

Developing results-based support mechanisms for common land

Project officer Job description

About EFNCP

The European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism is a UK-registered network which aims to raise awareness of the importance of certain low-intensity farming systems for nature conservation and to heighten understanding of the policy needs of such systems. It does this through a range of activities including research, pilots, networking activity, discussions with policy makers and a range of means dissemination and communication.

Background to the project

A gradual move towards approaches to delivering support to farmers which is results-based or outcomes-focussed at farm level is being seen in many countries at present. Although few projects have been rolled out nationwide, some, like the Burren programme in Ireland, are now mainstreamed into their Rural Development Programme, while a number of other even larger projects are still formally at pilot stage.

The UK has not been at the forefront of these developments, and in Wales only the small National Trust pilot on the Llŷn Peninsula has experimented with this approach. Nevertheless, that is now slowly changing, with England exploring the approach in its post-CAP Tests and Trials programme and SNH (with EFNCP involvement) supporting pre-pilot work in 7 different areas of the country. In Wales, policy is now moving in that direction, with the Welsh Government declaring in its *Brexit and our land* consultation paper that 'we will develop an outcome-based scheme that focuses on rewarding delivery'.

Commons are a very important repository of public goods in Wales and have the potential to deliver even more. But we know that they pose considerable challenges for scheme design and delivery; this has led in the past to them being left as afterthoughts in the policy-making process. Given the extreme social and economic vulnerability of the farming systems which manage those commons, graziers can't afford for this to happen at this crucial juncture.

The project

This project, which is a LEADER cooperation project between 6 Local Action Groups and is also in receipt of NRW Shared Outcomes funding, aims to develop results-based measures appropriate to commons management. It will examine and describe more broadly the limits to such approaches on commons and set out ways of maximising the effectiveness of such measures in terms of ease of access to graziers' associations, of rewarding active management by individual graziers and of meeting the demand for public goods.

After an initial phase of stock-taking, the project will work through representative examples of commons; it will be necessary for these to be drawn from all across the project area. It will also involve liaison with Government and its agencies and discussions with experts, as well as communication and dissemination of activities.

The project started on the 8th of October 2020 and will end on the 31st of October 2021. This advertisement is for the full-time project officer post, which will commence on the 1st of November 2020 and run until the 31st of October, 2021

Duties of the post

The postholder will be responsible for delivering the project on a day-to-day basis, supported by a part-time project coordinator and project administrative and budget manager. The overall project is outlined in the draft work packages available as an annex to this job description.

The essence of the project officer role is to be the person who day to day delivers the project work packages. As such the duties include, but are not limited to:

- Running meetings and engaging face-to-face with individuals in many fields in an engaging and appropriate and outcome-focussed manner
- Carrying out data gathering, manipulation and presentation both using existing and new data sources
- Writing reports and other forms of communication material in a range of styles, concisely and with clarity
- Making the most effective use of the skills and experience of experts and key stakeholders in Wales, including a limited number whose input will be paid for by the project
- Bringing in specific expertise on results-based approaches from further afield to build on existing experience of such measures
- Input into project social media activity and engaging with mainstream media
- Providing such reporting as is required by the project and by the employer within the timescales set down and in the prescribed form

Job requirements

You must:

- Be personable and able get on well with a range of people, but particularly farmers
- Have an established record of dealing with specific groups of the public in a sensitive and competent manner
- Have an established record of report-writing to a high standard, but also be able to shift registers for other forms of written output
- Be self-motivating
- Be a good time keeper and organiser of your own time
- Have a clean driving licence
- Have experience or certified expertise in either agriculture or ecology
- Have competence in the use of the main MS Office programs
- Have specific expertise in at least one topic relevant to a public good likely to be of central importance to the project

Some of the following are also desirable, but not essential:

- Have experience of working with marginal farming systems and their farmers, and particularly of commons
- Have some knowledge of agricultural support schemes
- Have experience of running public meetings
- Have some familiarity with the project area
- Have the ability to communicate in Welsh
- Can use GIS software and mapping programs

EFNCP welcomes and will consider seriously proposals for secondment from relevant organisations, but members of staff so proposed will still have to go through the appointment process.

EFNCP welcomes and will consider seriously proposals for job-sharing, though candidates should note that they would need to furnish additional justifications/assurances as part of their application; in such cases, the proposed job-sharers should submit a joint application and may be invited to a joint interview.

This work will be carried out by an employee; no applications will be considered from candidates or consortia (proposed job-shares) by anyone unwilling to become an employee of EFNCP.

Terms and conditions

The term of employment will commence on the 1st of November, 2020. It will terminate on the 31st of October, 2021 or by one month's notice on either side, other than in the case of gross misconduct.

The salary will be £35,000 p.a. pro rata. You will be enrolled in the EFNCP pension scheme unless you opt out. Your working day is normally 7.5 hours, but you will be expected to work flexibly as the job requires and within the overall salary budget. You are entitled to 36 days of holiday annually pro rata, inclusive of bank holidays.

You will be based in or within easy reach of the project area and working either from home or in space provided by a partner organisation. For travel away from your office base but with the exception of travel from your home to the project area subject to negotiation, you will be entitled to travel and subsistence following the normal EFNCP policies and any additional restrictions imposed by LEADER rules, providing you provide the supporting documentation required and within the set timeframe.

Your line manager will be the project coordinator. You will be required to provide monthly reports and these must be submitted timeously; not to do so will jeopardise the project funding.

How to apply

The closing date for applications is 16th October 2020.

Send a cv and a detailed covering letter outlining how your experience qualifies you for the job, along with 2 sample reports and the names and contact details of 2 referees who are willing to discuss your performance and skills by telephone to dgl_jones@yahoo.co.uk . Referees may be contacted before any interview.

Candidates not short-listed will be informed within a week of the closing date, as will candidates selected for interview. Short-listed candidates will be informed of the decision within the week. **Interviews are likely to take place in the week starting the 19th of October 2020 by Microsoft Teams otherwise.**

To discuss the role further, please feel free to phone Gwyn Jones on 07884116048.

Annex – Draft project work plan

Start-up phase

What?	Who?
Meet all the stakeholders, prioritising all the ones spoken to in PTS. (Broader meetings not appropriate at this stage probably)	Project officer, supported by coordinator
Agree a draft list of public goods for use in initial steps	Steering group and project staff
Prepare and start to populate, with existing info of relevance to list of public goods and/or realities of delivering schemes, a database of commons within the project area, e.g. BPS claimants, active graziers, habitats, info relevant to other public goods..... Some info already to hand, sources to include other initiatives in the project area or in official & research sources	Project officer, supported by coordinator, input from partners
Organise an event on a common to demonstrate the Irish approach to commoners	Project staff with subcontractors

Typology – deciding what needs to be covered in the selection

What?	Who?
Identify gaps in database with regard to public goods, if any, and decide and implement strategy to fill them or get round them	Steering group with project staff and possibly subcontractors
Identify and confirm with steering group a list of ‘types’ of common which need to be considered in the project	Steering group with project staff

Defining quality on sample commons – agreeing visions

What?	Who?
Through a variety of iterative and consultative means, convert the list of commons types into a set of example commons (min. 2 in each LAG area, total no more than 25??) taking also into account the ease of engaging with graziers	Project staff with support from steering group

On each commons, hold meetings and seek info and input from partners to identify the major public goods being delivered (or which could reasonably be delivered)	Project staff with support from steering group
Using expert input, and keeping engaged with graziers throughout, arrive at qualitative ways of determining the condition of the common with regard to each public good, and identify, explore and if possible resolve conflicts between public goods. Use maps and graphics where possible to facilitate communication and understanding.	Project staff with brought-in experts and support of steering group

Turning qualitative visions into quantifiable 'scheme'

What?	Who?
Convert, in iterative process with experts, the descriptions of good/bad condition into a measureable scale of easily determined metrics (scorecard(s))	Project staff with brought-in experts and support of steering group
Hold a series of meetings with graziers to discuss the draft approach	Project staff with support of steering group
Determine the (financial) support needs of scores of 10 in order to create a draft payment scale corresponding to the scorecard(s)	Project staff with brought-in experts and support of steering group
Identify where complementary supports of other types (e.g. non-productive investments) are necessary or more cost-effective than a purely outcome-focused area payment	Project staff with brought-in experts and support of steering group
Identify constraints on measure design stemming from social realities of commons and/or law of commons. Design measures in way that can deal with those constraints; clearly identify any remaining issues and suggest remedies, e.g. changes to law.	Project staff with brought-in experts and support of steering group
Having presented and discussed the proposal with graziers and external experts and adapted it accordingly, produce a fully-functional measure which could be tested by WG, including guidance notes, scorecards, crib sheets etc.	Project staff

Communication and dissemination

What?	Who?
If major stakeholders not represented on steering group, be proactive throughout to communicate the activities to them throughout	Project staff with support of steering group
Maintain a project website and social media presence throughout	Project staff