

Meeting Note, Land Evidence Forum 2, 2nd September 2021

Chair: Jonathan Derham, EPA

Attendees: Frank Barrett (DAFM), Colin Bray (OSI), Catherine Dunbar (DAFM), Mairead Glennon (GSI), Stuart Green (Teagasc), Tom Healy (CSO), Colin Heaslip (DAFM), Gareth John (DHLGH), Paul Kane (OSI), Marc Kierans (DECC), Fran Morrin (DAFM), Anne Marie O'Connor (OPR), Fiona O'Rourke (EPA), Lilian O'Sullivan (Teagasc), Gavin Smith (EPA), Virginia Teehan (Heritage Council), Gemma Weir (NPWS)

Apologies: Niall Ryan (DAFM)

Agenda

1. Terms of Reference review
2. Tour de Table – land related developments and activities of interest
3. Review of land use evidential review wireframe – comments & observations from group
4. Information management
 - a. Filesharing & collaboration tools
 - b. Hosting of evidential review outputs
5. Current land use evidential review tasks and rough outline of expected timelines
 - a. Glossary and definitions
 - b. Stakeholder mapping
 - c. Policies & legislation review
6. Dates for the next meeting
7. AOB

Specific Actions

No	Action	Who	Status
1	Group to send any specific ideas or requests to Paul Kane for landcover products.	All	Closed
2	Group to send FOR recommendations for who should be on the group: don't confine this to individuals, it may also be an area of expertise that we need to cover.	All	Closed
3	EPA to create a draft terms of reference for the group to include this new LU function for the existing LC SG to review.	Fiona O'Rourke, EPA	Done
4	EPA to share wireframe document presented at the meeting	Fiona O'Rourke, EPA (attached)	Done
5	Group to send comments on the seven tasks in the options document, and the content of the wireframe document to Fiona O'Rourke. Group to include in these comments any areas where their organisation will be able to provide an input.	All	Closed
6	EPA to send a doodle poll and draft TOR for a meeting end August early September	Fiona O'Rourke, EPA	Done
7	EPA to address task 6 (stakeholder consultation) using the Call for Evidence framework	EPA	In Progress
8	Share link to EPA evidence framework online	FOR	See this link
9	Seek member from OPW	FOR	

10	Issue updated TOR for agreement	FOR	Attached
11	Members to volunteer to review Socio-Economic outputs from Mark Scott, UCD, if this is expertise they can offer	All	
12	Doodle poll for November meeting	FOR	See this link

Summary discussion notes

1. Terms of Reference (TOR) review

LOS what is the group role in research?

Group agreed that the function is to collate evidence, not to conduct evidence as a group. Research may be commissioned through existing mechanisms (e.g. DAFM, EPA) which this group would use rather than create another mechanism. Group can recommend specific research be commissioned.

Knowledge exchange and information sharing is important.

DAFM suggested the addition of specific objective on land-use strategy.

FM suggested it is needed to ensure focus now on this specific action.

JD – Terms of Reference will have periodic review so we can keep this objective in the TOR for now and then retire it when the evidence review is complete.

SG – this group has always had a principle focus so that’s ok. “Provision of evidence” is restraining so can we remove this element?

FB asked if we need a definition of evidence? JD suggested the group review the EPA Evidence Framework which offers the EPA view of evidence (see link above).

TH suggested an objective proposed on assessing the link between land ownership and land use (objective IX).

FM suggested this could be generalised to “Advise on resourcing of future land evidence work as the need arises”.

TH: CSO doesn’t have spatial data on land ownership. Land ownership is an important issue. Its important to link land ownership to land use in Ecosystems Services accounting.

TH: should we mention the intricacies of land use and land cover across Ireland so should we mention Northern Ireland specifically? JD would defer the NI element to the NI ministerial council – this land evidence forum is an informal collective so our commitments on north south collaboration have to be constrained within that role.

CB Tailte Eireann is a merge of PRA, Land Registry and OSI. It will be formally established in January 2023. Land ownership data assessment issue raises GDPR considerations.

All agreed to drop item IX, and replace with FM suggested wording (above).

Group membership

MG suggested Coillte and Bord na Mona might have a role.

JD noted that they have a profit angle on land use decisions. Is that a conflict for national discussions on land use decisions?

VT: confine membership to bodies that have policy or advisory roles. Also suggest OPW.

AOC: OPW have important role in flooding and would add a dimension to the group that isn’t present.

SG: Teagasc don't have a hand in policy formation so don't be too prescriptive on the "policy" side.

All agreed that Coillte and Bord na Mona have a consultation role, and that we would seek a delegate from OPW.

JD – a decision is needed about who/how to host the evidence products from this group, for a future meeting. The objective to have a land evidence web product remains in the TOR but details need to be worked out.

JD we will issue the updated TOR for agreement: when reviewing for approval please remember that it is open for review at regular intervals.

CB will EPA retain chair of the group?

JD agreed EPA will chair until the evidence review is completed mid 2022 and we will review who should chair the group then.

GS – do we need more meetings than suggested by the TOR? FOR expects there may be more frequent interactions on specific elements of the evidence review, that may not require the whole group to meet.

2. Tour de Table – land related developments and activities of interest

GS: EPA is progressing a LULUCF regulation data reporting project gathering data to calculate emissions and removal of GHG from land. Goes back to 2000 because this is the first availability of LPIS data. This is important from a legislative point of view under "no net loss" principle.

Validation for the national landcover map will be ramping up as data has been processed and there is a meeting next week with the public sector bodies already signed up to organise validation. EPA/OSI may be looking for more volunteers for validation.

SG: Signpost farms (110 best practice farms for carbon) will establish a baseline habitat map for these farms (including hedgerows). Linked to new scoring system for habitats on farms. Teagasc have also submitted a research paper for new methods for mapping paddocks.

TH: met FOR and TM from EPA to delve into wireframe document, to discuss how CSO will support uncertainty work. CSO publishing on grassland and cropland from Corine data with preliminary indications of conditions. CSO are creating a survey on household attitudes concerning nature. CSO are producing a framework document with suggestions for national statistics on biodiversity. Acquiring a GIS statistician in the team.

FOR: EPA have completed a study on using satellite images to identify illegal waste activity (large dumps). The study has created a risk map for illegal waste dumping activity. It concluded it is not feasible to use satellite images to automatically identify illegal waste dumps as it returns too many false positives and more work is needed to eliminate these.

CB: OSI is tendering for sensor technology. R&D focus is around generation of remotely sensed digital twin to integrate 2D and 3D mesh information. This would enable shading of oblique objects based on the colour information from objects underneath. GeoHive2 being formally launched in November at GeoGov conference.

3. Information management
 - a. Filesharing & collaboration tools

FOR confirmed that OneDrive has not proven suitable. EPA have reviewed online document collaboration tools and are proposing to use Huddle. Invites will issue to register with Huddle once it is procured and set up. Huddle is very secure (ISO 27001) and has good document commenting and collaboration tools.

- b. Hosting of evidential review outputs
To be discussed at a future meeting.

4. Current land use evidential review tasks and rough outline of expected timelines

- a. Glossary and definitions
 - b. Stakeholder mapping
 - c. Policies & legislation review

Section	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
1 Draft 1 Glossary and Definitions	█						
2 Draft 1 Stakeholder Map	█						
3 Compile information for Ireland's land use status and trends		█					█
4 Draft 1 Policy catalogue and assessment			█				
5 Draft 1 catalogue of toolkits						█	
6 Call for Expert Evidence	█						

FOR showed the overview schedule for the work (above). The first piece is to define what the evidence review purpose and products are, define key terms, what classifications systems are in (or out) and what metrics or indicators for land need to be included. This is important to define the scope of the work so will need the group to review and comment. The target date is mid October, before the October bank holiday break.

The other elements of work will keep off soon and run in parallel, namely stakeholder mapping and the analysis work for the metrics identified in the first piece of work.

A policy review will be outsourced to identify the existing commitments and targets in policy to do with land use. JD – can OPR assist with policy review? AOC will put FOR in touch with someone.

JD – Mark Scott in UCD is doing socio economic work so reviewers will be needed to review his outputs – please can group members volunteer if that can do this review work. There will be an interim review stage we can share.

JD we are still unpacking task 4 (land use and climate change). It is expected EPA will commission this work.

MK there will be a steering group from senior dept officials meeting next week. It will steer this evidence work and the subsequent phase 2 policy work. Steering group has members from Department of Housing, DAFM, EPA etc. Their role will be on informing phase 2 but will seek input from this group too.

5. Dates for the next meeting
November, with interactions inbetween. FOR to send doodle poll.
6. There was no AOB