763
Salary + overheads	Annual	44,100	19,388
	Daily	252	111
	Hourly	34	15

2. Overheads.

This includes your business accomodation (office, lab) rent and facilities, vehicles and equipment, and other background costs. Telephone, fax, stationery, photocopying, postage, would all be included unless a contract incurs significant and accountable costs in this area which can be directly charged to the customer. If one employs secretarial or other support staff then their salaries must be added to the cost. One mechanism for calculating overheads is to divide the annual costs by the number of earning days and calculate a daily or hourly rate as for a salary. The purchase cost, lifespan, and resale and replacement value of equipment can be determined so the cost can be allocated to earning days. Universities charge 40 % overheads to industrial contracts, 20 % to European Union Research programmes, and may charge by other means on occassion. For instance salaries may be charged an overhead of 100 % (i.e. doubled) and the cost included as a salary charge in the contract.

3. Expenses

All readily identifiable costs related to a contract should be charged additional to time and overheads. This would include travel, subsistence, report copying and binding, photography, and equipment hire.

Opportunities

..... *for mobile researchers*

Probably the best options for young mobile researchers at present are to apply to gain experience working in other European countries. The European Union has several measures which fund placements, and they are valid in EU and EFTA countries. There are three main approaches:

Erasmus For third level students (under and post graduate) who move to a college in another European country for a term or academic year. Funding is insufficient to live on but generally covers the additional costs of moving to another country; the exact amount varies between colleges but is usually over 400 ECU per placement. Main benefits are that Irish students returning from Erasmus placements tend to have increased their marks by 5-10%, and may have learned a foreign language. Additionally, students coming to Ireland tend to raise standards in classes (they are usually older than Irish students). There are numerous schemes and most colleges are involved in some. Contact your college for information.

COMETT For third level students (under and post graduate, and recent graduates) and staff who take a placements in a company or non-educational institute in another European country for 3 to 12 months. In turn, staff from companies and institutes may take a placement at an educational institute. There are a number of COMETT schemes, each with a head office in some country but local contacts in different countries. Students are paid about 300 ECU a month and usually receive additional sponsorship from the host company. They have the advantages over Erasmus in being better paid and provide valuable work experience.

AquaTT is the only Irish led COMETT programme, and specialises in aquaculture training. They gain that essential work experience. Contact Yvonne Shields or Niamh Halligan at 12 Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2; Tel 01-6621200, Fax -6621510.

The **Environmental Engineering Education** university-enterprise training partnership (EEE-UETP) is a network of over 50 companies and universities all over Europe. They provide (a) exchanges for staff, students and graduates, (b) training courses, and (c) publications. It produces a free quarterly bulletin to interested organisations. EEE-UETP is co-ordinated by Sari Taukojarvi, The Finnish Association of Graduate Engineers TEK, Rataavartijankatu 2, FIN-00520 Helsinki, Finland. Tel. +358-0-2291 2256, fax -2924, e-mail sari@tek.fi.

There are many other COMETT programmes with environmental activities; contact any COMETT office for a full list. The current Erasmus and COMETT programmes are due to end in September 1995 but it seems that in the absence of the new programme, called Socrates and Leonardo respectively, being in place they may continue for another few months. Contact your college or the COMETT office for details.

Information on other exchange schemes is welcomed and will be included in future ENVIRONNEWS

Training and mobility programme

This programme has taken over from the EU "Human Capital and Mobility" programme and is similar in content. One can apply for individual research fellowships, to link your group with others in a European network, and to run Euro-conferences. The fellowships are very well paid, and scaled as to whether one is pre-doctoral (i.e. may be PhD student), or an experienced or post-doctoral researcher. Contact Dr M. Lyes, Forbairt, Glasnevin, Dublin 9.

Employment - know your rights

Redundancy entitlements

Employment law (including the Unfair Dismissals Act) in Ireland applies to anyone in a job for over one year, and does not distinguish between temporary and permanent employment. Students which receive payments but do not pay PRSI are not employees and so do not come under these laws. Changes in the employment law and safety at work legislation in Ireland over the past few years are making employers review their personnel management. These reviews primarily aim to protect the employer. Unfortunately, the information they supply to staff (old and new) about their rights and options tend to be limited. For example, how many full-time but temporary contract staff are told that if they work for over two years and their post ceases to exist (e.g. research funding terminates) that they are entitled to redundancy pay? Indeed, in the case of EU contract holders they may not know of this requirement and if they did they could cost it into the contract. The statutory amount is not much, but it is a legal entitlement, and 60 % of the cost is refunded by the Department of Enterprise and Employment. The minimum payment is:

- (i) for persons under 41 years of age = ½ weeks pay for each year of service + 1 weeks pay;
- (ii) for persons over 41 years of age = 1 weeks pay for each year of service + 1 weeks pay.

Pensions

Many temporary contract staff are now in their 30's and more, and should have personal pension plans. In most (if not all) European countries every institutional employer contributes to a personal pension plan for all full-time staff regardless of tenure. Despite the fact that funds may be available from research contracts or employer resources, Irish state and semi-state have been slow in contributing to temporary employees pension funds. This contribution can be significant; for example TCD may contribute an additional 13.5% of a permanent employees annual gross salary to a pension fund each year.

Visiting researchers

If you have a colleague abroad contemplating working in Ireland they will be pleased to know that they are not liable to pay tax and PRSI in Ireland as long as they do not work a day more than two years in Ireland. If they do they are liable for tax for the two years and future years. Even if liable for tax, they may not have to pay Irish PRSI if they already pay it in their native country. This depends on whether Ireland has an agreement with their native country to avoid double PRSI or taxation.

If you have information of possible interest to persons employed by companies, state institutions, or themselves, please send it to ENVIRONEWS.

ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN IRELAND

URGE

The **Universities Research Group on the Environment** is a consortium of third level institutes, formed to promote issues of mutual interest. The main aims are to lobby national and other European government and government bodies (e.g. EPA, EU) to involve the colleges and universities in environmental research, to promote inter-institutional and cross-border collaboration, and to promote the establishment of a representative body for environmental researchers.

The EAI held discussions with URGE in 1994 and is recognised by URGE as the body representing environmental researchers in Ireland. In contrast to EAI, URGE membership is institutional and limited to third level education institutes.

News from the Environmental Protection Agency

In case you were wondering what the EPA has been up to, here is a brief list:

- established a new regional inspectorate in Cork;
- commenced a survey of pesticides in drinking water at end of 1994;
- conducting a survey of trace chemicals in surface water since 1994;
- preparing a report on Lough Ree water quality study;
- conducting national survey of dioxins;
- published BATNEEC guidance notes for the Chemical and Waste sectors in May 1995;
- published Environmental Research Programme and Priorities discussion document in May 1995;
- invited tenders for six environmental research projects, and these contracts will be awarded in June 1995;
- will announce an open call for proposals for a further six to eight projects in June 1994.

Greening of the campuses

Although universities may be perceived to be full of radical "tree-huggers", at heart they suffer all the inertia of any large organisation when it comes to operating in a more environmentally friendly manner. They suffer the range of problems of waste disposal (including toxic and radioactive waste), energy consumption, transport, efficient land use, maintaining historical buildings, that many industries face. In an effort to promote good environmental practice Prof. Adrian Phillips (Natural Resources Development Centre, Trinity College, Dublin, fax 01-6718047) is looking for examples of good practice in Irish and other universities and colleges. Please send information to him and he will provide this newsletter with the news.

New survey of Clare Island

Since September 1991, the Royal Irish Academy has been co-ordinating a survey of the Clare Island area (County Mayo), to assess the changes which have taken place since the RIA survey in 1909-11 under R. Ll. Praeger. There are 27 study areas within 5 sections: Archaeology; Botany; Geology; History, language and folklore; Zoology and water quality. For further information contact Sara Whelan, Royal Irish Academy, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In this section information on environmental education courses (full-time, part-time, field or classroom, at all levels) will be provided if it is forwarded to the Editor. The information will be filed to produce a list of such courses in Ireland.

Environmental degrees

- **MSc Environmental Sciences course (TCD)**

Since 1979 TCD has run a full-time three term MSc in Environmental Sciences. The course covers applied aspects of marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecology and pollution, hydrobiology, groundwater, earth resources, air quality, rural landscape management and agriculture, conservation, laboratory analytical techniques, planning, legislation, environmental assessment and auditing. Examination is by continuous assessment, a research project (thesis) and sometimes written examinations. A maximum of 15 students are selected from the eligible applications by interview. EU students have had their fees paid for them for the past few years but this is not guaranteed in future. Contact Secretary, Environmental Sciences Unit, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

- **MSc Environmental Analytical Chemistry (UCC)**

This course in University College Cork may be taken full-time over 6 terms (2 years) or part-time over 9 terms. Examination is by continuous assessment and a research project.

- **Post-graduate Diploma in Environmental Engineering (UCC)**

This is a one year part-time course open to science and engineering graduates. It emphasises physical aspects of air, water and waste, and how to solve environmental problems.

- **BA (Mod.) in Environmental Sciences (TCD)**

In TCD, science students at the end of their 2nd year can choose to spend their final two years studying environmental sciences. Subjects are similar to the MSc (see above) but there are more biological options due to the input of the Botany and Zoology departments.

Adult education

- **Post-graduate Certificates and Diplomas in (i) Environmental Science and Social Policy, and (ii) Field Ecology (UCC).**

These may be conducted part-time, and include evening and weekend work.

All the universities and colleges run courses which are relevant to, or specialisations within, the environmental area. UCC has brought their environment related courses together in a special directory; Contact the Environmental Research and Teaching Group, University College, Cork for a brochure. In other colleges one must contact the Admissions office or contact individual departments for information.

MEETINGS DIARY

In view of the large number of meetings in the environmental area, only meetings either in Ireland, or major international meetings at which several EAI members may attend, are included. The Editor welcomes short reviews of meetings for this newsletter.

DATES	TITLE	VENUE	FURTHER DETAILS
1995 July 3 - 7	Coastlines '95	Swansea, UK	Sonya Palasiuk, Coastal Conservation Branch, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Monkstone Hse., City Rd., Peterborough PE1 1JY, UK. Fax 0733-555948.
September 6 - 9	Irish Marine Science '95	University College, Galway	Roseanna O'Connor, Martin Ryan Institute, University College, Galway. Fax: 091-25005; E-mail roseanna.oconnor@ucg.ie
September 10 - 15	7th Int. conference on Diseases of fish and shellfish	Palma de Mallorca, Spain	M.D. Furones & C. Rodgers, Apunto, Calle Cofradia de San Miguel 3A, E-07003 Palma/Mallorca, Spain. Fax -34-71-717970.
September 17 - 21	Habitat fragmentation and infrastructure	Maastricht and The Hauge	Congress Office ASD, PO Box 40, 2600 AA Delft, The Netherlands.
September 18 - 22	30th European Marine Biology Symposium	Southampton, UK	Dr P. A. Tyler, Dept. Oceanography, The University, Southampton SO17 1BJ, UK.
September 11 - 16	Strategies and methods in coastal and estuarine management	Trinity College Dublin	Dr M. J. Costello, Environmental Sciences Unit, TCD, Dublin 2; fax 01-6718047
September 22 -23	Global change and the Irish environment	St. Patricks College, Maynooth	Dr John Sweeney, Dept. Geography, St. Patricks College, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Fax 01-6289063
1996 January 12 - 14	Irish Environmental Researchers Colloquium	University College Dublin	Anne Johnson, Environmental Institute, Richview, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14. Tel . 01 - 269 7988; fax - 283 7009
1998 August	27th Symposium International Limnologie (SIL)	University College Dublin	Dr Declan Murray, Dept. Zoology, University College, Belfield, Dublin 4.

Future issues of ENVIRONEWS will contain more information on the topics here, letters from members, news from Europe (funding, regulations), news from around the country, people on the move (new staff, promotions), funding opportunities, and anything else members contribute and wish to read about. The editor welcomes information from these and other topics which may interest members.