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*We stand for a fair, caring and vibrant
Ireland for now and the future*

Date: 06 October 2021

Updated: Memorandum of Understanding:

Between:

The Community Foundation for Ireland, 3rd Floor Phibsborough Tower, Phibsborough,
Dublin 7

And

National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
90 North King St, Smithfield, Dublin 7

Purpose:

The Community Foundation for Ireland and the National Parks & Wildlife Service wish to work together to promote biodiversity conservation in communities across Ireland. This will be done by both parties working in partnership to distribute funds to encourage action through a three-year programme (2021 – 2024).

Background:

Following a successful pilot initiative in 2018, The Community Foundation for Ireland established a Community Biodiversity Grant Round under its Environment and Nature Fund as a flagship project.

The objective of the grants programme was and continues to be, to enhance biodiversity in communities throughout the country. This is done by combining the expertise of qualified ecologists with the skills, experience, and enthusiasm of local community groups.

The grant's programme was developed by engaging a panel of experts which included academics, independent ecologists, NGOs, and Heritage Officers. The need for scientific engagement was established and it was decided that communities need support from ecologists to understand local context and determine priorities based on evidence. The Community Foundation for Ireland put an open call out to appoint a panel of suitably qualified ecologists to work with communities to develop a Community Biodiversity Action Plan.





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The Community Foundation for Ireland supported the fund with €269,000 and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht donated a further €100,000. Overall, we were able to provide funding to 56 successful applicants with a minimum of one in each 26 counties receiving support. However as always, the demand outstripped the available funding with interest in this grant round from across the country with over 170 applications received and nearly a million euro requested.

With the arrival of Covid-19 in Ireland in 2020, grantees of the Environment Fund and environmental NGO'S experienced the direct impact of the virus and the associated restrictions. This prevented many from delivering work that had been planned for deployment during the height of the first and subsequent lockdowns. Because of this Foundation for Ireland carried out a review of the Fund, examining how the environmental sector could continue to be supported despite the ever-changing landscape. Following this review, the Community Foundation for Ireland proposed a reorientation of the focus of the Environment fund 2020, providing a number of large grants to organisations/programs focused on biodiversity.

The new approach Grants from the Environment Fund 2020 (Biodiversity) aimed to support larger, strategically important organisations within the environmental sector. By taking this approach, the Fund is investing in organisations who have the capacity and ability to support the sector. It was envisaged that this funding would provide a level of continuity and security, ensuring organisations with the potential to deliver long-term strategic change would remain in existence beyond the pandemic. As these organisations act as a key resource for grassroots organisations across Ireland it is crucial that they are supported and in turn can cascade support to environmental organisations of all sizes located in communities across Ireland, such as those who received funding from the Environment fund in 2018/2019. A total of 8 grants were awarded to organisations including The Hedge Laying Association of Ireland and The Irish Peatland Conservation Council.

Commitments :

The Community Foundation for Ireland's activities (2021-2024):

The Community Foundation for Ireland will contribute €200,000 to the Environment and Nature Fund to support Biodiversity projects.

It will:

- Provide €200,000 p/a to the Environment Fund: Biodiversity Strand
- Administer the Fund

Patron: Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland. **Directors:** Mike Gaffney (Chairperson), Patrick Farrell, Louis FitzGerald, Richard George, Eamonn Heffernan, Dr. Brian Keogh, Anna Lee, Catherine Mullarkey, Roddy Rowan, Tara Smith.
Goodwill Ambassadors: John Gallagher, Chris Horn. **Chief Executive:** Tina Roche

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Charity No. CHY 13967





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- Establish an expert Steering Committee
- Set the and design the criteria for Grantmaking and administer the funds
- Engage ecologists
- Monitor progress
- Convene Learning Events, where appropriate
- Report to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

In addition to the above, The Community Foundation for Ireland will work to engage additional donors for the fund, to meet the additional demand from applicants.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2021-2024):

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, will contribute an agreed total of €250,000 and thereafter a minimum of €100,000 per annum for three years (2022, 2023 and 2024). Payment will be issued following a receipt of a donation request from the Community Foundation for Ireland.

It will:

- Provide an appropriate person to sit on the Steering Committee
- Receive reports from the Community Foundation for Ireland
- Offer advice and guidance, if appropriate, on the outcome of the reports.

Timeline and Fees:

Timeline:

The Community Foundation for Ireland will issue a Donation Request before the launch of each funding round 2021 – 2024.

Funding and Fees:

As outlined above, the DHLGH have committed to:

- Contributing €250,000 in 2021 and €100,000 p/a (2022,2023 and 2024) towards the Biodiversity Strand of the Environment Fund.
- This funding is subject to a 5% fee on donation (i.e.). €12,500 of the overall €250,000 in 2021, and €5,000 of the overall €100,000 contributed thereafter.





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Agreement: The Community Foundation for Ireland and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage agree to the approach/terms outlined above and agree to work in partnership on the Environment Fund, a joint initiative of the above-mentioned parties.

Signed:

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Denise Charlton
CEO
The Community Foundation for Ireland

Signed:

Niall Ó'Donnchú
Assistant Secretary
Department of Housing, Local
Government and Heritage

