



Job Opportunities

ACRES – Donegal Co-operation Project

Recruitment of Seasonal Field Surveyors

Introduction

Inishowen Farm Innovations in partnership with Inishowen Development Partnership have been contracted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to operate one of the eight Co-operation Projects that are being established as part of Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan. Due to the unprecedented interest and large volume of farmers accepted into the ACRES scheme we are now expanding our team and are currently recruiting a number of project officers to work as part of the project team across all areas of Donegal. Project officers will play a key role in delivering this new results-based agri-environmental scheme where farmers will be rewarded and incentivised to provide positive environmental outcomes throughout the high nature value landscapes of Donegal (see map below).

Background

ACRES (Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme) is the new national agri-environment climate measure (AECM) that is available to over 46,000 farmers throughout Ireland currently. Using a habitats-based approach, delivered through a mix of results-based and prescriptive actions, ACRES aims to achieve improved biodiversity, climate, air and water quality outcomes. Through a hybrid payment model farmers will be rewarded and incentivised to maintain and enhance the environmental condition of their farms. There are 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 eight high-priority geographical areas, who opt to undertake measures, as well as bespoke farm, and landscape actions.

Farmers participating in the Co-operation approach will have the assistance of a Local Co-operation Project (CP) Team, who will assist with the implementation of the scheme at the local level. Inishowen Farm Innovations in partnership with the Inishowen Development Partnership have been appointed to fulfil the roll of the local CP team for Donegal, referred to as the Donegal Co-operation Project.



Job Description

The primary role of the Field Surveyors is to support the CP Team to assess the habitat condition of commonage lands across Donegal. This will involve a rapid assessment using one of several habitat scorecards as previously used by other results-based agri-environmental programmes. The aim of the assessment is to determine the habitat score of each commonage parcel which will in turn determine the payment level to farmers. Field Surveyors will assist with the assessment of commonage farmland on a seasonal contract running to at least September 2024.

The role will also involve actively engaging with farmers to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the opportunities available to them through the scheme and to encourage their active participation with a view to achieving better environmental outcomes that are most relevant and beneficial to the environmental targets of the local area. The job is an opportunity for somebody motivated to promote farming practices that maintain and enhance the environmental quality of Donegal's farming landscape.

The surveyors will be fully trained in habitat survey techniques and the use of GPS enabled devices in the capture of field data. The work will be mostly outdoors with some time also given to data review and desktop survey planning.

Location

Field Surveyors will be assigned to different local areas within the Donegal CP area which entails an area stretching from southwest Donegal to Inishowen. The role will be largely field based working in remote locations of the county. Some occasional office work will be required with a hybrid working arrangement between home and the local project office depending on project needs.

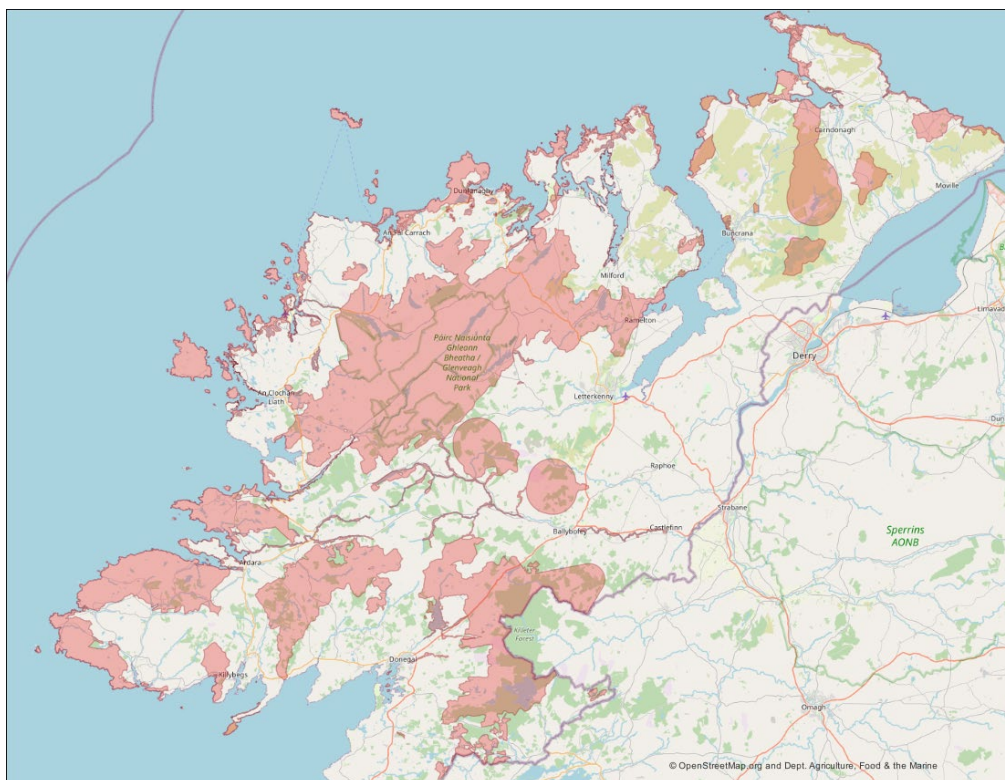


Figure 1: Map showing the local areas within the ACRES Donegal Co-operation Project.



Duties and responsibilities

- Assist the team in the field and support results-based score card assessment on Commonage farmland.
- Undertake walkover surveys of coastal, peatland and upland habitats.
- Liaise with landowners as required.
- Record survey data using digital devices operating GIS software in the field.
- Surveys will require the assessment of habitat condition (biological and physical characteristics) and an appraisal of land-use management.
- Adhere to all health and safety protocols.
- Have an organised approach to surveys by ensuring a survey plan is in place prior to field work.
- Carry out a desktop appraisal of sites in advance of surveys to plan your route and ensure a targeted, safe and efficient approach is followed.
- Attend training as required (e.g mountain skills, health and safety, habitat survey etc)
- Be available to work with and assist the wider team in delivering other aspects of the agri-environment scheme as required.
- Liaise with and provide support to farm advisors.
- Assist in delivering training events to farmers and farm advisors.
- Carrying out mapping of habitats for baseline data if required.
- Assist in liaising with local and regional stakeholders and interested parties on the project.
- Work closely with the wider project team.
- Any other duties as assigned by the Project Manager.

The Ideal Candidate

This role would be ideally suited to someone who wishes to develop a career in the growing agri-environmental sector. The ideal candidate should enjoy working outdoors, have excellent communication and organisational skills, and a keen interest in the environment and agriculture.

Much of the work will be outdoors, must be physically fit / happy to work outdoors.

Qualifications and Experience - Minimum Requirements

- Working towards a degree in agriculture, ecology or related discipline is desirable however other non-degree qualifications may be considered for experienced candidates.
- A full clean driver's licence.
- Applicants should have understanding and interest in agriculture / ecology / agri-environmental sectors.
- Knowledge of farmland and upland habitats (peatland & grassland) and their indicator species.

Qualifications and Experience - Desirable

- Knowledge and experience relevant to biodiversity and wildlife legislation in Ireland.
- Previous habitat survey experience, particularly in agricultural, upland, or peatland areas.
- In depth knowledge of Irish flora and fauna.
- Experience of map reading / navigation.
- Knowledge and awareness of agri-environmental schemes such as REPS, GLAS, REAP, Inishowen Uplands EIP, Curlew EIP etc.
- Experience of using ESRI ArcGIS, QGIS and database management software would be an advantage.
- An ability to communicate in spoken Irish.



Skills and Characteristics

The successful candidate must demonstrate the following skills and characteristics

- Excellent communication skills.
- Self-motivated and have a proven ability to work under their own initiative.
- Have a positive, enthusiastic, pragmatic, solution driven, and flexible approach to work.
- A willingness to actively participate as part of a wider multidisciplinary team.
- An ability to manage their own workload, ensuring that work is carried out safely, on schedule, and to a high standard.
- Willingness to work in remote locations and in poor weather conditions.
- Ability to consider health and safety issues when working in the field and take appropriate action as necessary.
- Good computer skills, particularly in the use of Microsoft Office software.

Salary and Employment Details

The contract period is expected to run until September 2024, and may be extended subject to continuing funding and needs of the project. Opportunities for continued professional development and training are envisaged.

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| Starting salary: | Dependent upon experience |
| Expenses: | Travel and subsistence expenses will be paid on a monthly basis. Field Surveyors will be required to have their own transport. |
| Other details: | I.T/field equipment will be provided. |
| Annual leave: | 20 days per annum (pro rata). |

How to Apply

Please find an application pack at www.acresdonegal.ie/careers

Email CV and application form and contact details of two referees by 12th April 2024 to:

Personnel Manager
ACRES – Donegal Co-operation Project
E-mail: info@acresdonegal.ie

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An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
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ACRES Donegal Co-Operation Programme
Drumfries, Clonmany, Co. Donegal, F93 N793
Tel: 087 338 1548 email: info@acresdonegal.ie visit: www.acresdonegal.ie

