

Request for Tender

Biodiversity Evaluation & Strategy Development

Application deadline for submission of tenders: 6th June 2025

1. Background Information

1.1 About Community Foundation Ireland

Community Foundation Ireland and our donors have a shared mission - *Equality for all in Thriving Communities*. We are a philanthropic hub recognised as the first port of call for enlightened donors looking to have a positive impact on Ireland through strategic giving. The Foundation is an expert, experienced and passionate team of professional advisors, strategists, activators and facilitators who have established a trusted reputation by working with donors, and over 5,000 non-profit organisations and communities to deliver grant-making that has positively impacted Ireland for twenty-five years.

More information on our impact - <https://www.communityfoundation.ie/impact-stories/>

1.2 Background

Community Foundation Ireland invites tender submissions to carry out an evaluation on its Biodiversity work.

One of our key strategic pillars in Community Foundation Ireland is Sustainable Futures. The work we carry out under this pillar places us as leading grant-makers and drivers of biodiversity and climate-action initiatives around Ireland. We work in partnership with communities, as well as donors and Government, to address one of the biggest challenges that communities face.

Community Foundation Ireland has made significant grant-making in the area of biodiversity initiatives over the last number of years, delivering positive impact. We now want to collate, review and evaluate this grant-making and the impact it has had in communities all over Ireland.

This evaluation will inform the development of a five-year strategy for the next stage of growth and expansion to support effective and impactful grant-making in this area. It will also support us to bring donors on this journey and in turn, support more impactful biodiversity initiatives around the country.

1.3 Background to the tender

Climate, Nature and Biodiversity

With the support of donors, the Foundation has seen its grant-making in climate, nature and biodiversity increase significantly over the past four years with approximately €2.2M in support in 2024. With climate, nature and biodiversity accounting for approximately 15% of all grant-making by Community Foundation in 2025, we are proud to be ahead of the curve and an international leader. Globally it is estimated that climate philanthropy accounts for 2% of all giving.

Within the areas of climate action, environmental protection and biodiversity loss, we have supported a range of interventions to tackle these crises from multiple angles.

This includes:

- Biodiversity protection work at local and national scales, from our grants programme to develop and implement Community Biodiversity Action Plans to larger grants focused on afforestation, marine protection, etc.
- Capacity-building to support leadership and core work of partners focused on advocacy and climate litigation

- Partnerships with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications focused on scaling innovative circular economy projects and improving communications among community groups

We have supported and provided expertise to a number of our key donors, both private and government, in relation to their philanthropic interests in supporting biodiversity and climate. This is a growing issue that is resonating with more donors who want to have a real impact with their philanthropic support. We also find that many of our donors want to support place-based climate and biodiversity initiatives and have launched projects such as the Mayo Sustainability Fund.

Biodiversity Grant Making

Core to this work are the community biodiversity action plans (CBAPs). Established in 2019 by Community Foundation Ireland, the Biodiversity Fund brought in the National Parks & Wildlife Service as a partner to work together to promote biodiversity conservation in communities across Ireland. This was to be done by both parties working in partnership to encourage action in local communities. The partners together developed clear parameters for grant-making and assess applications annually, with the Foundation distributing funds.

This fund works to enhance biodiversity in communities throughout the country by combining the expertise of qualified ecologists with the skills, experience and enthusiasm of local community groups. Currently, it partners with the National Parks & Wildlife Service to support the government's National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) by providing grants to communities to undertake Community Biodiversity Actions Plans (CBAPs) which feed into the NBAP. The fund also supports groups wishing to implement recommendations from their CBAP.

Donor interest in the Fund has grown significantly. The most recent round of funding has had significant contributions from four private donors. This includes the Sunflower Charitable Foundation, which has joined as a key philanthropic partner offering multi-year commitment.

It appears that this fund has had a positive impact on local communities across the country. It contributes to the wider National Biodiversity Action Plan and the data collected by ecologists is uploaded to the National Biodiversity Data Centre, contributing to a thorough mapping of Irish biodiversity. The Fund is closely tied to the Foundation's wider strategy as it contributes positively to our environment, while also empowering communities.

The vast majority of grantees are small community and voluntary groups with very limited funds and income streams. For the smallest groups, often the Foundation is their majority funder. We want to ensure that these smaller voluntary groups are supported and equipped to carry out this work. These grants are essential for giving power and agency to local groups. Ecologists often feedback that the education and training pieces within these grants are often as impactful as the biodiversity work itself.

There are challenges too, with very few grantees having the necessary structures, governance, and financial record-keeping to keep up with an increasingly rigid regulatory environment for charities and community groups.

1.4 Research Aims

Community Foundation Ireland now wishes to appoint a consultant to undertake an evaluation which will collate, review and evaluate Community Foundation Ireland's Biodiversity work, and set it in the wider context of the Foundation's other grant-making in the area of environmental protection and biodiversity loss. This review will also assist the consultant to develop the five-year strategy for the growth of this grant-making.

The evaluation would focus on the following areas:

- (i) key stakeholder mapping at national level, may include key stakeholders at international and EU level if appropriate
- (ii) identify, assess and analyse core databases and other sources of information to produce value add and impact measurement outputs with methodologies used clearly outlined
- (iii) highlighting impact at local and national level, including a review of how the grants programme has fostered networking and collaboration among community groups, their local authorities, and national biodiversity initiatives using case studies as approved by the Foundation.
- (iv) outline unmet needs, opportunities, challenges, barriers and potential growth and participation and consideration for larger projects for national impact. This output will be key to support the development of the strategy for the coming years.
- (v) summarise the investment through the Fund to date including a breakdown of sources of funding (by Community Foundation Ireland, state and other private donors and provide a case study of the funding of a similar fund (outside Ireland)
- (vi) based on the outcomes of the review, develop a five-year strategy to support the growth, development and overall impact of our biodiversity work, where investment should be directed. Include consideration for the recommendations of the Citizen's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss and the role for civil society and philanthropy in this to achieve the changes needed to support future strategy development
- (vii) Develop a funding model to generate new philanthropic income sources to support the new strategy for growth of the biodiversity initiatives.

1.5 Research Outputs

The tenderer will be required to produce:

- A detailed and expert evaluation report alongside a summary slide deck for use

These documents will act as an important output for use by the Community Foundation Ireland and its donors to assist decision-making for the next steps in relation to our biodiversity strategy.

1.6 Methodology

The consultant will be the expert in relation to the most appropriate methodologies for this review, but we would expect a mixed methods approach which may include desk research and small selection of interviews with key stakeholders, including philanthropic partners and randomly selected grantees as well as reviewing materials produced by bodies such as the CSO, National Biodiversity Plan, Local Councils. The consultant could also draw on relevant international experience including through the Community Foundation Model. Community Foundation Ireland will provide access to all relevant documentation that may be pertinent to this evaluation by way of briefing and background, which may include; list of grantees/projects, data and reports on the Biodiversity Fund, Biodiversity Convening Report.

1.7 Timeframe

Community Foundation Ireland wishes that interested parties respond with initial expression of interest by 31st May 2025. This process would expect to be completed within a two-month period, by 31st August 2025.

2. Instructions to Applications to Tender

2.1 Format of tenders

Interested parties should forward a brief summary of the proposed methodology, CV of those involved, and indicative costs.

2.2 Compliant tenders

Tenderers should read this document in full to better ensure compliance, and Community Foundation Ireland reserves the right to reject a tender as non-compliant. Tenderers are required to:

- Submit all documentation which this Request for Tender (RFT) requires
- Conform and comply with all instructions set out in this RFT
- Not alter this RFT in any way

2.3 Submission of tenders and application deadline

Completed documents must be sent by email to jjones@foundation.ie with subject line “Biodiversity Evaluation & Strategy Development”. Completed application forms must be received no later than 6th June 2025.

3. Queries and clarifications

All queries with respect to this RFT must be directed to jjones@foundation.ie. Community Foundation Ireland reserves the right to update, amend or cancel the information contained in this document and/or to extend the tender deadline. Participants will be informed of any such amendment, extension or clarification by email.

4. Award of contract

4.1 Award of contract criteria

A contract will be awarded out of a total of 100 marks, based on the tenderers ability to deliver the required service in accordance with the following criteria:

- Tenderer(s) experience and suitability – 20 marks
- Methodology and approach – 20 marks
- Experience in relation to the research topic or broad research area – 20 marks
- Cost – 20 marks
- Timeframe proposal – 15 marks
- Corporate, business and research promotion expertise – 5 marks

The contract will be awarded to the highest ranked tenderer based on the above criteria.

4.2 Contractual rights

This RFT does not constitute an offer or a commitment to enter into a contract. Until a formal written contract has been executed by or on behalf of Community Foundation Ireland, no contractual rights will exist. The tenderer may be required to outline and discuss the research proposal to Community Foundation Ireland staff or other stakeholders.

4.3 Payments

- All prices quoted must be quoted in euro (€)
- All prices quoted must be inclusive of VAT, with the applied VAT rate, indicated
- All prices quoted must be valid for at least three months following the tender deadline
- Payments will be made on foot of appropriate invoices submitted, with invoicing arrangements agreed after the award of contract

- Incorrect invoices will be returned for correction with subsequent effects on date of payment

4.4 Taxation

For the term of any contract issued, successful tenderers shall be in compliance with all domestic and EU tax laws. Tax clearance, reference and other tax registration numbers may be required prior to the award of any contract.

4.5 Subcontractors

Where a tenderer is relying on the capacity of other persons or entities for fulfilling any of the award criteria, if requested by Community Foundation Ireland, the tenderer must provide satisfactory proof that the persons or entities being used have the necessary expertise to fulfil the award criteria.

5. Terms and conditions

5.1 Liability and warranty

Community Foundation Ireland does not accept any liability or provide any express or implied warranty in respect of any such information contained in this RFT, and tenderers must form their own conclusions about the solution needed to meet the requirements set out.

5.2 Data protection

Applicants are required to comply with the requirements of data protection legislation and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). All data will be processed in accordance with GDPR and relevant data protection law.

5.3 Costs

All costs and expenses incurred by tenderers relating to their participation in this RFT shall be borne by the tenderers exclusively.

5.4 Confidentiality

All documentation, data, statistics and information furnished by Community Foundation Ireland to tenderers during the course of this RFT: shall be treated as confidential; are furnished for the sole purpose of replying to this RFT only; may not be used, communicated, reproduced or published for any other purpose without the prior written permission of Community Foundation Ireland; and must be returned immediately to Community Foundation Ireland upon cancellation or completion of this RFT if so requested.

5.5 Publicity

No publicity regarding this RFT or any contract pursuant to this RFT is permitted unless Community Foundation Ireland has given its prior consent to the relevant communication.

5.6 Ownership

Unless otherwise agreed, ownership of any reports, material or output produced relating to any contract awarded as a result of this RFT rests with Community Foundation Ireland.

5.7 Copyright

Copyright of any reports, material or output produced shall rest with and be assigned to Community Foundation Ireland. Community Foundation Ireland shall have the right to publish, or not as the case may be, and to disseminate any reports, material or output, without further reference to the tenderer. The tenderer will not be entitled to further payment if this occurs.

The tenderer and the individual researchers will be entitled to be credited with the work that they have done on this project in any publication.

5.8 Registrable interest

Any registrable interest involving any tenderer or subcontractor must be fully disclosed in the tender or, in the event of this information only coming to the notice of the tenderer or subcontractor after the submission of a tender, must be communicated to Community Foundation Ireland.

5.9 Anti-competitive

Price collusion or any other anti-competitive behaviour is a criminal offence under the Competition Act 2002.

5.10 Freedom of information

Information provided by tenderers during this RFT may be liable to be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and if tenderers consider that certain information is not to be disclosed because of its confidentiality or commercial sensitivity, tenderers must, when providing such information, clearly identify the specific information and specify the reasons for its confidentiality and commercial sensitivity.

5.11 Conflicts of interest

Any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest on the part of a tenderer, subcontractor or individual employee or agent of a tenderer or subcontractor must be fully disclosed to Community Foundation Ireland as soon as the conflict or potential conflict is or becomes apparent.

5.12 Insurance

The successful tenderer shall be required to hold for the term of the contract the appropriate level of insurance cover in order to carry out work associated with this project.