

PHC2020/07 – Enhancing the Plant Health Centre's communication with stakeholders

Background: There has been increasing concern over plant health, especially over the past decade. The risks of invasion and spread of new pests and pathogens have escalated due to globalisation, international trade, climate change and changes in social practice. The role of the Plant Health Centre is to improve resilience to plant health threats in Scotland by connecting science to application and inform policy, planning, responses and solutions. To maximise the impact of the work of the Centre, we need to be effective at the production, exchange and implementation of plant health knowledge across the four plant sectors, forestry, horticulture, environment and agriculture.

Following the development of a new Stakeholder Engagement Strategy for the Centre we are looking to commission a project to put this strategy into practice. The project will run for the duration of 12 months (commencing in Spring 2021) and we anticipate that it will be delivered by one or two individuals for approx. 2 days per week in total. The aims of the project are to conduct further research on plant health knowledge flows, develop the Centre's relationship with plant health stakeholders, foster a more dominant social media narrative for the Centre and lead the translation and distribution of knowledge to plant health practitioners. It is essential that the person in this role liaises closely with the Centre's Directorate including the Secretariat and Director, based at the James Hutton Institute (Dundee), and with the Sector Leads based at Forest Research (Edinburgh), SRUC (Edinburgh) and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE, Edinburgh), as well as with the authors of our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and SEFARI Gateway contacts. While we envisage that delivery of this project will involve regular face-to-face meetings with the Directorate and relevant stakeholders, we appreciate that this may not always be possible due to COVID-19, requiring remote working during periods of restricted travel and contact.

We expect the applicant/s to have some prior experience of communications, either professionally or otherwise, although not necessarily in plant health.

Impact:

- Support the identification of plant health needs across the four sectors of Horticulture, Natural Environment, Forestry and Agriculture
- Raise stakeholder awareness about the risks from plant pests and pathogens and the solutions available for their management and control
- Change stakeholder behaviour to enhance plant health
- Raise the profile of the Plant Health Centre and help to develop its on-line resources

Objectives and Outcomes:

- Help to map all of the PHC's potential stakeholders; identify and build relationships with 'key contacts' within organisations and institutions
- Put in place a system for keeping track of stakeholder contacts and interactions, so that stakeholder needs can be regularly gauged and PHC activities communicated back
- Prioritise stakeholders

Plant Health Centre

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- Help with maintaining and building lines of communication with stakeholders, tailored to each stakeholder type
- Explore different media for targeted dissemination of PHC outputs
- Help keep plant health and biosecurity at the forefront of our stakeholders minds, and a high priority for them
- Assess the profile of the PHC within various stakeholder groups, and raise our profile within those groups where we are unknown

Further Information:

- The project is suitable for one or two individuals with a demonstrable track record in knowledge exchange of science output to plant health policy and practitioners, as well as in collecting information and opinion from stakeholders
- The successful applicant/s will need to communicate effectively across disciplines and with colleagues from a range of backgrounds including professional practitioners in Agriculture, Forestry, Horticulture and the Natural Environment, scientists, policy makers and other stakeholders
- Visits to The James Hutton Institute, SRUC, Forest Research and the RBGE offices or other stakeholders is expected where COVID-19 restrictions allow
- The application should cover the applicant's knowledge of communications and stakeholder interactions and how you can assist with taking the Centre's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy forward
- Decisions on applications will be taken by the Centre's Directorate

Indicative Key Dates:

- Deadline for submission of application form: 12pm on Friday 2nd April 2021
- Project start: April 2021
- Overview of plans and project start-up meeting with PHC Directorate: April 2021

Project Duration: this project requires approx. 2 days per week (in total) for 12 months (with the possibility of a 3-6 month extension, if required)

Maximum funding available (including overheads and VAT where applicable): £50, 000

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