



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

South Kerry Development Partnership CLG

Wishes to recruit

Agri-Environment Officers for the Kerry/West Cork ACRES Cooperation Project

South Kerry Development Partnership CLG are seeking to recruit eight Agri-Environment Officers for the roll out of the Kerry/West Cork Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES) Cooperation Project on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine.

Background

The Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme is an environmentally ambitious agri-environment climate measure (AECM), to be known as the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme ('ACRES'), which will deliver significant long-term environmental improvement through participation by a significant number of farmers on the most appropriate land, with each making a strong improvement on their farm. Using a habitats-based approach, delivered through both multi-functional prescription and results-based actions, ACRES aims to contribute significantly to achieving improved biodiversity, climate, air and water quality outcomes. These will be achieved through two approaches under the scheme:

- an ACRES General approach offering a range of measures for individual farmers (both targeted and general); and
- an ACRES Co-operation approach, available to farmers in defined high priority geographical areas, who opt to undertake measures, as well as bespoke farm, and landscape actions. Farmers participating in this approach will have the assistance of a Local Cooperation Project (CP) Team, who will assist with implementation of the scheme at local level.

The Scheme is co-funded by the National Exchequer and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) of the European Union under Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027

The ACRES CP will be managed by eight Cooperation Project (CP) Teams, one for each of the eight CP Zones.

Following on from the work of the MacGillycuddy Reeks EIP Project and a competitive tender process, SKDP were awarded a contract from the Dept. of Agriculture Food & the Marine (DAFM) to provide management support services for the ACRES Co-Operation approach in Zone 8 - Kerry/West Cork.

The principle of the Co-operation Projects (CP) is that they facilitate the effective implementation of locally targeted and adapted agri-environment measures in identified high environmental priority areas across the country. These include areas dominated by semi-natural vegetation (both privately owned and in commonage), Natura 2000 lands and priority water catchments, etc. These areas are of high nature value, hold significant carbon stores and are home to some of the most pristine waters in the country. This follows on from the successful roll out of the MacGillycuddy Reeks European Innovation Partnership Project (EIP), a locally led agri-environmental scheme led by South Kerry Development Partnership.

Job Description

i. The ideal candidates shall

- ❑ Possess excellent report writing, organisation and presentation skills,
- ❑ Excellent knowledge of the habitats & species associated with the Kerry/West Cork Cooperation area, (available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/76026-common-agricultural-policy-cap-post-2020/>) as well as an understanding of the conservation requirements for the habitats/species present,
- ❑ Possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills and have the ability to engage with a wide range of possible stakeholders,
- ❑ Be enterprising and innovative and be capable of working on own initiative or as part of a team,
- ❑ Possess excellent computer skills, including MS Office packages-Word, Excel, Power-Point and ArcGIS/QGIS.

ii. Character - candidates must be of good character.

iii. Education, Training, Experience, etc.

- ❑ Hold a recognised third level qualification, minimum level 8 (Degree), in the National Framework of Qualifications, in a subject relevant to Agriculture, Ecology, Environmental Management, Environmental Science, Earth/Natural Sciences, Zoology, Botany, Wildlife Biology, Hydrology or Natural Resources Management;

and

- ❑ Have a minimum of 2 years' experience in a role relating to environmental management/agricultural management;
- ❑ Have strong farmland & upland habitat ID skills, including indicator species, demonstrated understanding of their ecology and management;

- ❑ Have knowledge and awareness of agri-environmental schemes such as REPS, GLAS, Burren Programme, MacGillycuddy Reeks EIP, Hen Harrier & Pearl Mussel Project;
- ❑ Have understanding of issues and challenges relating to agri-environmental management & biodiversity in Ireland;
- ❑ Experience managing, analysing and interpreting ecological datasets;
- ❑ A competent Geographical Information Systems user (either Arc or Q-GIS);
- ❑ Experience in the preparation and monitoring of farm plans;
- ❑ Knowledge of results-based schemes would be an advantage;
- ❑ An excellent understanding of National legislation and EU Directives as they relate to nature conservation, farming and land use management;
- ❑ Excellent report writing skills, with strong attention to detail, with a proven ability to work to deadlines and to deliver reports prepared to a high standard is essential;
- ❑ Excellent communication skills with a proven ability to work to foster a positive working relationship with colleagues, landowners, the wider community and external stakeholders.
- ❑ Have strong personal motivation and flexibility, with a positive, solution driven approach to work.
- ❑ Have a flexible approach to working, and a willingness to travel to project sites in the local Co-operation area and to various related events.

iv. Duties

The Catchment Officer will have particular responsibility for the following duties:

- ❑ Liaise with Project Team, farmers & farm advisors for the creation of ‘Farm Sustainability Plans’ (annual work plans) for participant farmers on commonages;
- ❑ Carry out results-based habitat assessments;
- ❑ Be the main point of contact for landowners/farmers & the Project Team;
- ❑ Carry out mapping of habitats for baseline data if required;
- ❑ Support the delivery of training to farmers and farm advisors;
- ❑ Carry out verification checks as required;
- ❑ Provide support and advice to farmers and farm advisors as required;
- ❑ Preparation of reports and presentations for the Project as required;
- ❑ Undertake monitoring & evaluation activities as required;
- ❑ Participate and facilitate in site visits;
- ❑ Organise outreach events as required;
- ❑ Support the dissemination of information on the Project to members of the public
- ❑ Any other duties as assigned by the Kerry/West Cork ACRES Co-Operation Project Team Project Manager from time to time.

Post Location

The posts will be work-based at one of the 4 regional offices throughout the Co-operation area (West Cork, West Kerry, Beaufort & Kenmare) with the possibility of hybrid working arrangements. It is envisaged that 2 officers will be assigned to each location. Candidates should state their preferred location in submitting their applications for the positions.

Employment Administration and Responsibility

The payment of salary, travel & subsistence, and other matters relating to the financial administration of the post will be the responsibility of the South Kerry Development Partnership CLG.

Reporting To

The Agri-Environment Officers will report to the Kerry/West Cork ACRES Co-Operation Project Manager.

Particulars of Employment

The Agri-Environment Officers will be employed by South Kerry Development Partnership CLG on a full time (37.5 Hours per Week) fixed term contract basis. The contract period will run for 5 years. The contract may be extended annually there-after, subject to continuing funding.

Salary

The salary scale for the position will be €43,254 to €49,007 per annum with start point dependent upon qualifications & experience.

Pension

Following completion of 6 months of satisfactory service, the Agri-Environment Officers will be eligible for inclusion in the SKDP voluntary staff pension scheme. For members of the scheme, SKDP will make employers pension contributions of 10% of the gross salary of the participating staff member. The Agri-Environment Officers will be required to make a minimum 5% contribution.

Travelling & Subsistence Expenses: - Any travel undertaken by the Catchment Officer will be paid at approved Partnership rates.

Selection

- i. Selection shall be by means of competition based upon interview.
- ii. A panel will be formed on the basis of such interview.
- iii. Candidates may be short-listed on the basis of relevant qualifications and experience as set out in their application. The candidates short-listed will be invited to attend for interview. South Kerry Development Partnership CLG will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by candidates in attending for interview.

- iv. The Board of South Kerry Development Partnership CLG shall require persons to whom appointments are offered to take up such appointment within a period of not more than one month.

The South Kerry Development Partnership CLG is an equal opportunity employer.

South Kerry Development Partnership CLG acknowledges the assistance of the Dept. of Agriculture, Food & the Marine in supporting these posts.