



CIEEM



Increasing Capacity in the Professional Ecology Sector in Ireland

Partner Proposal



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The Issue

The shortage of skilled workforce relative to the current demands of the ecological sector in Ireland has been raised as a concern by CIEEM in recent years (see [CIEEM Briefing Document from February 2022](#)). One of the noticeable effects of a lack of capacity is difficulty in filling positions. In 2021 we asked ecological consultancy employers about their experiences. They reported difficulty in recruitment in the previous 2 years and all but one respondent said they have had to turn down work opportunities due to an inability to fill ecological vacancies. The situation is likely to become more challenging because of an anticipated increase in the need for professionally trained ecologists in response to a growing awareness of the biodiversity crisis and implementation of new government policies across departments in areas such as Nature Restoration, Biodiversity Enhancement and Nature Based Solutions, among others.

We also heard that, whilst, there is greater difficulty in filling senior positions, the lack of necessary knowledge and skills amongst new entrants is also a concern to employers. Multiple respondents highlighted a *“considerable gap in the graduates coming from the various universities in relation to practical field survey techniques and ID skills in particular”*. Full information on this work can be read in the briefing note, [here](#).

Positive actions being taken to address both the biodiversity crisis and the climate emergency are to be welcomed. However, without sufficient ecological expertise in the workforce these actions may not be effective and could be detrimental to achieving the government’s policy ambitions.



The Opportunity

Since the publication of the 'Current Capacity Crisis in the ecological sector' CIEEM briefing paper, CIEEM has engaged with a number of stakeholders including, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS), Solas, and Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). However, resourcing to underpin further research and action is now required.

The [Community Foundation Ireland](#) (CFI) is a philanthropic hub for Ireland and has a mission of equality for all in thriving communities. CFI has invited CIEEM to collaborate on a project that will enable more work to help address the issue. This includes bringing together stakeholders to conduct more detailed research to accurately identify areas and actions to increase future capacity in the ecology sector. This work will be essential if we are to continue to grow a robust, resilient and thriving professional ecological sector in Ireland that is able to respond appropriately to the growing demands on it.



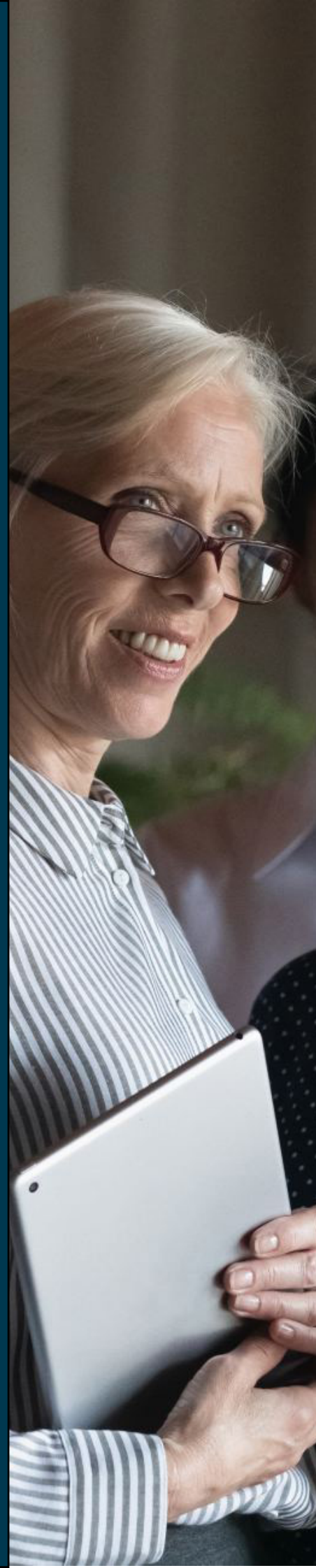
The Proposal

Our proposal is to deliver a twelve-month project to start to address the issues outlined. Over the twelve months we will:

- Identify and engage with stakeholders impacted by the lack of ecological capacity. This will include employers across all employment sectors, policymakers, regulators and developers.
- Collate evidence on current capacity, likely future capacity requirements and potential barriers to increasing capacity.
- Review currently available employment incentives and opportunities that could help recruitment.
- Develop an action plan for CIEEM and stakeholder implementation.
- Produce an evidence-based report highlighting the action required from relevant government departments to help tackle this issue.

To deliver this work CIEEM intends to offer a fixed term part-time employment contract. Project support will be provided by CIEEM's Irish Project Officer, Head of Policy and Head of Professional Practice.

The CFI will fund half of the costs of this work, but we need to find the matching €10,000 required. We are looking for financial and operational investment from consultancies and organisations who are interested to working with us to address the capacity crisis and create an industry in Ireland that people want to join and to stay working in. We are looking for funding partners who can also see the scale of the need, the opportunity for evidenced intervention and the impact we could have through collaboration. We are asking funding partners to commit to investing a minimum of 1,000 euro and help us match-fund the CFI contribution to get this work underway.





Why Your Company Should Invest

Becoming a funding partner will deliver some tangible benefits for your company or organisation.

- Your involvement will be seen by a wide audience, including both current and future employees, as an example of leadership in the ecology and environmental management profession in Ireland.
- You can have substantial input at a strategic level into CIEEM's work in this area and will help to shape delivery of the project.
- You will have opportunities for your staff to be engaged in some of the research and engagement activities.
- You will be making a difference to the future of the profession and supporting the future growth of your organisation.

How It Would Work

As a funding partner you will be asked to nominate a representative onto a strategic Steering Group and to help shape the project delivery plan going forward.

- Contact us to let us know of your interest and amount you are looking to pledge.
- Your investment will be put towards match funding the Community Foundation Grant and, once our target is reached, we will draw down the grant funds.
- With input from the Steering Group, CIEEM will begin recruitment of a suitable candidate to undertake the project work.
- A work plan and targets will be developed and agreed by the Steering Group with operational delivery undertaken by the candidate and overseen by the Head of Professional Practice.
- The delivery plan will need to be fluid, driven by our agreed objectives but adapting to opportunities and the research findings with guidance from the Steering Group.
- CIEEM will then collaborate with stakeholders to drive implementation of the Action Plan resulting from this phase of the project.

We do hope that your company or organisation will see the value of this proposition and will join us. If you would like to speak to our Irish Project Officer, Elizabeth O'Reilly, to explore the proposal further please do get in contact via elizabeth@cieem.net.





Raising the profile of professional ecological and environmental management and promoting the highest standards of practice for the benefit of nature and society.



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