

## **Opportunity for Placement Fellowship (Economist) at The National Archives (Ministry of Justice)**

As part of its Placement Fellowship Scheme the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and The National Archives welcome applications from academic economists interested in working in a research capacity in the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), part of The National Archives and a member of the Ministry of Justice family. The Scheme encourages social science researchers to spend time within a partner organisation to undertake policy relevant research and to develop the research skills of partner employees. The Fellowship will be jointly funded by the ESRC and OPSI while the Fellow remains employed by his/her institution. More information on this Placement Fellowship can be found on the [ESRC website](#).

**Project Title:** Valuing information: an economic analysis of public sector information and its re-use.

**Length of Fellowship:** Six months

**Proposed start date:** Autumn 2009

**Applications to be submitted as soon as possible.**

**Location of Fellowship:** The National Archives' sites (Central London and Kew)

### **Expected tasks**

Purpose:

- To understand the role, remit and processes of OPSI as the regulator of public sector information (PSI) and to deliver best practice in pricing, legislation and guidance, and to consider PSI issues raised by the 2009 Budget Report, which sets out a way forward for PSI;
- To review current thinking and approaches to measuring the 'value' of PSI, drawing on academic and Government research into both the impact of PSI on the economy and its potential value for the public, private and third sectors;
- To identify or develop a methodology for assessing the 'value' of upstream (unrefined or raw) and downstream (refined or value-added) data, and to test existing conceptual and practical distinctions between the two activities;
- To undertake - within the limits of the six-month placement - as many of the following tasks as possible: qualitative and quantitative analyses of PSI 'value' in the market in which Public Sector Information Holders (PSIHs) operate; an assessment of the costs and benefits of growing the PSI commercial market; an examination of the potential benefits and efficiencies of using new technologies and online tools; and an assessment of how information trading and re-use fits within the public tasks of PSIHs;
- To communicate research findings and policy recommendations by means of a written report and presentations to senior policymakers and Ministers to

shape and inform policy decisions and to demonstrate the importance of a wider appreciation of the public value of PSI.

### **Skills required**

- A strong recent record of writing peer-reviewed articles or books in economics, or a social science subject using econometrics and economic theory;
- An ability to apply academic approaches to policymaking and appraisal and an interest in improving public sector performance through applied research;
- A knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced in the PSI environment, preferably with previous experience of undertaking policy-related research;
- An ability and willingness to communicate complex technical information and arguments clearly and rapidly to an audience of non-economists;
- A well-developed ability to interact with policymakers and a capacity to respond quickly and effectively to the demands of senior management.

### **Output**

- A written report dealing with the issues listed in the 'expected tasks' section (above), providing evidence and recommendations for future policy considerations;
- An oral presentation of the report findings to senior policymakers;
- Further presentations to key staff relating to the methods, approaches and findings of the research.

### **Background**

Operating from within The National Archives, the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) is at the heart of information policy, setting standards, delivering access and encouraging the re-use of PSI. OPSI provides a wide range of services to the public, information industry, government and the wider public sector relating to finding, using, sharing, licensing and trading information.

The National Archives leads on Information Management (of which PSI is a core part), across the whole of government. Key stakeholders include the Cabinet Office Digital Engagement Department, the Office of Fair Trading, HM Treasury, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. PSI is at the heart of government - it is the fuel for innovation and essential for public service delivery.

OPSI has a central role in government for regulating PSIHs in the context of their information trading activities. The Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS), founded on the principles of openness, transparency, fairness, compliance, challenge, maximisation, simplicity and innovation, provides a level of assurance to re-users of PSI that they will be treated reasonably and fairly. OPSI also investigates complaints against public sector information holders made under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations.

**Application is by the JeS system and should be submitted accordingly. Please refer to the ESRC's scheme specific [guidance notes](#). A list of [FAQs](#) relevant to the Placement Fellowship Scheme is also provided by ESRC to assist you.**

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