

PhD Studentship Opportunity in Experiential tourism to extend the visitor season in the French-English channel: economic evaluation

University of Surrey, Guildford, UK

- Funding for:** UK and EU Student fees covered. International students will need to cover the fee difference
- Funding amount:** £14,500 in addition to UK/EU student fees
- Closes:** 31st March 2020

This project contributes to realise the potential of common natural and cultural assets to deliver innovative and sustainable growth in the French-English Channel (FCE) region. You will contribute to a large Interreg funded project to reduce seasonality in the Oct-March period by supporting the development of experiential, sustainable tourism offer that improves the economy, contributes to healthy communities and preserves the environment. Your particular role will be to conduct quantitative forecasting and evaluation of the economic impacts of the project. This €23.5m project will provide data from over 1500 new sustainable tourism interventions over 6 regions, giving unprecedented access to appraise how different variables relating to the context and implementation of the interventions affect the outcomes.

The FCE region currently uses a destination-based tourism approach based on conventional, mass-market locations during peak season. Modern travellers are losing interest this type of holiday. Experiential tourism is a growing travel trend based on regional uniqueness. Travellers seek off-the-beaten path, 'live like a local' authentic experiences throughout the year. Regions inside and outside the EU have shifted from destination-based approaches to successfully harness this new experiential trend to extend the season. The FCE region is not popular with experiential travellers despite abundant potential. Current offer does not target the off-season or meet modern expectations, limiting competitiveness in the global tourism market.

To break the cycle and successfully extend the season, EXPERIENCE will develop a new tourism strategy to tackle all the challenges at once. We will capitalise on successes with experiential tourism observed in other countries. We will apply this to the FCE region to attract off-season visitors. The new strategy is composed of 5 delivery plans designed to break existing tourism convention and bring global innovation in season extension to our region. We will:

- Unite and train traditional (tourism offices) and atypical actors (foresters/artisans) to recognise unique regional tourism selling points
- Create new off-season tourism offer, harnessing regional selling points to create exciting itineraries
- Adapt regional summer tourism infrastructure for off-season use
- Promote the FCE region for experiential tourism Oct-Mar
- Ensure offer is demand-driven for continued off-season visitors growth in FCE region

With a budget over €23m, we will test the strategy across 6 pilot regions (Brittany, Pas-de-Calais, Compiègne, Norfolk, Kent, Cornwall) each with diverse characteristics representative of other FCE regions and wider.

This is a 3 year project commencing in July 2020.

<https://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/BXN380/phd-studentship-opportunity-in-experiential-tourism-to-extend-the-visitor-season-in-the-french-english-channel-economic-evaluation>

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