**UK-Malaysia Researcher Links Workshop**

**25-29 January 2016**

**Muka Head National Park, Penang, Malaysia**

**Promoting collaboration between the UK and Malaysia**

**Theme***: Conservation of natural resources in coastal ecosystems for the benefit of humankind and global balance*

**This application form has 3 pages.** See pages 4-6 for additional instructions and information.

**Please return your completed application to the coordinators by email.**

**Deadline:** 29 November 2015

**UK coordinator: Dr Julia Sigwart** **j.sigwart@qub.ac.uk**

**Malaysia coordinator: Prof. Siti Azizah Mohd Nor** **sazizah@usm.my**

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| **Applicant**  |
| Name |  |
| Gender  |  |
| Professional position / job title |  |
| Institution |  |
| Postal address |  |
| Email |  |
| Phone number |  |

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| **Confirmation of eligibility** |
| Are you available and able to travel to Malaysia to attend the workshop 25-29 January, and if a place is offered will you accept?  |  |
| Country of residence: UK or Malaysia? |  |
| Year PhD awarded[[1]](#footnote-1) |  |

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| **The workshop will take place in English as standard. Please indicate your ability to work and communicate in English (Note, translators may be provided if necessary)** |
| Native speaker |  | Good |  |
| Excellent |  | Need support |  |

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| **Equality***We wish to ensure equal involvement of all workshop participants, regardless of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, disability, or other considerations. Please use this space to inform the coordinators (in confidence) of any potential barriers to your participation so that we can make appropriate accommodation.* |
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| **Research***Please describe your research interests and expertise (up to 200 words). We seek participants from any field relevant to the sustainable use of coastal ecosystem resources, including ecology, genetics, taxonomy, aquaculture, and social science, law, or others. The workshop will focus on conservation of natural resources in coastal ecosystems for the benefit of humankind and global balance, and the sustainable management of coastal biodiversity.* |
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| **Motivation***Please describe your interest in this workshop and how it will contribute to your professional development.* |
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| **Previous experience***Please describe any experience you have that would be relevant to the long-term goals of building collaborations between the UK and Malaysia.* |
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| **Brief CV** *Please expand these sections as necessary but do not exceed one page* |
| Education and qualifications (degrees, dates awarded, institution) |  |
| Professional positions and Employment history |  |
| Grants and funding (funding body, amount, duration of grant, and your role) |  |
| Three (3) selected publications |  |

**British Council Researcher Links workshop***Conservation of natural resources in coastal ecosystems for the benefit of humankind and global balance*

**Theme**

Coastal environments are essential to human prosperity: from major food sources in coastal fisheries and aquaculture, to the physical protection from flooding and tsunami disasters provided by mangroves and other natural protections. But damage to these resources and the integrity of coastal ecosystems are accelerating due to increased human activities and global climate change. International cooperation is needed to understand how to maintain natural resources. This workshop will focus on sustainable management of coastal biodiversity to preserve ecosystem function while securing livelihoods of local communities for generations to come. In Malaysia, coastal ecosystems are among the most productive and heavily used. More holistic approaches involving ecological responses to disturbances, genetics, and socioeconomic components of coastal systems will shed light on prioritizing important resources that will increase knowledge and motivation for local communities to improve their quality.

Please also see the draft programme on p. 5 of this document.

**Venue**

Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies (CEMACS), field studies centre in Muka Head National Park, operated by Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

**Background**

*‘British Council Researcher Links’* is a programme to provide opportunities for early career researchers from the UK and internationally to interact, learn from each other and explore opportunities for building long-lasting research collaborations.

This workshop will provide a forum designed to build relationships between early career researchers with overlapping interests, to promote collaboration that links the UK and Malaysia. Thus there will be a focus on building links for future collaborations and participants will be selected on the basis of their research potential and ability to build longer term projects.

The coordinators and other mentors will act as moderators for group discussions among participants and provide logistical advice for developing longer-term projects to continue beyond the workshop.

**Funding:**

For selected participants, the British Council will cover all costs related to the participation to the workshop, including: travel (both international and local), accommodation and meals. Costs for visas (if necessary) will be covered.

Participants and their institutions will be responsible for making all the necessary insurance arrangements. Insurance costs will not be covered by the British Council. Therefore, participants are responsible for ensuring they have adequate travel and medical insurance for their trip. Participants who wish to extend their trip are welcome to do so but this will be at their own expense.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

* Applications must be submitted using the Researcher Links application form
* Application must be submitted by the deadline, 29 November 2015
* Demonstrable research experience and expertise relevant to the theme and coastal ecosystems

Participants must be Early Career Researchers: defined as holding a PhD (or having equivalent research experience) and having up to 10 years’ post-PhD research experience. That is, participants will normally have a PhD awarded in 2006 or later; however, allowances can be made for career breaks such as parental leave.

* Participants should have a research or academic position (either a permanent post, independent fellowship, or equivalent research contract) at a recognised research institution either in the UK or in Malaysia.

**Application and Deadline:**

The full application form (3 pages, above) must be completed and submitted by email to both coordinators, by 29 November 2015

Dr Julia Sigwart j.sigwart@qub.ac.uk, Prof. Siti Azizah Mohd Nor sazizah@usm.my

**Assessment of Applications:**

Applications will be assessed by the full mentorship teams in both countries. We will consider the following factors in selecting participants:

* Eligibility
* Experience and relevance of the applicant’s research area to the workshop
* Motivation and contribution to the aims of the workshop
* Ability to contribute to the long term aims beyond the workshop.

**Timeline:**

* The application deadline is 29 November 2015
* We aim to notify successful applicants by 2 December.
* Successful candidates will communicate with our travel agent to make flight arrangements.
* Travel arrangements for UK participants must be finalised before 11 December.
* The dates of the workshop are 25-29 January 2016.

n.b. If you are offered a place, you must confirm your attendance and by available to confirm your travel arrangements in early December, or you may forfeit the funding and your place given to a reserve candidate.

**Equal Opportunities:**

The British Council is committed to equal opportunities and diversity in all its activities and this includes the avoidance of any bias in the assessment of applications due to gender, disability, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or religious belief. Participants’ selection undertaken by workshop organisers must not contravene this policy. Extra support to enable participation of early career researchers with special needs will be given. Please use the space in the application form (p. 1) to inform the coordinators or contact them in advance by email. Your personal information will be treatment in absolute confidence.

**WORKSHOP DRAFT PROGRAMME**

**Site**: Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies (CEMACS), Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. This centre has state of the art conference facilities and on site accommodation in a pristine coastal environment. CEMACS is slightly remote while still easily accessible, providing an ideal setting for the group to focus on the topic without distraction.

**Overall structure:** The activities of the workshop will combine (1) opportunities for participants to brainstorm and develop new collaborations a new projects, to pursue beyond the scope of the workshop and (2) real hands-on experience and training of assessing and analysing coastal biodiversity. The experience of doing a large-scale sampling project in Muka Head National Park will provide valuable scientific experience but also team building, and will produce a data product assessing diversity in the National Park that will be prepared as one of the deliverables of the workshop.

**25 January - Day 1:** Orientation and internationalisation. The training objectives of Day 1 are to aquaint the participants with each other, the mentors, and specifically with the inter-cultural differences between the UK and Malaysia but also between academic disciplines

- Arrival, registration and briefing,

- keynote lectures from network coordinators/mentors

- Informal research presentations, brief introduction from each participant on own research foci and goals

- Inter-cultural ice-breaker session and dinner

- after-dinner presentation: Muka Head National Park

**26 January - Day 2:** The training objective of Day 2 is to establish break-out groups that represent possible collaborative projects. A ‘speed dating’ session in the morning will give all the participants a chance to have rapid focussed idea-sharing interactions in pairs. The participants will privately report their impressions of the most productive groupings to the mentors who will suggest break-out groups for focussed discussion. An informal atmosphere will be maintained throughout so that there is scope to brainstorm new ideas and combinations at all points.

- Morning: Research collaboration ‘speed dating’; mentors use the outcomes of these interactions to propose break-out groups to discuss future collaborations

- Lunch

- Afternoon: Research session, break out groups 1

- Mentor presenations: how to get funding for small and large research projects

- Evening: informal break out groups continue after dinner

**27 January - Day 3:** The training objective of Day 3 is to gain experience in hands-on field work, assessing coastal ecosystems, in terms of data acquisition, techniques and challenges

Morning: briefing on sampling plan and group assignments, demonstration of relevant protocols.

All day: Sampling around Muka Head National Park

Evening: discussion: what are the major challenges to ensuring coastal sustainability? (Based on learning and observations from field work)

**28 January - Day 4:** The training objective of Day 4 is to gain a basic working knowledge of specialist data analysis. We will invite colleagues to deliver expert training in specialist software and techniques relevant to the analysis of biodiversity and community ecology data.

Mini analysis workshop - analysis of data collected on Day 3

- each group from Day 3 to complete analysis for their own sampling assignment

- Afternoon: comparison of results from each group, post-workshop plan for reporting on data results

- Evening: rest

**29 January - Day 5:** Synthesis. The training objective of Day 5 is to achieve a synthesis of all activities, both relationship building (Day 1, 2) and practical skills (Day 3, 4) and thus identify concrete actions to follow up and time scales for future activities.

- documenting plans for linkage among participants and mentors/coordinators through joint research and project applications

- summary reporting of future potential projects from break-out groups

- evening celebration

**End of Workshop**

1. Funding is available to ‘**early career researchers’,** with a PhD awarded 2006 or later; however, allowances can be made for parental leave or career breaks. Please indicate your circumstances under ‘Equality’ if this applies to you. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)