

KerryLIFE

Location

Country: Ireland

Scale: local

Region: South Kerry

Compensated /improved ecosystem services

- Water purification
- Habitat

Management

KerryLIFE is a demonstration project in the Caragh and Blackwater river catchments to restore the two internationally important freshwater pearl mussel populations. It focuses on supporting sustainable farming and forestry activities and aims to implement, in co-operation with farmers and forest owners, a wide range of measures that will enable farming and forestry to be practised, in a way that sustains both the pearl mussel population and the livelihood of the farm and forest enterprises. There are at least eight-publicly owned forests and two privately-owned forests expected to participate in the project covering over 500 ha. Various methods of sustainable forest practices are currently being developed within these forests.

The KerryLIFE project aims to restructure 175 ha of conifer forests currently managed under the clear-fell system into permanent protective woodland. This will result in the creation of mixed-age broadleaf or conifer dominated woodland, which will be managed for the protection of water-quality and freshwater pearl mussels, as well as for wider biodiversity purposes. A wide range of sensitive forestry operations is demonstrated over the course of the project and the impact of these concrete conservation actions is monitored and evaluated.

The establishment of permanent, long-term retention woodland in critical source areas will significantly reduce the risk of on-going and future sediment and nutrient loss. Long-term retention woodland will subsequently develop as mixed (native broadleaves and conifers), uneven-aged forests managed for biodiversity and the protection of water quality. This less intensive land-use will ensure that future impacts on pearl mussel populations will be minimised, principally through the avoidance of the clear-fell/replanting cycle.

The KerryLIFE project is trialling a number of targeted freshwater pearl mussel conservation actions in forestry including:

- Various methods for restructuring commercial plantations to long-term retention woodland
- The transformation of conventional clearfell-managed commercial forests to continuous cover forestry
- Alternative methods of firebreak management
- Sustainable management of forestry drains

Participating farmers and land owners are qualified for payment in respect of the successful completion of agreed works undertaken as part of the project. Payment vary in accordance with each agreed management plan and is determined using trial works that have been undertaken with some of the catchments farmers in recent years. Once a participant has an agreed management plan in place, they know exactly how much he will be entitled to on successful completion of the agreed works.

Stakeholders

Sellers or service providers:

Public and private farmers and forest land owners

Buyers and beneficiaries of services:

National authority

Knowledge providers and Intermediaries:

KerryLIFE is a partnership project between the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Forest Service, South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd, Coillte, Teagasc and Pobal. The project partners work collectively and collaboratively as part of the Project Management Group to steer and guide the work of the Project Team as it pursues delivery of the KerryLIFE project measures and actions.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht provides the legislative and policy framework for the conservation of nature and biodiversity in Ireland. It:

- coordinate delivery of the KerryLIFE contract and support the technical and administrative processes,
- provide advice in relation to national biodiversity policy and the ecological requirements of habitats and species including in particular the freshwater pearl mussel,
- support the development of coherent and meaningful conservation practices for freshwater pearl mussel through engagement with all relevant KerryLIFE stakeholders.

The Nitrates, Biodiversity and Engineering Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine:

- provide an agri-environment policy perspective and, in particular, a general understanding of the cross-compliance process and the integration of environmental legislation into Pillar 1 of the CAP, and the role of Pillar 2 RDP in delivering agri-environmental objectives,
- support efforts to raise awareness of the vulnerability of the FPM species as well as the strategy and measures for conservation, locally and nationally.

The Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine provide:

- advice on forestry and agri-environmental policy and its interaction with biodiversity policy,
- support in the development of coherent and meaningful forestry- and agriculture-related conservation practices for freshwater pearl mussel through engagement with all relevant KerryLIFE stakeholders,
- specialist technical inputs to relevant actions and development of appropriate After-LIFE measures.

South Kerry Development Partnership Ltd is a local development company that provide:

- advice on forestry and agri-environmental practices and socio-economic considerations in South Kerry as they may relate to biodiversity policy,
- support the development of coherent and meaningful forestry- and agriculture-related conservation practices for freshwater pearl mussel through engagement with all relevant KerryLIFE stakeholders,
- support the socio-economic and value-added elements of the project.
- specialist inputs to relevant actions and development of appropriate After-LIFE measures.

Coillte Teoranta is Ireland's leading forestry company and provide:

- advice on forestry policies and practices and potential interactions with biodiversity policy,
- support the development of coherent and meaningful forestry-related conservation practices for freshwater pearl mussel through engagement with all relevant KerryLIFE stakeholders,
- provide specialist technical inputs to relevant actions and development of appropriate After-LIFE measures.

Teagasc is an Associated Beneficiary of the KerryLIFE project and provide:

- advice (in addition to DAFM) on agri-environmental policy and its interaction with biodiversity policy,
- supervise PhD, select academic supervisor, and ensure quality and project-relevance of associated research,
- farmer advice and demonstration events for both forestry and agriculture,
- assist local and national dissemination of material from the KerryLIFE project.

Pobal:

- administer the involvement of the Rural Social Scheme participants who will contribute to the KerryLIFE project,
provide advice to the project team on delivering sustainable rural development

Timeline

Establishment year: 2014

Time horizon: medium term

Status of PES: active scheme

Availability of economic data

The total budget for the KerryLIFE project is €5,010,851. A total of 50% of the project funding come from the European Union's LIFE+ funding programme for Nature and Biodiversity while the remaining 50% of the funding is being contributed by the Ireland partners.

The expected results and outputs of the Kerry LIFE project regarding to the forest include:

- The successful implementation of approximately 25 farm and 10 forest management plans
- The sustainable management of farm (2500 ha) and forest (485 ha) drainage systems
- The provision of 20 alternative drinking water facilities on farms
- The establishment 15 ha of native woodland
- The management of 10 ha of existing broadleaf woodland
- The conversion of 15 ha to native broadleaf woodland
- The restructuring of 175 ha of commercial plantations into long-term retention woodland
- The provision of at least ten training workshops and ten demonstration events to farmers, forest-owners and other catchment users

References / Source of information

<http://kerrylife.ie/>

<https://www.npws.ie/research-projects/kerrylife>