**PhD project**

**The role of emotions in making and communicating science:**

**How knowledge about ecosystem services becomes relevant in policy making**

**Start: September 2014**

**Duration: 3 years**

**Place: Irstea, Grenoble, France**

Applications including a CV, a motivation letter and two letters of reference should be sent to Taru Peltola (taru.peltola@irstea.fr) and Isabelle Arpin (isabelle.arpin@irstea.fr) by end of April 2014.

**Description:**

The concept of ecosystem services (ES) holds promise for social change towards sustainability. It has been designed to invite various social actors, including businesses, local communities, citizens and public decision makers, to recognize and safeguard nature’s values. ES is argued to contribute to such a commitment by drawing decision makers’ attention to the benefit and value of ecosystems to human societies. Therefore, much effort is put on valuating and mapping the ES. Research in science studies shows, however, that scientific evidence alone cannot bring social change. To become effective, scientific accounts of environmental change need to be attached to broader cultural conceptions and narratives. Recently, social scientific research has underlined the role of emotions in making and communicating science. This PhD project aims to document and analyze how emotional narratives are mobilized and circulated in research on ES to justify environmental concern. Popularized by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), the notion has enjoyed considerable success as an argument for nature conservation while also facing harsh criticism within and beyond the scientific community. Triggering strong positive and negative reactions, it constitutes a good case to study how scientists are affected by their research object and use emotionally laden arguments to present their results and convey their message in different settings. The project will explore when and where emotional narratives matter, or do not matter, and which emotional narratives are legitimate in ES research and relevant to the communication of science to policy and practice. The project will analyze, for example, scientific and popularization texts, semi-structured interviews with scientists and focus group discussions with scientists and practitioners who translate the concept of ES into decision making. The project will enhance the scientists’ capacity to reflect on their practice of emotions and improve science communication.

**Steering committee:**

Taru Peltola (Irstea), Isabelle Arpin (Irstea), Céline Granjou (Irstea), Florian Charvolin (CNRS), Sandra Lavorel (LECA)

**Expected competences and skills**

Candidates are expected to hold a master’s degree in social sciences. Good knowledge of science and technology studies and of environmental studies will be appreciated. An excellent knowledge of both French and English is required.