**Tender Brief for Ecology Skills and Capacity Research in Ireland**

*July 2024*

CIEEM (the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) is seeking to appoint a contractor to research the current skills and capacity issues in the Irish professional ecology sector. This research will culminate in a report with recommendations to inform next steps and future work by CIEEM and the sector to address skills shortages and gaps.

**Background**

The shortage of a skilled workforce relative to the current and increasing demands on the ecological sector in Ireland has been a growing concern. One of the most noticeable effects of this capacity issue is the difficulty in filling ecological positions.

In 2021, CIEEM conducted a survey among ecological consultancy employers regarding their recruitment experiences over the previous two years. The survey revealed that most employers faced significant challenges in recruiting qualified ecologists. All but one respondent reported having to turn down work opportunities due to their inability to fill ecological vacancies. This shortage not only impacts the immediate availability of services but also hampers long-term project planning and delivery.

The situation is expected to become even more challenging due to an anticipated increase in the demand for professionally trained ecologists. This increase is driven by a growing awareness of the biodiversity crisis and the implementation of new government policies across various departments, such as Nature Restoration, Biodiversity Enhancement, and Nature-Based Solutions.

Employers have expressed concerns that graduates from many programmes are poorly prepared to work in the sector. This skills gap exacerbates the difficulty in filling not just senior positions, but also entry-level roles that require practical, hands-on expertise.

For a more detailed analysis of these issues, refer to the [2022 CIEEM briefing](https://cieem.net/resource/cieem-briefing-current-capacity-crisis-and-the-need-to-provide-support-to-the-professional-ecological-sector-in-ireland/) on the capacity crisis in the Irish professional ecology sector.

**About CIEEM**

CIEEM is the leading professional membership body for ecologists and environmental managers, providing benefit to society by setting professional standards, promoting best practice, supporting education and training, and delivering advocacy and influence for those championing a sustainable natural environment.

Established in 1991 and receiving our Royal Charter in 2013, we have over 7500 members drawn

from across the employment sectors including local authorities, government agencies, NGOs,

industry, environmental consultancy, academia and industry. CIEEM engages in a wide range of activities, including:

* promoting the sharing of best practice through publications, networking and awards;
* supporting continuing professional development (CPD) through the provision of training and conferences;
* being an influential voice for the sector by advising governments on policy and practice in relation to management of the natural environment;
* promoting careers in ecology and environmental management and support for early careers professionals;
* promoting an integrated inter-disciplinary approach to sustainable management of the natural environment; and
* establishing and upholding standards of professional competence and conduct of those who practise ecological and environmental management as a profession.

CIEEM is very active in the green skills agenda across the UK and Ireland and is involved in a number of Working Groups designed to promote green jobs and capacity build for future delivery of actions designed to tackle the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis.

**The Project Brief**

The contractor is required to undertake a project to identify and examine critical capacity issues within the Irish professional ecology sector. This 9-month project aims to identify, analyse and develop recommendations to increase capacity within this essential sector, to ensure that it can meet growing demand.

This project is part-funded by the Community Foundation Ireland (CFI), part funded by employer partners and part-funded by CIEEM.

**Outputs**

1. Stakeholder engagement
	1. Initial consultations; engage and gather feedback from a representative range of stakeholders.
2. A detailed research report providing:
	1. Stakeholder engagement; summary of consultation with stakeholders; key insights and feedback.
	2. Quantification of demand; identify and analyse current and future sector trends and demand for ecological skills.
	3. Quantification of skills gaps; identify specific skills gaps and capacity limitations within the current and future ecological workforce, including within specific levels and roles.
	4. Barriers and opportunities; identify and discuss potential barriers to increasing capacity and opportunities for overcoming them.
	5. Recommendations for stakeholders; provide actionable recommendations for CIEEM, employers, policymakers, and other stakeholders.
3. Presentation materials; for dissemination to stakeholders

This research is primarily focused on the Republic of Ireland. However, CIEEM would encourage submissions encompassing Northern Ireland.

**Project Management**

The project will be managed by CIEEM’s Education and Careers Manager. Additional support will be provided by CIEEM’s Ireland Project Officer. Contractors will be required to attend regular online project management meetings.

**Costs**

Tenderers are required to include within their tender the full costs of delivering the outputs as specified above, including VAT. The maximum value of this tender will be in the range of €16,000 - €20,000 (inclusive of VAT) depending on the scope of work proposed. Tenderers are asked to give a breakdown of the number of days allocated to specific tasks.

CIEEM would like to better understand capacity Issues in Northern Ireland – please make your proposed scope clear in your submission and budget accordingly.

**Timescale**

We anticipate this contract starting in September. Delivery of outputs must be completed by the 2nd May 2025.

**Insurance**

Contractors are required to have full Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance up to a value of €500,000 in each case.

**Decision-making process**

All tenders received will be reviewed by CIEEM. A decision to shortlist and to offer a contract to undertake the work will be made on the basis of a combination of:

* Value for money and affordability (40% of scoring)
* Experience, creativity and technical ability of team members relevant to the brief (20% of scoring)
* Experience relevant to the target audiences (40% of scoring)

**Format of tender**

Tenders should be submitted using the tender proforma provided. Tenderers must demonstrate their understanding and relevant experience of working with stakeholders, providing supporting evidence and a preliminary stakeholder matrix identifying key stakeholders relevant to this project. The deadline for returning tenders to CIEEM is 5pm on 21st August 2024. Tenders should be submitted to enquiries@cieem.net. Tenderers must be available to be interviewed remotely, if required, on 28th August 2024.

**Contact details**

Any questions or queries in relation to this brief or the tender process should be directed to

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