

Land Evidence Forum meeting

Date/time: 10am Thursday 19th May 2022

Chair: Jonathan Derham, EPA

Attendees: Catherine Dunbar (DAFM), Fiona O'Rourke (EPA), Gavin Smith (EPA), Gemma Weir (NPWS), Hugh Carey (DHLGH), Claire Byrne (EPA), Tomás Murray (CSO on secondment to EPA), Lillian O'Sullivan (Teagasc), Ian Doyle (Heritage Council), Lorcan Scott (Heritage Council), Niamh Gibbons (DECC) (part of meeting), Clare Glanville (GSI)

Apologies: Frank Barrett (DAFM), Paul Kane (OSI), Marc Kierans (DECC), Mairead Fitzsimons (GSI),

Invited to part of meeting: Daniel McInerney and David Feeney, Coillte

Agenda

1. Presentation from Coillte (15 mins presentation, 15 mins questions)
2. Tour de Table – land related developments and activities of interest (30 mins)
3. (i) Progress of land use evidential review tasks (30 mins)
 - a. Stakeholder mapping
 - b. Land ownership high level statistics
 - c. Policy catalogue (done)
 - d. Land use indicators
 - e. Land use in other countries, case study research
 - f. Land use classification pilot
 - g. Suitability criteria
 - h. Call for Evidence
- (ii) Structure of synthesis report – early indications of content
3. AOB
 - (i) Publication of meeting notes to EPA website
4. Dates for the next meeting

No	Mtg Date	Action	Who	Status
21	Mar	Share the briefing note on Phase 1 of the land use evidential review	Fiona	Done
22	Mar	Review the ownership draft documentation and provide comments by 6 th April	All	
23	Mar	Review the suitability criteria contacts list to advise who can help us to identify the maturity level of suitability criteria to inform land use decisions	All	
24	Mar	Review the proposed outline for the synthesis report	All	
25	May	Identify experts who can assist with soil indicator assessment	All	
26	May	Review the synthesis report proposed outline presented today and add comments on - Items that are missing	All	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whether you disagree with any of the content proposed - If you have items that should be considered in this review that haven't already been submitted under the Call for Evidence earlier this year <p>Please submit your comments by the 10th June 2022</p>		
27	May	Share the draft EAGLE definitions for land use classes with the group for them to review	FOR	Done
28	May	Complete Doodle poll for next meeting	All	

Item 1 – Presentation from Coillte

David Feeney, land solutions division & Dr Daniel McInerney, Resource Planning and land use modelling gave a 15 minute presentation.

A consultation process on the Strategic Vision they are developing will start in the next month.

Objectives for forest estates examined first: starting point was UN SDGs, eight of which were particularly relevant to forests. (The right objective in the right place with the right trees).

A land use modelling framework used spatial data to inform their strategic plan. Canadian models (Remsoft and Carbon Budget Model) were used in the land modelling framework.

There are four pillars to the strategy – Climate, Nature, Wood, People.

Climate: potential for carbon sink, storage of carbon, substitution of CO₂ via wood products to substitute for fossil-based products and generation of renewable energy to substitute for fossil fuel energy. Focus areas are to create new forests, optimise management of estate to maximise carbon storage, redesign areas of peatland forests. Dr Peter Holmgren studied timber displacement potential of timber products.

Nature: Want to increase the biodiversity in forests. Identified forest areas that have high ecological potential. Plan to transition sensitive Freshwater Pearl Mussel areas to semi natural woodlands.

Coillte offered to share details of the land use modelling and are keen to support land use evidence review work.

David Feeney and Dr Daniel McInerney left the meeting at this point.

Item 2 – Tour de Table

GS updated that the landcover data image processing work has progressed to allow the validation and data preparation stages to continue. There will be some name changes on the classes to reflect feedback from public sector experts: further public sector body stakeholder input is being sought to review the landcover class names.

Item 3 - Progress of land use evidential review tasks & structure of synthesis report – early indications of content

FOR presented on three aspects of the land use phase 1 review – the indicator assessment, early results from a trial land use map and a proposed outline of what sections and topics the synthesis report will include.

- (i) Indicator assessment continues, with expert reviewers sought to peer review the work done to date. We especially need help with soil indicators. CG from GSI suggested two GSI contacts who can make an input.

- (ii) A test run of converting the draft landcover data for the southeast of Ireland into land use data was done to assess the main barriers to creating land use map(s) for Ireland. This review assessed the draft definitions, availability of data and whether a logical land use object was achieved when the definitions and data were processed. The output will be a summary of the main barriers and things we need to consider in order to create a land use map(s). It is still in progress as the project output data is complex and we need to work through it.
- (iii) It is proposed to have four sections in the synthesis report. It cannot exceed 50 pages and ideally would be 30 pages long. The deadline is the end of September. The group are asked to give their feedback on a proposed outline for what could be included in Phase 1.

CG asked how urban land is being assessed, as it results in multiple pressures. FOR replied that in the EAGLE land use scheme the relevant land uses are residential, infrastructure and services. This means that in the indicator assessment the urban pressures might be repeated as they are being catalogued according to the land use types (so urban pressures will be catalogued against residential, infrastructure etc).

GW asked if the draft land use class definitions will be shared. FOR said they will as there is a task to workshop/review the draft land use class definitions with the land evidence forum and some of their colleagues with expertise in this area. The review is to make sure the definitions are adequate (we have some test data as a result of the land use map trial that will help with this task).

3. AOB

(i) Publication of meeting notes to EPA website. Meeting notes for this group have been requested under FOI and AIE. To make this more efficient for the requesters the EPA will publish meeting notes to the EPA website until the land use evidence review phase 1 is complete. FOR would like a one-week turnaround for any comments/corrections on the meeting notes for timely publication.

4. Dates for the next meeting

We will have a meeting at the end of June, FOR to send a doodle poll. There won't be meetings during July or most of August and we will reconvene end August/early September. Draft material for review will be published to Glasscubes in the interim.