



Irish Uplands Forum

Irish Uplands Forum Newsletter: Upland EIP's News, June 2018

Wicklow

Initiation Document

The Wicklow initiation document was prepared by an agricultural consultant, assisted by members of the vegetation management committee who were involved in the original study of vegetation management in the Wicklow Uplands carried out in 2012-2013. The budget for the EIP is €1,950,000 and it is anticipated to run from December 2017 to December 2022.

Administration

The project will be based in the WUC office in Roundwood, Co. Wicklow

A subsidiary of WUC has been set up to manage the project, in order to meet a requirement by the department to manage the project using an entity which hasn't traded previously. Thus SUAS will be managed by an owned subsidiary of WUC called WUC-SUAS Clg . It has been set up with three directors:

Pat Dunne, Project Lead, board member of WUC and chairperson on vegetation management committee, which developed SUAS application.

Sean Byrne (current chairperson of WUC)

Brian Dunne (Co-ordinator/employee of WUC) as company secretary.

Two bank accounts are being set up as required by the department. Money will be paid into one of these accounts by the department. The second bank account will be used for farmer payments. On contract signing the grant will be front loaded. Further installments will be paid every three months on confirmation of project goals.

Members of the Operational Group for the scheme are:

Brian Dunne (WUC)

Declan Byrne (Teagasc and WUC vegetation management study)

Pat Dunne (Project Lead, board member of WUC and chairperson on vegetation management committee, which developed SUAS application)

Sean Byrne (WUC chairperson)

Owen Carton (Consultant who wrote SUAS application)

Catherine Keena (Teagasc ecology specialist)

Helen Sheridan (Botany/Biology Lecturer UCD)

Enda Mullen (NPWS/Wicklow Mountains National Park)

Monica Gorman (Lecturer in Rural Development UCD)

Sinead Hursen (LAWCO) Local Authority Water Conservation Officer

Tom Doyle (Accountant)

Larry O' Loughlin (Former Regional Manager Teagasc, Communications specialist)

Project liaison persons on DAFM side are currently Margaret Murray and Ronan O' Flaherty who are based in Johnstown Castle.

Staff and consultant recruitment

The process of selecting a project manager is almost complete. From a total of 25 applications a short list of five was made. Interviews have been held and an appointment will be made in a few weeks.

The tender seeking an ecologist to carry out the ecological baseline was advertised on the e-tenders website. The closing date is the 29th June. It is anticipated that the ecological survey will be completed by September.

Additional tenders are being developed for a water quality expert and a facilitator to work with commonage groups. These tenders were also issued last week and have been sent directly to various service providers.

Implementation

The duration of the project is 5 years. Year one will focus on getting groups formed and management plans in place. In Year 2 work will begin on the ground. As there has been a delay of 4/5 months in getting the project started it is hoped that there will be an extension of this time at the end of December 2022.

Advertisements were sent out in March looking for farmers to participate in the scheme. All will be managing upland habitats. They or many not be in commonages. Three commonages and one non commonage upland area managed by an individual farmer have been selected by the operational group. The selection has ensured a good geographic spread (east, west and south). More management units will be involved later this year or early next year.

A minimum of five commonages and two non-commonages will be selected to participate over the duration of the project.

All participants in the SUAS scheme will be required to be involved in training programmes to enable the implementation of the management recommendations. "Commonage Groups" will be set up to enable the implementation of the management recommendation through co-operative management of commonages. Commonage Groups will have a constitution and elect a Chairperson. The group will be paid to attend meetings and discuss and decide how the required management tasks will be carried out.

When the ecological baseline is carried out there will be a lot of time spent in explaining the results to all participating farmers, what good/bad/poor condition looks like from an ecological perspective and the measures needed to improve the condition. This training will be provided to all participants in the scheme, farming in commonages and in private upland. It is expected that there will also be a number of field trips to other areas e.g. Hen Harrier project sites, The Burren, The MacGillycuddy Reeks, The Blackstairs etc.

Contact person for Wicklow SUAS Clg is Brian Dunne. Email:

bdunne@wicklowuplandscouncil.ie

Kerry

Initiation Document

The Kerry initiation document was compiled by a locally based ecologist, assisted by members of the Reeks Access Forum. The budget for this project is €930,000 from April 2018 to April 2022.

Administration

The project will be based in the offices of the local Leader Company, South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd. A separate company was not set up. One bank account has been set up for the scheme.

The project will be managed by the Operational Group. The membership of the Operational Group has not been finalised.

Liaison persons with department Margaret Murray (+new person) replacing Ronan O Flatherty, and Barry O' Connor finance issues. Based in Johnstown Castle.

Staff and Consultant Recruitment

Project will be managed by a full time project manager, part-time administrator and a part-time ecologist. An Admin post has been advertised to be followed by an advert for project manager. A Project Manager will probably appointed in a timescale of five weeks from now.

Implementation

Funding for first six months will be drawn down on the appointment of a project manager.

Funding arrangements similar to Walks Scheme , in that payments to landowners will be requested first from Dept., drawn down and then paid out after checks to ensure compliance.

No local publicity or advertisements yet. Informal liaison with landowners is being maintained through the Reeks Access Forum.

Contact person is Patricia Deane Email: pdeane@skpd.net

Blackstairs

Initiation document

The EIP Project Plan for the Blackstairs was prepared by a consultant team comprising an ecologist and an architect working in partnership with the Blackstairs Farming Group. The proposal referenced reports on Blackstairs biodiversity and farming prepared in 2015 with the support of the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism, the Heritage Council and Carlow and Wexford Local Authorities. The project budget is €1,500,000 for a 5 year scheme.

Administration

The project will be based in Rathanna, Co Carlow in a facility designed and built by a local architect and sub-let to the project.

A company has been set up to manage the project called Blackstairs Farming Futures.

A bank account been set up.

An Operational Group will manage the project. Members of the Operational Group are:

Martin Shannon
Jim Kavanagh
Tomas McCarthy
Eugene Brennan
(Farmers)

John Byrne (Accountant)
Dr James Moran Ecologist GMIT
Vincent O'Connor (Teagasc)
Catherine Keena (Teagasc)
N.P.W.S representative

Liaison persons with the department are Elaine Hickey and Margaret Murray who are based in Johnstown Castle.

Staff and consultant recruitment

About to advertise for an ecologist using local funds. Will also appoint an administrator.

Implementation

Project was profiled in an article in the Farming Independent; otherwise no local promotion has taken place. Informal liaison with landowners is being maintained through the Blackstairs Farming Group.

Project is managed by Martin Shannon, Chairperson Blackstairs Farming Group, Thomas Mc Carthy is Vice Chairperson and Eugene Brennan, is the Secretary and Peter Rose is Treasurer.

Contact person is Martin Shannon
Email martinshannon160@gmail.com