An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

LEGACY4LIFE





FINAL REPORT

11th June 2024

Legacy4LIFE
An Taisce

An Taisce -
The National Trust for Ireland
Lobbying for thE Green Deal in Agriculture, Communities and BiodiversitY in Ireland

LEGACY4LIFE

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVENTION

Work Package 1 (WP1)- Ponds as Reservoirs for Biodiversity

Objectives

The key objectives for WP1 were to enhance the role that ponds can play as biodiversity refugia in Ireland, by supporting capacity development and expertise in pond creation, management and conservation at local and national level. The objectives focused on enhancing public awareness/community mobilisation around the value of ponds (and pond creation) to enhance Irelands biodiversity, to improve water quality and around their climate mitigation benefits. These needs addressed in the application were achieved through the written outputs of the projects, the public engagement, workshops, connection and collaboration with Local Authorities at a national scale and the adopt a pond network created by WP1.

Activities

Task 1.1 Stakeholder Consultations. Working with Local Authorities staff (specifically Biodiversity officers) and other relevant national and UK stakeholders e.g. National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS), UK Freshwater Habitats Trust, National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) and the public through events, pond demos/workshops and community group engagement.

Task 1.2 Review of Existing Pond Status post BRIDE project. The project followed up on previous work undertaken as part of the Bride project and the NPWS Pond Creation scheme, the status of these was examined, included in the Pond Survey Report.

Task 1.3 Establishment of Demonstration Sites. In conjunction with local authorities and community groups, a range of demonstration sites were established across Ireland on public land.

Task 1.4 Involvement of Community Groups/Citizen Science. A successful adopt a pond scheme was created in conjunction with community groups at a series of the Legacy4LIFE pond demo site locations, with workshops for relevant community groups, local authorities and operational staff to learn the technicalities of pond creation, and how to best situate and manage ponds for biodiversity.

Deviations/Unforeseen Actions

The only WP1 deliverable which was not achieved was the creation of a Most Pond Friendly Town Award. It was identified early on during the project that this would not be feasible within the project timeframe, this was brought to the attention of, and agreed with the Project Advisor. This would be an ideal component of a future expansion of the Ponds for Biodiversity programme and could be connected with a continuation of WP2 (e.g. a Most Pond-Friendly Farm Award) as there was great interest in the Pond Creation Pamphlets at this year's BioFarm conference.

Results and Impacts

Current status and needs analysis for urban and rural pond development and maintenance in Ireland.

Task 1.1 Incorporation of pond creation and maintenance as an objective in at least 5 County & Town Development Plans - 5 CDPs/LAPs (Kildare CDP, Fingal CDP, Edenderry LAP, Tramore LAP, and Dungarvan LAP and two additional submissions to the Climate Action Plan 2023 and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023.

Task 1.2 - A succinct overview of the current Pond Status in Ireland, including a catalogue of current pond projects was completed. Generally speaking, a key result of this task was uncovering the extent to which pond-based research has been neglected in Ireland, especially when compared to the vast bodies of research in marine environments or other terrestrial aquatic environments such as rivers and lakes.

Task 1.3 - Seven demo site locations were created with community groups engaged to monitor them into the future. The impact of this was to show communities their ability to create or maintain their own ponds and see firsthand their biodiversity and climate mitigation potential. This part of the project has great scope to be expanded in future programmes and would give a wealth of knowledge on the extent, status and health of ponds in Ireland.

Task 1.4 - The results of this task connect in with those of Task 1.3, beyond the demo site locations there was also a total **22 nationwide pond creation, management, and monitoring workshops across the country**, connecting community groups and the public with WP1's work. These workshops introduced the public to key skills pertaining to pond creation, management, and species identification. Beyond the physical involvement of community groups/the public during demos and workshops, WP1's team also engaged the public on the aforementioned topics through their presence at events (e.g. Bloom 2022 with an *in-situ* pond) and through social and traditional media material (full list in Results section).

Effectiveness and lessons learned

All activities across WP1 were deemed highly effective. There is a clear need in Ireland for a leading voice on Ponds, it became apparent during the course of the project that while there were previous initiatives, no all-Ireland, all-encompassing projects have happened to date. WP1 has the potential to be a much larger project - the WP1 Team Lead identified the major need for an All-Ireland Pond Plan, in the same vein of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. While this WP had the opportunity to engage with policy makers, local authorities, education and the public, the surface has only been scratched. Especially in relation to stakeholder engagement and resource creation (e.g. The Irish Pond Manual) a longer time frame and larger team will be required for a potential future Ponds for Biodiversity projects.

The level of public and stakeholder interest and requests for collaboration within the timeframe of the project was beyond the workload possible for the team, if all key milestones and deliverables were to be met, but a spreadsheet/database of interested community groups, state and semi state agencies and international collaborators has been collated for potential future projects e.g. The Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Director of Inland Fisheries Ireland and Birdwatch Ireland. With the dissemination of the Local Authorities Pond Report and The Pond Manual, we already had requests to receive additional copies, before the print run had even been posted out. There is indeed a great hunger and potential in Ireland for an All-Ireland Pond Plan.

Work Package 2 (WP2) - Tackling Biodiversity Loss through Promotion of "Farm to Fork"

Objective

WP2, with its focus on organic agriculture and emission reduction options for agriculture, was soundly based on Green Deal Theme 6 'Farm to Fork'. Its concerns for metrics and diversification of agricultural practices also had relevance for Theme 1: 'Increasing Climate Ambition'. The primary objective of this work package was to advocate and educate both producers and consumers in Ireland regarding the opportunities offered by the Farm to Fork alternative to current intensification-based policies.

To achieve this, the specific objectives centered on clarifying the scientific underpinnings and climate mitigation potential of current agricultural practices and promoting the importance of an alternative robust, diverse and resilient food system in a post- Covid recovery environment.

All objectives were addressed, and met the needs identified in the application by finding novel ways to communicate the Farm to Fork theme to key, relevant stakeholders. Creating

outputs which; helped the next generation to better understand food provenance, sovereignty and the need and benefits of organic agriculture and effectively identifying and communicating emissions reduction requirements (from the dairy sector) for Ireland.

Activities

Task 2.1 Surveying Barriers to Organic Agriculture Uptake - the 405 participants of this survey provided a valued insight into the current difficulties faced in transitioning from non-organic to organic farming practices. Results were conveyed to key stakeholders with a view to improving future uptake policies and regulations and to further promote a movement from intensive dairying to more diversified organic agriculture, shared with relevant stakeholders and made available for the public via the dedicated WP2 outputs page on the AT website.

Building on initial engagement with the organic farming community across the country and a series of subsequent farm walk visits, a booklet of best practice examples (small and large scale across beef, dairy, sheep, horticulture and mixed farming) was created as a resource for conventional farmers considering making the switch to organic and also detailed relevant state supports, this was disseminated at appropriate events (e.g. NOTS BioFarm conference 2023, The Wheel Access Europe conference 2023) and to appropriate stakeholders (e.g. Minister Pippa Hackett, Minister of State for Land Use and Biodiversity in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine).

While an initial output for WP2 was to create age-appropriate booklet-style material for The Green Schools network, inspired by the above-mentioned farms visits, the team was inspired to turn this into a complete children's book, which could take the reader on a "virtual" farm walk, ideal for those not living in rural communities or have never been to a farm. This involved the creation of the text, and engagement of illustrators, a copy editor and publisher.

Task 2.2 This task examined the alternative methodologies for Methane emission quantification and the climate implications of EU trade agreements on Irish agriculture. Pressures to change the metrics of carbon dioxide equivalents have been evident at national, EU and UNFCCC levels in recent years, based on various interpretations of the GWP versus GWP* methodology. This task used IPCC-based scientific expertise to examine in detail the arguments and the implications that forthcoming EU legislation will have in combination with national legislation in determining the future trajectory of Irish agriculture. A dissemination plan was to be developed to publicise the outcome of this task and to emphasise the imperative of reductions in emissions in the short term in compliance with national and pending EU legislation. *Due to the project end of year completion date, it was deemed by the steering committee that these outputs would gain the most traction launching in January instead of December.*

Task 2.3 Examining the arguments concerning carbon leakage, food security and increased efficiency which are frequently used to justify increased dairy intensification in Ireland. They were examined in view of these in the wider post-BREXIT trade environments and also in the context of MERCASUR and CETA implications. The dissemination of this work (as well as the rest of the WP2 tasks) was several fold - via social media and traditional media, relevant stakeholder events and provided in a dedicated resource page for WP2 on the An Taisce website. With the key task of informing the general public of the consequential relationships between agriculture and environmental quality indices of alternative trajectories in Irish agriculture.

Deviations/Unforeseen actions

For Task 2.1 as well as distributing the findings to relevant stakeholders, and outlined in the initial proposal, it was also deemed pertinent to deliver the information in a more useful way to the farming community considering making the switch to organic. The key findings of the survey were therefore presented by WP2's organic farming expert team member at the 2023 BioFarm conference in November 2023.

In July of 2023, WP2 lost its work package lead. This type of issue that was foreseen in the initial application, due to the high turnover rate on project work in the Irish NGO sector. As much of the Lead-appropriate work was already complete, the Steering committee chose instead to hire an executive assistant whose skillset would be more focused on the finalisation of the project deliverables - editing, design, publication etc. This allowed us to still meet all key activities and deliverables within the timeframe of the project.

Results and impacts

Task 2.1 Report distributed to appropriate stakeholders (including, along with the other deliverables, Minister for Agriculture Charlie McConlogue at COP28). Also disseminated via presentation (and public engagement at a dedicated stand) at the National Organic Training Skillnet BioFarm conference 2023 - considered to have the most impact as it allowed the WP2 team to better engage with farmers considering making the switch to organic and speak to a wider audience in person.

Task 2.2 The outputs of this task considerably exceeded those initially planned in the project application. **The Best Practice booklet** was re-printed, initial 50 copies were all keenly taken at the BioFarm conference, including hand delivered to Minister Pippa Hackett. A subsequent print run of 150 booklets was necessary for distribution to other relevant, interested stakeholders. The nature of the booklet, an opening introduction by L4L staff member John Liston and profiles of each farm created from interviews of the farmers themselves, tended to the booklet's overall success - as it was by organic farmers speaking directly to the farming community, the tone of which was greatly appreciated.

The initial educational material planned for Green Schools was developed into a full children's book commercially printed, the scope of which could be expanded beyond the

initial remit of the Green Schools network and has become a key legacy output from the Legacy4LIFE project, 900 of which have been printed to date, distributed via GS, at events and to public and university libraries in Ireland and the UK.

Task 2.3 Dissemination across 15 articles, blogs and inclusion on websites of state and semi state bodies. Presence or presentations at conferences and events, >25 social media posts on dedicated L4L social media channels as well as mentions on other organisations, social channels e.g. Organic Trust on X. Event attendance e.g. Ploughing Championships, Bio-Farm and COP28. Full list in section IV. The impact of 2.3 social and general media was several fold - as it acted to inform the public and the farming community about the important of GHG emission reduction and the benefits of switching to an organic agriculture system (as per the initial proposal), but it served to publicise other outputs from the project such as the farmers booklets or children's book and gave An Taisce the opportunity to connect with the farming community in a new and favorable way.

Task 2.4 The results from task 2.4 have been very interesting, due to the fact that they deviate so greatly from the current status quo on agricultural GHG emissions in Ireland from most major state and semi state bodies, it was identified by the Steering Committee, that the policy recommendations from Task 2.4 would be best launched in January 2024, instead of the pre-Christmas period, when the L4L project finished. *The outputs from Task 2.4 are complete and available in the WP2 folder.*

Effectiveness and Lessons learned

Despite the hurdle of losing its work package leader, WP2 can still be deemed highly effective, all deliverables were still met and, in many cases, considerably exceeded the initial expectation (for example the x900 copies of the children's book). A key afterthought of WP2, in the current agricultural landscape in Ireland, the sentiment seems to be that the farming community is on "one side" and the environmental/NGO community is on the other. The presentation of WP2's outputs at the BioFarm conferences, the engagement with the farming community from the very beginning of the project, and having a 15 year's certified organic farmer (who sits on the Irish Organic Growers and Farmers Association board) all sought to bridge this gap. Something that will be very much needed in the coming years, if Ireland is to meet its emission reduction targets.

With organic farm gate prices showing a premium at the moment, there is great potential benefit for the farmer provided by the increased Organic Farming Scheme payment rates, the access to the ACRES environmental scheme (mainly for linear measures), while also being able to claim agroforestry payments on organic areas, only further highlighting the importance of the work carried out in WP2. A major lesson learned was that, especially for smaller scale commercial operations, the farming community who were engaged had a great interest in nature-based practices and biodiversity restoration. There was also an unexpected

crossover with WP1, where many farmers were interested in reinstating/creating ponds on their farmland to foster greater biodiversity and improve water quality and so wished to avail of the materials generated in WP1 (primarily the Pond Creation pamphlet).

Work Package 3 Green Communities Development of a Low Carbon Plan

Objectives

In accordance with the Green Deal objective of incorporating an ambitious Greening Plan for certain urban areas by 2030, this work package established stakeholder interactions and practical steps necessary to establishing low carbon town centres and how established successful instruments such as Green Flag awards to incentivise community involvement in the process could be activated. A novel objective also explored how smaller rural centres could be involved in buying in to similar community-based sustainability schemes.

- **Stakeholder interactions: -** stakeholder interaction was conducted throughout the duration of the project, in the form of meetings, community presentations and talks, sectoral seminars, requests for stakeholder assistance and participation, requests for support from sectoral agencies, and extensive survey engagement.
- **Practical steps necessary to establish low carbon town centres. -** *See Low Carbon Plan Manual, Part IV.*
- **Green Flag awards to incentivise community involvement. -** *This is contained within the "An Taisce Green Communities Low Carbon Plan Accreditation Framework: A Rural and Urban Low Carbon Green Flag Award Programme" document, available to view at: https://www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*
- **Emission reduction strategies. -** The project has worked in collaboration and alignment with the Kildare County Council Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) Strategy for Maynooth. The Green Communities Low Carbon Plan Manual will allow communities to explore their low carbon future options and preferences within a framework that fits in with Local Authority and other national planning initiatives for climate action. The Green Communities Low Carbon Plan Manual provides an emissions methodology that is compatible with the need for Irish Local Authorities to develop their own DZ Baseline Emission Inventories (BEI).
- **Mobilising community and commercial interests in conjunction with administrative authorities: -** WP3 met with over 100 Students to present the LCP, and to engage students with the plans' commercial and agricultural sectors (Maynooth University School of Business MSc in Strategy & Innovation). Community engagement was completed via community meetings and engagement with the Green Communities Low Carbon Calculator.
- **Develop a template for the development of a low carbon town-** using the town of Maynooth, County Kildare as the test site. *A detailed template for urban*

low carbon planning is contained within the Low Carbon Plan Manual, available to view at: https://www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources

- **Development of a template for rural communities -** using the village of Ballyvaughan, County Clare as the test site. *A guidance template for rural low carbon planning is contained within the "Green Flag for Low Carbon Communities Draft methodology for consultation", available to view at: www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*

Activities

- **Climate Action Policy research and interpretation for the Low Carbon Plan Manual**
- **Formulation of the LCP stakeholder structure**
- **Joint Green Communities/Maynooth University Sustainability & Climate Action Research Webinar:** The most significant outreach event during 2022 was the Research week Sustainability and Climate Action Research webinar, *(online & in person event)*.
- **Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI) research and methodology:** An extensive methodology was developed for the 7 themes of the Low Carbon Plan Manual. Direction and advice were provided by the following state agencies and consultancies: Codema, EPA, SEAI, Teagasc.
- **BEI results for Maynooth and Ballyvaughan:** These were calculated using the Green Communities emissions methodology.
- **Survey based emission intervention forecasts:**
- **Ballyvaughan Survey based Low Carbon Plan theme preferences:** A major component of the survey engagement across all sectors was to acquire a preferred climate action emission theme for the plan from the following four societal sectors.
- **Exploration of sustainable finance:** *See Low Carbon Plan Manual, Part X.*
- **Documentation of institutional barriers:** These were documented throughout the project. *See Low Carbon Plan Manual, Part X.*
- **Meetings and Public Engagement:** Stakeholder Meetings: 37, Public Meetings (Maynooth): 4, Internal Project Meetings: 160, Steering Meetings: 5, Data and Research Meetings (State Agencies): 3, Sectoral Events Attended: 7, Seminars and Webinars Attended: 17, Policy Submissions: 5, Number of social media posts: 72 , Radio, TV, and media interviews: 6(3 in Maynooth & 3 in Ballyvaughan), Public enquiries answered: 57, Press Releases & News Bulletins: 8 *(a selection of these*

articles and press releases are available at the following An Taisce web page link: https://www.antaisce.org/Blogs/greencommunities).

- **For background on all WP3 activities please go to the An Taisce website** *www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*

Deviations/Unforeseen actions

WP3 had planned to engage in a Scenario Planning exercise within Maynooth in June of 2023, in order to deliver an exploration of Low Carbon Planning for Maynooth, and to capture community preferences. A novel approach to community engagement was introduced by the Legacy4Life steering committee in the form of the Carbon Calculator. This was in addition to the existing tasks and deliverables of Work Package 3. The concept was sound in that the Carbon Calculator would provide an online application accessible to a much wider audience than a citizens forum.

Results and impacts

WP3 worked in collaboration with the Kildare County Council Decarbonisation Strategy for Maynooth and was assisted by Maynooth University staff and students. Looking to the future there is great potential for this model of community climate action planning to align with Local Authority Climate Action Planning. It is An Taisce's hope to establish Green Communities Low Carbon Planning as a national programme. This will deliver mentorship and accreditation supporting Green Communities Plans for Low Carbon Communities across the country. This delivers strongly on the UN Sustainability Goals, Specifically: 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, 13: Climate Action, 17: Partnerships for the Goals. To view An Taisce's Green Communities promotional video, please visit:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86KiTu7Nse0

Completed Deliverables of Work Package 3:

- **3.1 Handbook for developing Green Communities at City and town level.**
- **3.2 Report on a framework and stakeholder structure, timing and phasing by which an Urban Greening Plan programme 2030 would be advanced in Ireland.**
- **3.3 Quantified uptake of Green Flag Awards for Parks and Public spaces.**
- **3.4 Report on a template for developing an incentive scheme based on a Green Flag Award for small rural communities.**

Completed Impacts (expected results) of Work Package 3:

•Identifying institutional barriers to be overcome in establishing low carbon towns and urban greening plans for 2030 in Ireland. *See Low Carbon Plan Manual in WP3 deliverables folder, specifically Part X – Sustainable Finance and Institutional Barriers.*

•Identifying baseline local data needs for establishing criteria necessary for key performance indicators for a low carbon town. *See Low Carbon Plan Manual, specifically Part V – Green Communities Low Carbon Plan Emissions Methodology.*

•Documented protocol for developing a Green Flag for Communities in urban centres. This is the "An Taisce Green Communities Low Carbon Plan Accreditation Framework: A Rural and Urban Low Carbon Green Flag Award Programme".

•Finalisation of a template for inaugurating a Green Flag for Communities in rural areas. This is the "Green Flag for Low Carbon Communities Draft methodology for consultation".

- For more background please go to the An Taisce website *www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*

Effectiveness and lessons learned

The Legacy4LIFE Green Communities was particularly effective at mapping out a replicable methodology for baseline emissions, and for emission reduction forecasting. It is a replicable template for low carbon community planning, in alignment with local authority climate action planning. The emissions methodology follows Codema's "Developing Co2 Baselines: A Step-by-Step Guide For Your Local Authority (2017)" document to some degree. However, the Green Communities Handbook expands on this by providing methodologies for Land Use emissions, Water Consumption emissions, and additional Agricultural emissions (enteric fermentation, soil emissions, and manure management). It also provides options for calculating emissions at a higher resolution than previously available, (Electoral Division, rather than County level).

Lack of community engagement is a perennial issue faced with all climate action plans and their consultations, and The Green Communities Maynooth LCP approached this challenge by organising separate surveys and engagement events for the following sectors: agriculture, community, large businesses and small – medium enterprise (SMEs). This proved to be quite successful for all community sectors, with the exception of the SME sector where engagement was minimal. Recommendations as to how to address this engagement shortfall are included within the relevant SME section of the Low Carbon Plan Manual, specifically Part VIII – Maynooth Engagement and Emission Forecast Results. Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) collaboration with Green Communities Low Carbon Planning moving forward, would greatly aid future replications of the LCP in other communities. The SECs are looking to move beyond

the work they have done with their Energy Master Plans, and Low Carbon Planning would be an ideal gateway for them to identify local decarbonisation options and projects.

HIGHLIGHTS

In WP1 - Promoting Ponds as Reservoirs of Biodiversity - one of the team's key deliverables was a pamphlet on how to create your own pond, 1000 copies to be commercially printed. There was such a high level of interest from local authorities, community groups and the public, that this expanded into two separate pamphlets (one on pond creation and one on the biodiversity of Irish ponds). Over 7,000 copies are printed to date, all additional print runs being sponsored by various local authorities. By project end date, more and more requests were coming in to sponsor print runs. At time of writing, another print run is in the works with LAWPRO (Local Authorities Water Programme).

In WP2 - Farm to Fork - one initial output of the project was to engage with the Green Schools programme to promote Farm to Fork and organic farming, through the creation of a booklet. Through the various skillsets identified within the Legacy4LIFE team, this grew to become a high-quality children's book which guides the reader through a "farm walk" on an organic farm. The book was launched at the National Organic Training Skillnet BioFarm conference and has now been distributed through the Green Schools system, at key events (Access Europe, Dublin 2023) as well as the Irish and UK library systems, and is great legacy piece from the project.

In WP3, The Green Communities Handbook provides a structure to engage citizens in the planning of their future, rather than being passive recipients, and allows for much more dynamic engagement with decarbonisation. It also allows the public from different sectors of the community to vote for their preferred decarbonisation activity, and for these preferences to then guide and inform the future direction of local authority climate action planning, which can be more rapidly incorporated into the Local Authorities Climate Action Plan. The Green Communities LCP will allow communities to explore their low carbon future options and preferences within a framework that fits in with the local authority and other national planning initiatives for climate action. Following on from this, the Green Communities Carbon Calculator allows the user to manipulate different levers (each representing key actions that could be taken at a community level) to lower the community's overall carbon emissions. The carbon calculator is unique in the fact that it allows a community to see potential action as a collective (calculators typically assess individual emissions) and the fact that the calculator can be "fed" with the data of the user's specific town/community. While the calculator is currently in beta, given the high level of interest already received from local authorities and the public, we would certainly seek to develop it to full functionality so it could be rolled out

at a national level. For background on all WP3 work please go to the An Taisce website *www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*

DETAILED ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS/IMPACTS UNDER EACH WORK PACKAGE

Work Package 1: Promoting Ponds as Reservoirs of Biodiversity

The activities in this area have been carried out fully.

Duration: 15/11/21 – 14/11/23

Objectives:

- *To establish a network of local authorities and other bodies who understand the value of ponds, and commit to protecting/creating ponds on public lands*. WP1 produced a first-of-its-kind Ponds Local Authorities report, distributed to a network of Biodiversity Officers in County Councils across the country. County Councils (such as Wicklow and Cork) also sponsored additional print runs of WP1 pamphlet (details included in Results below) and would like to collaborate with An Taisce on any future Ponds projects.
- *To create a set of demonstration sites across Ireland which demonstrate to practitioners and policy makers how ponds can help to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.* - See Results for Adopt a Pond locations.
- *To ascertain the status of recent pond initiatives* - please see Pond Survey Report online.
- *To establish an 'adopt a pond' network of citizen scientists/community groups to monitor and manage the newly created ponds, or existing ponds…* - A network of WP1's demo locations agreed to become 'adopt a pond' sites. Under the guidance of the WP1 team, local community groups have taken on the monitoring of each pond & supply of information to the National Biodiversity Data Centre, as outlined in the initial application.
- *To disseminate the project's results to policy makers, practitioners and other stakeholder.* - detailed in results below.

- *To engage individuals to establish ponds in their gardens… potential for awards for the most 'pond-friendly' town/county in Ireland* *- this was completed through social media posts, public attendance at demos, presentations at public events & talks and WP1's Pond Creation pamphlet (to guide the public on pond creation at home), full quantification in results below.
- *To build capacity within Ireland for pond expertise, and operators skilled in pond creation* - Local authority staff demos, dedicated Local Authorities Pond Report and most importantly The Irish Pond Manual.

Activities:

Task 1.1 Stakeholder Consultations. In conjunction with key stakeholders, an exercise of co-creation was undertaken to draft and develop an action plan for local authorities to foster pond development as part of their Development Plan priorities, modelled on the National Pollinator Plan. In particular, close liaison with the National Biodiversity Centre and Local Authorities was involved.

Task 1.2 Review of Existing Pond Status post BRIDE project. The project followed up on previous work undertaken as part of the Bride project and the NPWS Pond Creation scheme. The status of these was examined. *See Pond Survey Report.*

Task 1.3 Establishment of Demonstration Sites. In conjunction with local authorities and community groups, a set of demonstration sites was established across Ireland on public land, with workshops for relevant community groups, local authorities and operational staff to learn the technicalities of pond creation, and how to best situate and manage ponds for biodiversity. *See results for list of demo sites titles, locations and attendance numbers.*

Task 1.4 Involvement of Community Groups/Citizen Science. A successful adopt a pond scheme was created in conjunction with community groups at a series of the Legacy4LIFE pond demo site locations. *See results for list of Adopt a Pond sites and associated community groups.*

Results

- **To establish a network of local authorities and other bodies who understand the value of ponds, and commit to protecting/creating ponds on public** - All Biodiversity Officers in Local Authorities (or Heritage Officers in county don't have a BO) received a copy of the Local Authorities Pond report and the Irish Pond Manual (including requests received for additional copies). WP1 collaborated continually throughout the project, with great connections forged in Wicklow, Cork Co. Councils and Galway City Council (who would certainly like to collaborate on future projects).

- **To create a set of demonstration sites across Ireland which demonstrate to practitioners and policy makers how ponds can help to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change** - 7 demo sites total, 6 on publicly accessible land, connected with community groups, 1 as part of a social enterprise operation.
- **To ascertain the status of recent pond initiatives** - 262 surveys completed, (*see Pond Survey Report*), the outcome of this work helped to inform WP1s work, by better understanding (and therefore being able to address) the gaps in pond research in Ireland.
- **To establish an 'adopt a pond' network of citizen scientists/community groups to monitor and manage the newly created ponds, or existing ponds** - all demo site locations came onboard to become adopt a pond locations and where provided with guidelines and resources to feed their future data to the National Biodiversity Data Centre.
- **To engage individuals to establish ponds in their gardens, with clear guidance and tips, and a portal to enter their pond location, potential for awards for the most 'pond-friendly' town/county in Ireland** - As previously stated, the initial deliverable for this was x1 pamphlet printed x1000. To date two pamphlets were created (which fold out into beautifully illustrated posters, by award winning illustrator Brian Fitzgerald), over 7,000 have been printed (subsequent print runs sponsored by county councils and LAWPRO, currently further print runs in the works).
- **To build capacity within Ireland for pond expertise, and operators skilled in pond creation** - Completed through the creation of the Irish Pond Manual and the Local Authorities Pond Report as well as the attendance of local authority staff members at Pond demos and workshops.
- **Local Authorities and Ponds: Actions and Plans Report** - as previously stated, submitted to all Biodiversity Officers (or Heritage Officers as appropriate) nationally, along with physical copies of the Irish Pond Manual, to further aid their work.
- **Incorporation of pond creation and maintenance as an objective in at lest 5 County & Town Development Plans** - Submitted to 5 CDPs/LAPs (Kildare CDP, Fingal CDP, Edenderry LAP, Tramore LAP, and Dungarvan LAP + 2 additional submissions to the Climate Action Plan 2023 and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023
- **Demos, Workshops & Events**
  - **Biodiversity Week 2022,** 14/05/22, 'The Grove 'Wildlife Sanctuary, Dublin, Attendance: 36 A),
  - **Farmland wetlands: a multifunctional haven for local wildlife,** 19/05/22, Liston Family Farm, Limerick, Attendance: 29 B)
  - **Love your wetlands,** 21/05/22, Location: An Tairseach Organic Farm and Ecology Centre, Attendance: 15 C)

- **Biodiversity Week** 2023 Carlow (12 attendees), Cork (15 attendees), Tralee (30 attendees)
- **LA Biodiversity conference/workshop**, Limerick 2022
- **Presented to engineers at Environment Conference** 2022
- **Irish Wastewater Expo**, **Recorded Pond Talk for OPW** (2022)
- **PONDERFUL** Presentation (2023)
- **BLOOM** presentation and living pond display 2023
- **NPWS Public Lecture** Summer Series 08/23
- Talk for **Birdwatch Ireland** Wicklow Branch 12/12/23
- **25 pond creation, management and monitoring workshops:** An Tairseach, Wicklow, The Grove, Dublin, Marlay Park, Dublin, Kilbogett Park, Dublin, Wildacres (x12), John Liston's Farm Pond (Limerick) (x2), Tralee Bay Wetlands (x2), Ennis, Clare, Ballinahown, Westmeath, Merlin Woods Park, Galway, Cork- Clashduv (x2)

Deliverables/evidence

For more information and background see *www.antaisce.org/ponds-for-biodiversity-resources*

- **Output of Tasks 1.1, 1.2 Local Authorities Pond Report 50 copies copies to be commercially printed -** as per discussion with Project Advisor (November '23) it was deemed better to send electronically. This was shared with all County Council Biodiversity Officers in Ireland and for counties without Biodiversity Officers, it was shared the Heritage Officer instead. This was deemed a more effective form of communication with the Local Authorities and allowed us to answer their questions in real time.
- **Output of Task 1.2 Starting your own pond (pamphlet) Output of Task** - instead x1 (1000 to be printed) WP1 created x2 pamphlets, 7,000 copies printed to date with subsequent prints runs being sponsored and run beyond the end of project date.
- **Output of Task 1.3 A Guide to the Creation and Management of Irish Ponds (Handbook) - "**Final Report 50 copies commercially printed", instead 150 copies commercially printed and circulated to the Biodiversity (or Heritage) Officers of all Local Authorities, currently fielding requests for further copies.
- **Media Outputs**
  - Ponds for Biodiversity - National Biodiversity Data Centre (biodiversityireland.ie)

- Biodiversity-Ireland-Issue-24-WEB.pdf (biodiversityireland.ie)
- An Taisce Legacy4LIFE blogs:
- Ponds for Biodiversity: 2022 in Review | An Taisce - The National Trust For Ireland
- Legacy4LIFE - Ponds Project | An Taisce - The National Trust For Ireland
- Legacy4LIFE Ponds for Biodiversity Social Media Posts
- Legacy4LIFE Ponds for Biodiversity Project - CARO
- Learn to build a pond: 'The minute you create one, wildlife comes. Instantly – ' The Irish Times
- Rewetting land for biodiversity under debate (irishexaminer.com)
- Donal Hickey: Handy info here if you're planning to dig and manage a pond (irishexaminer.com)
- Ponds Better for Biodiversity Than Rivers and Lakes - An Taisce Publication (afloat.ie)
- Waterland's Discover An Taisce's Legacy4LIFE Ponds for Biodiversity Project | WaterLANDS: Water-based solutions for carbon storage, people and wilderness.
- Dun L/Rathdown Co Co August 2022 Monthly Management Report (dlrcoco.ie)
- IEN Newsletter Connecting Nationwide this September (constantcontact.com)
- LSL Auction article Final days of National Biodiversity Week 2022 - LSL Auctions News
- Horticulture connected Legacy4LIFE programme to develop community-based supports for natural environment - HorticultureConnected.ie
- Growtrade.ie website on L4L project Growtrade | Ireland's online source for latest news and insight for the horticulture, sportsturf, parks and landscape industries

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Work Package 2: Tackling Biodiversity Loss through Promotion of "Farm to Fork"

The activities in this area have been carried out fully.

Duration: 15/11/21 – 14/11/23

Objectives

- To advocate and educate both producers and consumers in Ireland regarding the opportunities offered by the Farm to Fork alternative to current intensification-based policies.

- To clarify the scientific underpinnings and climate mitigation potential of current 13 agricultural practices and promoting the importance of an alternative robust, diverse, and resilient food system in a post-Covid recovery environment.

Activities

- Survey design, distribution, analysis & dissemination
- Farmer's best practice booklets - farm site location selection, subsequent farm visits, interviews and desk research, creation of booklets, editing, design, publication and distribution
- GHG emission trajectory policy pieces - extensive desk research, writing, peer reviews, subsequent edits, design, internal organisation consultation and dissemination
- Children's Book - inspiration taken from aforementioned farm visits, story boarding, text write up, identification of suitable copy editor, illustrator and publishers. Hurdles were faced due to loss of WP1 team lead late summer of 2023, project coordinator took over children's book project management, sources new illustrators, re-edited text and subsequently book was publishes and distributed as per initial application plus launches at BioFarm conference.

Results

- After the creation, completion and analysis of the farmers survey, the practical barriers to organic farming uptake were identified and summarised in the Farm Survey Report *(see WP2 deliverables folder).*
- Guidance on how to begin farming organically, with real examples from a variety of farming types, was provided through the creation of the Farmers Best Practice booklet. This also provided an easy to read and up to date introduction to the types of funding and supports available to Irish organic farmers (and those wishing to farm organically) in 2023 into 2024.
- The percentage reduction in agricultural livestock emissions (commensurate with current policy proposals) under a number of different input scenarios, was quantified and put forward in a brief aimed at both policy makers and other relevant stakeholders.
- Clarification of MERCOSUR and CETA (Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement) impacts on Irish agriculture in the context of climate mitigation was put forward in a brief aimed at both policy makers and other relevant stakeholders.

Deliverables/evidence

For more information and backgound see *www.antaisce.org/farm-to-fork-resources*

- **Statistical analysis of questionnaire survey**
- **Best Practice Booklet**
- **Farm Walk Children's Book** .
- **Irish Agriculture and Farm to Fork: Environmental Challenges and Opportunities**
- **Agricultural Methane in Irish Climate Action: greenhouse gas metrics, methane mitigation, and related quantification of livestock numbers**
- **Print and social media articles;**
    - Connemara community radio *Stream Legacy4LIFE on Connemara Community Radio by An Taisce | Listen online for free on SoundCloud*
    - Irish Farmers Journal Article on organic Survey *An Taisce survey to gauge farmer views on organic farming - 17 January 2023 Free (farmersjournal.ie)*
    - Agriland Article on organic survey *New survey launched on organic farming in Ireland (agriland.ie)*
    - Farming for Nature website on organic survey *Organic Farming: Barriers and Benefits - Survey now live! - Farming for Nature*
    - National rural network on organic survey *Legacy4LIFE Launch New Organic Farming Survey - NRN (nationalruralnetwork.ie)*
    - IFA website - coverage on organic
    - TEAGASC website - coverage on organic
    - Organic trust twitter on organic *survey Organic Trust on X: "What are your thoughts on organic farming?? ⬇️ @NatOrgSkill @OrgGrowersIre #agriculture #agribusiness #routestomarket #farmgate #farm #biodiversity #agroecology #food systems #SoilHealth" / X (twitter.com)*
    - Irish independent article – Hannagh Quinn Mulligan – Childrens Booklet and Organic Best Practice booklet coverage *Hannah Quinn-Mulligan: Farm lobby preaching to the converted while An Taisce get the children of Ireland on their side | Independent.ie*
    - Horticulture connected *Legacy4LIFE programme to develop community-based supports for natural environment - HorticultureConnected.ie*
    - Food security blog *Legacy4LIFE - Food Security | An Taisce - The National Trust For Ireland*
    - The benefits of organic farming blog *Benefits of Organic Farming | An Taisce - The National Trust For Ireland*
    - Advancing farm to fork in review blog *Advancing Farm to Fork: 2022 in Review | An Taisce - The National Trust For Ireland*
    - Why organics blog *Why Organics? | An Taisce - The National Trust For Ireland*
    - An Taisce Farm to Fork Webpage *Advancing Farm-to-Fork | An Taisce - The National Trust For Ireland*

- Legacy4life Farm to Fork Social Media posts
- An Taisce L4L WP2 at BioFarm 2023 *https://m.independent.ie/farming/comment/hannah-quinn-mulligan-farm-lobby-preaching-to-the-converted-while-an-taisce-get-the-children-of-ireland-on-their-side/a1010785054.html*
- DunLaioghre / Rathdown coco management report *August 2022 Monthly Management Report (dlrcoco.ie)*
- LSL Auction article *Final days of National Biodiversity Week 2022 - LSL Auctions News Growtrade.ie website on L4L project Growtrade | Ireland's online source for latest news and insight for the horticulture, sportsturf, parks and landscape industries*
- Climate Change Advisory Council Working Paper Scoping Study prepared by Teagasc *WP21 Scoping Study data requirements to inform strategies for sustainable agriculture DIS.pdf (climatecouncil.ie)*
- *National Organic Strategy 2024- 2030*

Event Attendance

- RDS Spring Agriculture and Forestry Awards presentation, May 6, 2022
- The Ploughing Championships, September 2022
- Biofach - Germany, August 2022
- Biofarm- Carrick an Shannon, October 2022
- Biofarm – Limerick, November 2023
- COP28, Dubai, UAE December 2023

Work Package 3: Advancing a Green Flag Scheme for Communities

The activities in this area have been carried out fully.

Duration: 15/11/21 – 14/11/23

Objectives:

Work Package 3 addresses emission reductions strategies in urban and rural locations by mobilising community and commercial interests in conjunction with administrative authorities. It is therefore highly consistent with Theme 1 of the Green Deal: 'Increasing Climate ambition'. The aim of WP3 was to develop a template for the development of a low carbon town, based partly on the successful Green Flag concept, whereby synergistic benefits

will occur for participants, and the buy in of the general community to climate action will be enhanced. A secondary objective would be the development of a template for rural communities.

Activities:

Task 3.1: Selection and Planning for a Town Test Location

Review of the current DZ designations: April 2022, Maynooth chosen as test site May 2022.
Public consultation:

- Initiated April 2022
- Sustainability and Climate Action Research Community Engagement Event October 2022
- Agriculture and Commercial Consultation Complete May 2023
- Carbon Calculator Concept Public Demonstration June 2023
- Carbon Calculator Concept Public Demonstration September 2023
- Low Carbon Plan Public Survey September 2023

Stakeholder co-design:

- Initiated April 2022 with: Kildare County Council, Maynooth University, Maynooth SEC, Maynooth Chamber and RPS Consulting
- Emission Topics and Methodology to Maynooth University September 2022
- Stakeholder co-design complete May 2023.

Task 3.2 Steps towards the creation of a Low Carbon Town Centre area

Baseline energy and CO2 emissions data:

- Baseline Emission Inventory based on CAP themes agreed July 2022.
- Emission Topics and draft Methodology sent to Maynooth University September 2022
- Draft Carbon Calculator Baseline Emission Inventory. Collaboration with RPS Group and Kildare County Council: Feb – April 2023
- Survey Inputs to Low Carbon Plan Baseline Emission Inventory: September-November 2023

Quantitative carbon reduction target:

- Draft Low Carbon Plan Emission Interventions: March 2023
- Draft Carbon Calculator Emission Interventions: May 2023
- Agriculture and Commercial Intervention Surveys Complete May 2023.
- Survey Input from Public Consultation: September 2023
- Survey Inputs to Low Carbon Plan Emission Forecasts: September-November 2023

Stakeholder consultation:

- Initiated: April 2022: Kildare County Council, Maynooth University, Maynooth SEC, Maynooth Chamber and RPS Consulting

- Maynooth University Research Week Sustainability and Climate Action Research webinar: October 2022.
- Maynooth University School of Business "Agricultural and Commercial Consultation and Survey": March-May 2023
- Low Carbon Plan & Carbon Calculator Public Demonstration June 2023 & September 2023
- Dissemination of completed Low Carbon Plan Manual to Kildare County Council and Codema for Review: November 2023

Task 3.3 Promotion of the Green Flag Award for Communities

A Green Flag award system:

- Maynooth University Research Week Sustainability and Climate Action Research webinar: October 2022.
- Publication of 2022 Interim Green Communities Report December 2022.
- Business Model proposed for An Taisce Green Communities Beyond 2023: June 2023 Steering Committee.

Task 3.4 A Green Flag Template for Rural Communities

- Ballyvaughan selected as test site location, 2023
- Launch of Ballyvaughan Rural LCP Activity: April 2023.
- Community Survey Launched June 2023.
- Green Communities Rural Low Carbon Plan Community Engagement Event: October 2023

Results

- For more background please go to the An Taisce website *www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*

•Identifying institutional barriers to be overcome in establishing low carbon towns and urban greening plans for 2030 in Ireland. Priority list of 20 institutional barriers identified from consultation with authorities and stakeholders **.** *See Low Carbon Plan Manual, Part X - Sustainable Finance and Institutional Barriers.*

•Identifying baseline local data needs for establishing criteria necessary for key performance indicators for a low carbon town. Priority list of 10 data needs and practical actions for their possible acquisition based on consultation with authorities and stakeholders - *See Low Carbon Plan Manual, Part V - Green Communities Low Carbon Plan Emissions Methodology.*

●Documented protocol for developing a Green Flag for Communities in urban centres **-** *See An Taisce Legacy4LIFE Green Communities Accreditation Framework.*

●Finalisation of a template for inaugurating a Green Flag for Communities in rural areas **-** *See Green Flag for Low Carbon Communities Draft methodology for consultation.*

Deliverables/evidence

For more background please go to the An Taisce website *www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*

Deliverable 3.1 Handbook for developing Green Communities at City and town level. Output of Tasks 3.1& 3.2

Deliverable 3.2 Report on a framework and stakeholder structure, timing and phasing by which an Urban Greening Plan programme 2030 would be advanced in Ireland

Deliverable 3.3 - Quantified uptake of Green Flag Awards for Parks and Public spaces. Output of Task 3.3 A 20% increase in awards are targeted for the end of 2023 by comparison to 2020. As of 2022 Irish Green Flag Award sites stood at 84 public parks and gardens nationwide. By 2021 a 20% increase had already been achieved with the awarded total increasing to 103 Green Flag Award sites. See *https://www.antaisce.org/low-carbon-town-plan-resources*

Deliverable 3.4 - Report on a template for developing an incentive scheme based on a Green Flag Award for small rural communities - Output of Tasks 3.3 & 3 presented to participating rural communities and relevant government departments.

OTHER COMMENTS

Legacy4LIFE was nominated for the Our EU Story awards and the team attended the award ceremony held by Access Europe (and initiative run by the Irish organisation The Wheel). This was also a networking opportunity for the coordinator and other team members to meet with the Irish contact points of different EU funding bodies (such as LIFE, Erasmus+ etc). The Legacy4LIFE project received a very positive reception, with contact points from various Interregs, Erasmus+ and LIFE interested in further meetings to discuss potential legacy projects from Legacy4LIFE.

PERSONNEL

Prof John Sweeney

Aoife O'Rourke

Francesca Loughran

John Liston

Robert Moss

Theresa O'Donohoe

Kevin Horan

Paul Price

Finn Van der Aar

Rob Gandola

Ellen O'Hora

Karen Mahon

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact info@antaisce.org

See www.antaisce.org/legacy4life

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- Maynooth University Green Campus
- Ballyvaughan Community Development Group
- Dublin City Council Regional Waste Management and Planning
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- Jack Nolan, Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
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- Aisling Ginnity, Illustrator
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- Martina O'Brien. Biodiversity Officer DLR Co Co
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- Kildare Chamber
- Kildare County Council
- Maynooth University (NUIM)
- Maynooth SEC
- Maynooth-Kilcock Green Forum
- Wetland Surveys Ireland
- Freshwater Habitats Trust
- Teagasc
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- Irish Organic Association.
- Organic Trust
- Glenisk
- The Little Milk Company
- The Good Herdsmen
- Prof Barry McMullin











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Registered Office: Tailors' Hall, Back Lane, Dublin, D08 X2A3, Ireland | www.antaisce.org | +353 1 4541786 | info@antaisce.org
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