



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

Job Opportunities

ACRES - West Connacht Co-operation Projects

Recruitment of Six Project Officers (agri-environmental)

Introduction

Wetland Surveys Ireland in partnership with The Pearl Mussel Project have been contracted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to operate two of the eight Co-operation Projects that are being established as part of Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan.

We are currently recruiting six project officers to work as part of the project team. 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 West Connacht (see map below).

Background

ACRES - West Connacht Co-operation Projects

ACRES is the new national agri-environment climate measure (AECM) that will be available to over 30,000 farmers throughout Ireland from 2023. 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. Wetland Surveys Ireland in partnership with the Pearl Mussel Project have been appointed to fulfil the roll of the local CP team in two of the eight CP zones (Northwest Connacht and South Mayo Connemara), collectively referred to as the West Connacht Co-operation Projects.

Job Description

The Project Officer's primary role is to support farmers and farm advisors throughout the delivery of the scheme. They will actively engage 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 local area. The job is an opportunity for somebody motivated to promote farming practices that maintain and enhance the environmental quality of the west Connacht farming landscape.

Location

Project officers will be assigned to different local areas within the west Connacht area as illustrated in Figure 1. Candidates are asked to indicate their preferred local area in their application. The role will be largely field based and we foresee a hybrid working arrangement between home and the local project office.

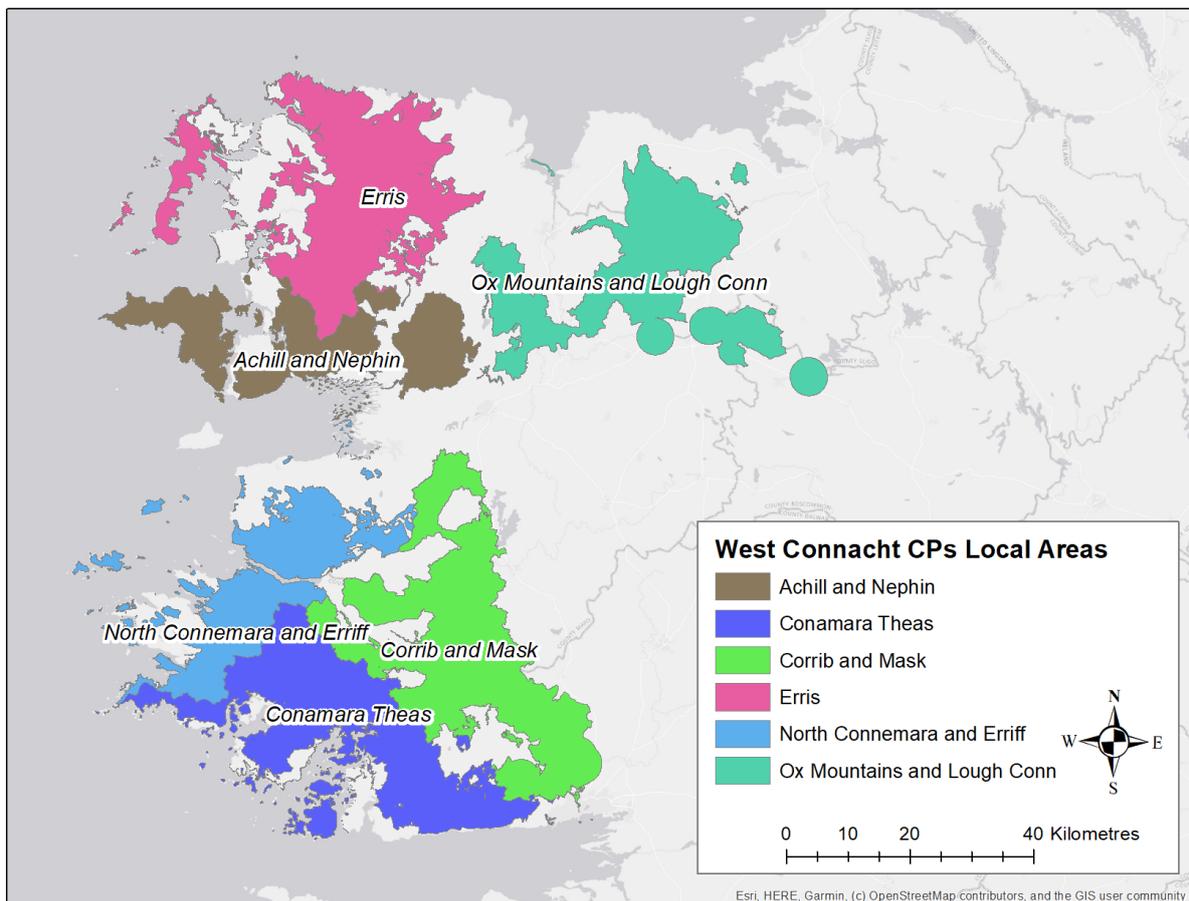


Figure 1: Map showing the local areas within the ACRES West Connacht Co-operation Projects.

Duties and responsibilities

- Main point of contact between farmers and the project team.
- Continual liaison with the farming community in respective local area.
- Provide agri-environmental advice and support to participant farmers.
- Liaise with and provide support to farm advisors.
- Coordinate and deliver training events to farmers and farm advisors.
- Organise and partake in community outreach events (e.g. school visits community groups etc)
- Undertake habitat scoring of farmland habitats (including private lands and commonages).
- Undertake farm visits to monitor farm implementation and success of actions.
- Preparation of reports, training materials, and presentations as required.
- Screening farm actions proposed by farm advisors (includes non-productive investments and landscape actions).
- Liaise 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.

Qualifications and Experience - Minimum Requirements

- A degree in agriculture, ecology or related discipline.
- A full clean driver's licence.
- Applicants should have a minimum of two years relevant work experience in the agriculture / ecology / agri-environmental sectors (those with <2 yrs experience may apply but will only be considered for more junior roles on the project which will be filled over the coming year).

Qualifications and Experience - Desirable

- Post-graduate qualification
- DAFM FAS Approved
- Knowledge and experience relevant to biodiversity and wildlife legislation in Ireland.
- Knowledge and experience relevant to agriculture policy in Ireland including results-based schemes such Burren Programme, Pearl Mussel Project, and other EIPs.
- Strong knowledge of farmland habitats (peatland & grassland) and their indicator species.
- Experience in the preparation and monitoring of farm plans.
- Experience of providing agri-environmental advice and support to farmers.
- Experience of using digital mapping and database systems.
- An ability to communicate in spoken Irish.



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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 on schedule, and a high attention to detail.
- Good computer skills, particularly in the use of Microsoft Office software.

Salary and Employment Details

Project Officers will be employed on a full-time fixed term contract basis. The contract period is expected to run for 5 years, and may be extended annually there-after, subject to continuing funding and needs of the project. We foresee that there will be opportunities for career progression and promotion during the project.

Starting salary: €38,000 per annum (+ 4% employer pension contribution)

Expenses: Travel and subsistence expenses will be paid on a monthly basis.

Other details: A budget will be available to cover the costs of home office set-up and equipment. Project Officers will have the opportunity to contribute to a pension, the employer will make an annual contribution of 4% of salary per annum.

Annual leave: 20 days per annum, increasing to 22 days after one year of service, further increasing to 24 days after three years of service.

How to Apply

Please email cover letter, CV, and contact details of two referees by **Friday 29th July 2022** to:

Mary McAndrew
Project Manager
ACRES - West Connacht Co-operation Projects
E-mail: mary@pmproject.ie