

**Notes of the Expert Group on National Land Information meeting (via MS Teams) 22nd June 2023
10:30 – 12, via MS Teams**

Chair: EPA

Attendees: Alan Cahill (CSO), Nova Sharkey (CSO), Sylvie Clapp (CSO), Frank Barrett (DAFM), Tara Higgins (EPA), Claire Byrne (EPA), Fiona O'Rourke (EPA), Fran Russell (Contractor to EPA), Gavin Smith (EPA), Gemma Weir (NPWS), Paul Kane (TE)

Apologies: Marc Kierans (DECC), Niamh Gibbons (DECC), Stuart Green (Teagasc), Catherine Dunbar (DAFM), Thomas Harty (DAFM), Lorcan Scott (Heritage Council)

Agenda

1. Tour de Table – land related developments and activities of interest (not covered elsewhere in agenda) (15 mins) (All)
2. EPA Copernicus LMS assessment (Fran Russell, EPA – 20 mins)
3. Proposal for a national validation framework (Stuart Green, Teagasc – 20 mins)
4. Next steps on national LIDAR forum (All, discussion, 10 mins)
5. Completion of land use data structure review (Fiona O'Rourke, EPA – 5 mins)
6. Status of Land use evidence review Phase 2 (Thomas Harty, DAFM - 5 mins)
7. Update on EEA Land Group activities (Gavin Smith, EPA - 5 mins)
8. AOB (5 mins)
 - a. National Terrestrial Area
 - b. European Commission soils extraction and excavation survey seeking input
9. Dates and agenda items for the next meeting (All)

No	Mtg Date	Action	Who	Status
40	Apr '23	Discussion paper on national validation framework	SG	Open
41	Apr' 23	Document regulatory and/or data revision requirements for national landcover map	All	Open
42	Apr '23	Arrange meeting at the end of June via Doodle poll	FOR	Done
43	June '23	Send informal outline of options for a terrestrial boundary layer for assessment/statistical purposes	CSO & EPA	
44	June '23	Arrange meeting for September/October via Doodle poll	FOR	

1. EPA Copernicus LMS assessment (Fran Russell, EPA – 20 mins)

FR presented the work the EPA has been doing to assess the land datasets coming from the EU Copernicus project (the ultimate aim of the work is to assess potential use cases for them in Ireland). FB asked if this assessment looks at how well does the data performs in an Irish context (in the context of the pan-European nature of Copernicus data which can mean that the data is more standardised for central Europe and the Irish land mapping nuances can be lost). GS and FR confirmed that it's an assessment of the validation performed by CLMS at pan-European so far. Future step is to review the suitability of the products specifically with Irish context in mind. EPA are

trying to bring everything into one place for everyone to see and reference. It's an independent assessment; an EPA initiative to understand the data better so that we can get as much out of it as possible. Flagged it with EEA contacts and will feed results back to them.

GS noted that EPA have a template and framework in place, but EPA won't be able to do the full process for every product from every perspective. But any other organisation could apply this framework to review a product from the perspective of their needs. FOR noted using a common template adds to a national knowledge base.

GW observed that a quantitative commentary on each product on its suitability for an Irish context would be useful.

2. Proposal for a national validation framework (Stuart Green, Teagasc – 20 mins)

As SG had sent apologies, this item was moved to a future meeting.

3. Next steps on national LIDAR forum (All, discussion, 10 mins)

PK updated that Tailte Eireann are actively working to see what can be done for this.

Colin Bray has meetings planned mainly with Maynooth University (Tim McCarthy) to discuss what the forum should look like. Tailte at early stages of a planned activity to update their sensors with the aim to get a national lidar dataset.

4. Completion of land use data structure review (Fiona O'Rourke, EPA – 5 mins)

FOR updated the group on a small project the EPA completed to examine how other countries structure their land use data. The INSPIRE directive outlines some options: most countries who have created land use maps select the "one land use per boundary" option. This implies that if Ireland progresses with a land use map project the likely outcome would be a series of land use layers that integrate with each other to capture the reality of multiple land uses in a location. The next step would be to agree a classification scheme for land use which requires input from this group.

5. Status of Land use evidence review Phase 2 (Thomas Harty, DAFM - 5 mins)

TH sent his apologies but provided an update on Phase 2 to FOR prior to the meeting: DECC & DAFM will be joined by DHLGH to lead on Phase 2. FOR asked group to consider the resourcing implications of Phase 2 should this group be requested to actively participate.

6. Update on EEA Land Group activities (Gavin Smith, EPA - 5 mins)

GS advised there will be a meeting of the EEA Eionet land group in November. The main item will be the production of Corine 2024 landcover data. The EEA had outlined that it was likely this would be done as a centralised project rather than by individual member states as before: this is not yet confirmed.

7. Tour de Table – land related developments and activities of interest (not covered elsewhere in agenda) (15 mins) (All)

(i) TH asked how the land use mapping would work in practice. FOR replied that group would have to set up workshops to cover

- Outputs/recommendations from land use map pilot and land use data structure projects
- Any requirements from Phase 2 of the land use review will influence what's needed in the land use map(s)
- Would like to get started by September at latest but this is resource dependant

GS added that the land use map pilot project done in Phase 1 of the land use review was a short proof of concept to identify barriers to transforming the landcover data into land use data and to create test data and outputs to inform consultation on land use classification and the required maps.

Workshops and consolidated effort needed to get an agreed classification in place which will take time.

- (ii) TH noted that the recent EPA research call included a call for research proposals to further develop some of the recommendations from Phase 1 of the land use review.
- (iii) SC advised that ecosystem accounting data is to be submitted to EuroStat the end of 2023/beginning of 2024.

8. AOB (5 mins)

CSO and EPA have identified a requirement for a standard GIS layer of the terrestrial area of Ireland for assessment and statistical purposes to ensure consistent and comparable data year on year (not an official territorial boundary). PK noted there is work ongoing to bring the high-water mark into PRIME2. FOR asked if CSO and EPA had assembled options for this data and could they be circulated to the group, to examine. A specific purpose sub-group could assess and agree this boundary dataset: volunteers needed to participate in this activity. Members outside the group would be needed to give their input (Marine Institute, OPW etc).

9. Dates and agenda items for the next meeting (All)

Next meeting should be Sept/Oct.