



## **Invitation to Tender: To develop and deliver with local landowners, farm resilience plans in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area**

### **1. Introduction**

The Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme invites proposals to project manage, research, develop and deliver farm resilience plans in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area (**see appendix one**). The aim of this project is to develop a holistic approach to farm management and decision making, focusing on the strategic use of green infrastructure and planning to maximise benefits for local farmers, farm businesses and to help sustain viable and resilient habitats, landscapes and local communities. Farm resilience plans should be in keeping with the ethos and objectives of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (UNESCO MAB) initiative which involves supporting local farmers in:

- Conservation of biodiversity and cultural diversity
- Economic development that is socio-culturally and environmentally sustainable
- Logistic support, research, monitoring, education, and training

Further details on each element of the required farm resilience plans are included within this invitation to tender. The closing date for return proposals is **10 am on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**.

### **2. The Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership**

In 2017, the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) announced its support for the Development Phase of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme. Landscape Partnership Schemes are landscape scale programmes funded by the NLHF to support partnerships of local, regional, and national interest, which aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK.

The development stage commenced in 2018 and lasted for 18 months resulting in a successful Delivery Stage application. The delivery stage started in September 2020 and will last for 5 years. It will deliver an investment of over £3.4 million pounds in the local area.

Situated in the north west corner of Northern Ireland, the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands area is a special place. What makes it unique is the range of landscape and heritage features within a relatively compact area. The extensive coastline includes wide sandy beaches, dune systems, seaside towns and estuaries backed by a distinct cliff line and upland area. The area is home to some of the earliest human settlements in Ireland, was used during war times and inspired many stories, songs, and folklore. Although the primary land use is food production, it is blessed with many opportunities for tourism and recreation. With growing pressures on the area's natural environment and cultural heritage, the challenge is to ensure that these are developed sustainably, with the involvement of local communities and landowners.

The Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands LPS will initiate a series of projects which aim to address the threats to the heritage of the area. No individual project can be viewed in isolation. All projects will provide opportunities to better manage and understand the area's outstanding natural, built, and cultural heritage and enhance and promote the local landscape and heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. Full details of what is proposed under the scheme can be found in the Landscape Conservation Action Plan for the project (**see appendix two**). It is highly recommended that applicants familiarise themselves with this document.

### **3. Location and background to the development and delivery of farm resilience plans**

As custodians of the landscape for present and future generations, the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands LPS strives to assist farmers to maintain or enhance farm productivity whilst generating greater benefits for the local environment and community. At the most basic level this project in farm resilience planning aims to work with farmers and landowners on a one-to-one and group basis to undertake an assessment of the natural, built and cultural resources of the farm business, and implement actions which make better use of natural and built resources to improve farm productivity, where possible reduce costs for the landowner, and provide environmental and community benefits. It is hoped that the development and delivery of farm resilience plans will result in enhanced resilience for both the farm businesses and the landscape and ecosystem services of the project area as a whole. Examples of outputs this project will help to deliver include halting the spread of invasive species, significantly improving woodland and hedgerow cover, reducing application of chemicals or fertilisers, reducing nutrient runoff into local watercourses, improving shelter for stock and a reduction of land loss through bank stabilisation. This project is supported by the Woodland Trust, Loughs Agency, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council and Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust.

It is estimated from 2014 Farm Census data that there are between 120 and 150 active farms within the project area. Over half of the farms within the project area fall within a 'less favoured area' i.e. 'those areas with poor land or poor productivity, which is difficult to cultivate and for which productivity cannot be increased except at excessive cost'. The data indicates that the majority of the LPS area is sown in grass with just 14% of the area under arable crop, primarily in the Magilligan and Ballykelly area. Areas under arable crop, primarily takes the form of oilseed rape, barley, wheat, maize, carrots, potatoes, and kale. Additionally, there are significant areas used for the production of lawn turf, particularly at Magilligan and Myroe. In general farms around the Lough Foyle Alluvial Plain and Magilligan Coast tend to be quite large with a greater focus on arable farming, with farms in upland areas (Eastern and Western Binevenagh Slopes and Uplands) somewhat smaller and with a greater focus on beef, lamb and dairy production.

### **4. Aim of Farm Resilience Planning**

Through detailed research, fieldwork, and consultation with landowners on a one-to-one and group basis, the development and delivery of farm resilience plans will result in:

***“better use of the natural, built and cultural resources of the project area to improve farm sustainability, whilst providing wider environmental and community benefits which are in keeping with the project’s Landscape Conservation Action Plan and the ethos of UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme”***

### **5. Detailed Objectives of Farm Resilience Plans**

To achieve the stated aim the following objectives must be met:

1. The development and delivery of at least 20 farm resilience plans per year which are tailored specifically to each farm and farmer. These plans will identify 'green' infrastructure and/or techniques to improve farm sustainability and profitability, whilst providing wider environmental and community benefits. The plans will signpost farmers to the most appropriate source of further information and support.
2. Where relevant provide initial ideas on diversification (e.g. woodland creation, tourism, recreation etc.) to help sustain the farm business, signposting the landowner to other bodies who can support this.

3. Undertake soil analysis to identify more appropriate approaches to the maintenance and/or management of soil nutrient content, including a focus on reducing nutrient runoff and/or pollution incidents in local watercourses.
4. Ensure that where identified, any other environmental/ecological features of significance are catered for in the plan.
5. Where a farmer or farmers express an interest in working together on group activities, these should be explored and included in the plans.
6. Identify any other opportunities and issues that may impact on the farm.
7. Deliver a map(s) which summarises proposed plan activities and identifies corresponding benefits to the landowner, wider environment, and community. Where possible these should be complemented with appropriate graphics/descriptions.
8. Provide an annual "summary report" to the Landscape Partnership Scheme and partners which records the key research findings and notes the environmental and community benefits which farm resilience plans have delivered.

## **6. Project Methodology**

It is important to recognise that this is a five-year project with the goal of delivering up-to 100 farm resilience plans by 2025. Given the nature of the project it will be essential to deliver at least 20 plans per year throughout the five-years of the scheme. In developing a methodology and associated costings, applicants are encouraged to present these on a 'cost per plan' basis, bearing in mind the requirement to provide an annual summary report. It is proposed that the contract for this work will be awarded initially for 3-years with an option to extend for a further 2-years, subject to satisfactory performance. A payment schedule will be agreed between the successful applicant(s) and will be based on satisfactory plan delivery. It is expected payments will be quarterly and based on the number of successfully completed plans. The LPS Board reserves the right to terminate the contract with 3 months' notice at any time should it determine that the requirements of the project are not being met.

An outline / suggested methodology follows. This is not a prescriptive methodology and applicants are encouraged to submit their own methodologies and proposals which meet the requirements of the project.

1. Initial consultation, conversations, and recruitment of landowners, prior to farm surveys
2. Promotion of the farm resilience plan project and the delivery of regular updates to participants e.g. through presentations / talks.
3. Desktop research and data collection to support farm surveys e.g. environment and climate data
4. Undertake the farm surveys / site visits along with the farmer including all necessary on-site data collection (e.g. soil samples or any data/records which the farmer wishes to share). The survey should take account of the farmers personal ideas and experiences regarding their farm.
5. Development and presentation of draft farm resilience plan, associated map(s) and activity plan to landowner for comment
6. Undertake any further necessary site visits and follow-up work
7. Delivery of final farm resilience plan, map(s) and activity plan
8. Delivery of an annual summary report which records the key research findings and notes the environmental and community benefits which farm resilience plans can deliver

## 7. Project Outputs

The key project outputs will include:

- High-quality **written reports and maps** covering all the objectives outlined in Section 5, supported with:
  - illustrative materials
  - photographs
  - maps (must be presented in **paper and GIS formats**)
- An **annual summary report** based on research conducted for the development of the farm resilience plans which outlines the environmental and community benefits which delivery of the plans can provide. This should highlight how local landowners contribute to and can be supported by the principles of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Reserve Programme.

The written reports, maps and activity plans must be provided in digital format (e.g. Microsoft Word and PDF) and supplied along with one printed copy.

## 9. Copyright, Data Protection and Confidentiality

All materials provided to the successful applicant will remain the property of the contributing organisation(s) and individuals. Copyright for the farm resilience plans and associated materials will become the property of the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme, for free distribution to landowners, partners, the public and funders.

## 10. Key Dates

The following dates are provided to give guidance on when key milestones must be met for this project.

Date	Phase	Action / Activities
9 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Invitation to tender circulated	
22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2020	Deadline for submission of proposals	Applicants must submit proposals by 10 am on Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2020
26 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Assessment of submissions	Submissions will be scored. Applicants may be required to attend an online interview if requested by the assessment panel.
28 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Project Initiation Meeting (online)	The successful applicant will meet with the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands team to agree a work programme
30 <sup>th</sup> November	Meeting with and presentation to the Natural Heritage Advisory Group	The successful applicant will meet with stakeholders to outline the methodology and consult with members to inform the research and fieldwork stages of the project
End – January 2021 and each quarter thereafter	Completion and submission of farm resilience plans (minimum 20 per year)	The successful applicant will complete and submit farm resilience plans with a claim based on cost per plan basis outlined in contract.

October 2021 and each year thereafter	Completion and submission of annual summary report to Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership	The successful applicant will complete and submit an annual summary report in October of each year that contract is awarded / continues.
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### 11. What is required in the submission

Please note your submission must contain evidence of the 7 criteria outlined below. Failure to include this will invalidate your submission:

A detailed, clear and costed methodology (with timescale) that ensures that the Farm Resilience Plans will meet all the objectives outlined in Section 5. Note that costs must be presented on an overall 'cost per plan' basis, accompanied by with a detailed breakdown of activities and associated costs (e.g. expenses, VAT etc).
Key dates, project milestones, including how and when partner and public consultation will take place
Evidence of the skills of the applicant(s) including a portfolio of relevant work
Evidence of community consultation and explanation of role in previous relevant projects
A breakdown of project personnel, the activities they will be responsible for and contact details for the project lead
A clear breakdown of project costs, including all expenses and including VAT
Contact details for two referees who have knowledge of your work

### 12. Scoring Criteria and Weight

Criteria	Weight
Proposed methodology	25%
Evidence of skills required to design, produce and supply the required spatial masterplan	30%
Cost - including a clear breakdown of costs including daily rates, number of days, VAT and other proposed expenses (please note mileage will only be paid up to a maximum of 45p/mile)	25%
Evidence of community consultation and involvement in the process of spatial master planning	20%

Your submission should be no longer than twelve A4 pages using font size 12. Evidence of previous work is not included in this maximum page allowance.

### 13. Budget

The maximum budget for this project is £30,000 per year (inc. VAT). Proposals must include all fees, travel, direct and indirect costs, expenses, and VAT. Applicants should present their proposal(s) on a cost-per-plan basis.

Payments will not be made until the LPS Board has signed off on the project outputs.

The successful applicant will be expected to complete a minimum of 5 farm resilience plans each quarter and submit an associated claim to the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme for assessment. Payments will only be made on the basis of the number of successfully completed plans in each quarter. Payments cannot be made for prospective work or work which does not take place due to a change in circumstances in the Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Landscape Partnership does not bind itself to accept the lowest priced or indeed any proposals submitted. The contract will be awarded to the most advantageous submission based on an assessment of the criteria outlined above.

Proposers will not be compensated for costs associated with the production of the tender document.

#### **14. Amendments**

Should this request to tender need to be amended all recipients of the documents will be notified simultaneously. If deemed appropriate the deadline for receipt of tenders will be extended.

#### **15. Contact Information**

If you have any queries, please contact Andrew Bratton ([Andrew@ccght.org](mailto:Andrew@ccght.org))

#### **16. Submission**

The closing date for return of proposals is **10 am on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020**.

Submission can be made by email or post:

Email: Please title your email Farm Resilience Plans ITT and send it to [andrew@ccght.org](mailto:andrew@ccght.org). Please send all documents as attachments. These will not be opened until the deadline has passed. Applicants are responsible for ensuring emails have been received before the deadline.

***Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and requirement for employees to work from home, applications by post cannot be accepted on this occasion.***





Appendix One: Map of Binevenagh and Coastal Lowlands Project Area ([interactive map available here](#))

