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| Searching for a Coordinator/Partner for | **The Green Deal – Farm to Fork** |
| Topic | **LC-GD-6-1-2020:**  **Testing and demonstrating systemic innovations in support of the Farm-to-Fork Strategy** |
| Subtopic | **Subtopic A.**  **Achieving climate neutral farms by reducing GHG emissions and by increasing farm-based carbon sequestration and storage.** |
| Organisation Details | **Institute of Technology, Tralee (ITT)** is a higher education institute based in the south west of Ireland with an undergraduate student numbers in excess of 3,500. Across its three schools (STEM, Business and Computing and Social sciences and the Humanities) it offers qualifications up to MSc and PhD level.  Undergraduate courses of relevance to the topic include agricultural science and wildlife biology. ITT additionally offers a postgraduate diploma in Bioeconomy with Business (with a particular emphasis on sustainable agriculture).  As of the 1st of January 2021 ITT will amalgamate with the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) to form the **Munster Technical University (MTU)**. |
| How we can contribute to this topic | ITT has a wealth of experience in managing projects at a national and European level that are of relevance to this topic and in particular this subtopic (see projects and information below).  Through the delivery of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in agriculture and the Bioeconomy, ITT is considered a hub of such expertise in the south and south-west of Ireland.  We propose to identify a number of sites (considered marginal land, e.g. upland farming) that are particularly synonymous with farming in the south-west of Ireland and apply a number of known strategies of carbon sequestering, for example blocking drains, reducing nutrient inputs, planting peat loving plants such as sphagnum moss and heather. Through these sites not only can the amount of carbon stored be measured, but also the improvement in water quality and the increased biodiversity of the sites.  These sites would serve as demonstration sites. Each strategy can be compared to each other in terms of the amount of carbon storage, if there is a symbiotic effect and how characteristics of the site may dictate the effect of the strategy. This effective knowledge would help inform future national strategy on reducing GHG emissions by increasing farm-based carbon sequestration and storage.  While these techniques are not new and have been demonstrated to work in rehabilitating blanket peat lands, it is our opinion that there is a gap in knowledge about how these strategies could be employed in more marginal and upland areas (for example gley soils). As these soils make up to a quarter of designated agricultural land in Ireland such a study is invaluable at this time.  Finally by working with farmers from these lands will enable us to offer sustainable measures that are more acceptable. This point cannot be overstated. These relationships, cooperation and buy-in helps bridge the gap between the research and working solutions at the practical level. |
| Other information | Mr. Eoin McCarthy (senior lecturer in agricultural science in ITT) is a project officer on the Hen harrier project which deals with approximately 1600 farms in marginal upland area.  The Hen Harrier project is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and is the largest current European Innovation Partnership associated with agriculture in Ireland acts as a template for our proposed work (in terms of working with farmers on marginal land to make their farms more sustainable).  It is a locally targeted conservation programme that relies on building strong partnerships with farmers in order to deliver sustainable benefits for biodiversity, upland ecosystems and a vibrant local rural economy.  The relationships built and knowledge acquired during this work would be invaluable as it relies on participation, cooperation and finally buy-in from farmers. |
| Previous Horizon 2020 projects | ITT has been extremely active in the last 10 years or so participating in European projects from FP6 to FP7 and finally to H2020 across the STEM subjects with a particular focus on sustainable agriculture.  H2020 projects of relevance to this project include:  **AGRIFORVALOR** - Bringing added value to agriculture and forest sectors by closing the research and innovation divide (2016-2018, Budget: €1,997 416.25) Sea-More-Yield: A Blue Biotechnology Solution for the Reduction of Pod Shatter in Bio-Oil Producing Crops (2016-2018, Budget: € 1,286 382.50) |
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