



INSTITUTE OF ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

PROJECT BRIEF: ECOLOGICAL SKILLS GAP PROJECT PHASE 1

ABOUT IEEM

The Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) is the professional membership body for ecologists and environmental managers in the UK and Ireland. Our mission is to develop the science, technology and practice of ecology and environmental management for the benefit of people and biodiversity. Our objectives are:

- To advance the science, practice and understanding of ecology and environmental management for the public benefit in the United Kingdom and internationally;
- To further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological processes and life support systems essential to a fully functional biosphere;
- To further environmentally sustainable management and development;
- To promote and encourage education, training, study and research in the science and practice of ecology, environmental management and sustainable development; and
- To establish, uphold and advance the standards of education, qualification, competence and conduct of those who practice ecology and environmental management as a profession and for the benefit of the public.

We are a non-profit making body with membership categories that include Student, Graduate, Associate, Full and Fellow. Members work across a number of employment sectors including the private sector, public sector, voluntary sector and statutory sector. Strategic management of the Institute is undertaken by a Council of Members who give their time voluntarily supported by five sub-committees, including the Training, Education and Career Development Committee which oversees this project on behalf of Council. Day to day management of the Institute is undertaken by a Secretariat team based in Winchester. In addition to providing advice and services to its members the Secretariat also organises conferences, training workshops and speaks out on behalf of the profession.

The Institute also has 11 Geographic Sections covering the whole of the UK and Ireland. These Sections, run by volunteer members, may also organise their own programme of meetings and events for locally-based members.

BACKGROUND TO PROJECT

In May 2008, IEEM employed a Project Officer to deliver a three year 'Ecological Skills Gap Project' (ESGP), reporting to a Steering Group. Anecdotal information had suggested that there is a skills gap relating to the provision of qualified ecologists and environmental managers for a wide range of posts across the ecological and environmental management sector. (The term 'skills' is used in the broad sense of education, training and continuing professional development.) Employers such as the statutory government agencies (e.g. Natural England, Countryside Commission for Wales, Environment Agency, Environmental Protection Agency (Ireland)), ecological consultancies, NGOs and local authorities had all expressed concerns. Indeed there were indications to suggest that core skills for ecological or environmental management practice were being lost from undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses. If validated, such skills' erosion could seriously affect the profession's ability to meet the challenges of biodiversity loss, changing climate and other environmental pressures. Accordingly IEEM launched the Ecological Skills Gap Project in order to:

- a) establish the magnitude of the problem
- b) establish its significance in relation to the current and future needs of employers;
- c) identify the skills required by new entrants into professional ecology and environmental management; and
- d) make recommendations as to how the skills gap can be closed

Despite gathering significant background information, progress was affected in January 2010 when the Project Officer left IEEM. To meet the Institute's commitment to completing the Project we are seeking to appoint a consultant to undertake the remaining work.

SCOPE

The geographic scope of this Project is the United Kingdom and Ireland. The professional scope is the range of careers to which graduate (or equivalent) ecologists and environmental managers are recruited.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To appraise the magnitude of any skills gap within the profession of ecology and environmental management relative to the needs of employers.
2. To appraise its nature and causes.
3. To raise awareness and understanding of the scale and significance of the skills gap.
4. To engage with stakeholders in identifying a strategy for closing the skills gap.
5. To build partnerships amongst stakeholders in order to implement an agreed strategy.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

1. An interim report to the Project Board and the Training, Education and Career Development Committee of IEEM.
2. A one day technical conference/workshop to disseminate the initial findings and identify options for a way forward.
3. At least one article in the Institute's members' bulletin, *In Practice*.
4. A final report with recommendations to the Project Board, the Training, Education and Career Development Committee and Council.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. An evidence-based expression of the size, nature and causes of any ecological skills gap leading to dissemination of information about its impact on the UK and Ireland's ability to recruit appropriately skilled professionals.
2. Strong engagement with key stakeholders resulting in a commitment to raise awareness about the skills gap and its solutions.
3. Information to help shape the profession of ecology and environmental management to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' in the 21st century.

APPROACH

The selected consultant will be expected to make use of information already gathered. Resource material includes:

- electronic files and documents already collated by the former ESGP Project Officer;
- an analysis of continuing professional development work undertaken by Institute members over the past 3 years;

- an analysis of practical fieldwork, survey and biological identification content of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the UK and Ireland;
- 400 returns on a questionnaire sent to Graduate Members in November 2009 (questionnaire completed but data not yet analysed).

We expect prospective Consultants to suggest how to undertake this work successfully within the timescales but, as a guide, our approach would anticipate:

- collation and analysis of existing background material;
- design, distribution and analysis of a questionnaire to employers of ecologists and environmental managers that will clarify:
 - skill requirements of newly qualified staff; and
 - the actual competence of staff appointed;
- benchmarking approaches to skills acquisition compared with other professions, and
- face to face meetings/telephone calls with key stakeholders (minimum 15, maximum 25).

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The Ecological Skills Gap Project has been managed by a Steering Group who will be corresponding participants in this Phase of the work.

The Project Board will be the Chair of the Steering Group, the Chair of the TECDC, another nominated member of the Steering Group and the Institute's Chief Executive.

The Project Executive is the Institute's Chief Executive who has overall responsibility to the IEEM Council for the Project's delivery of identified objectives within the agreed budget.

The Project Manager for this Phase is the Institute's Deputy Chief Executive, reporting to a Project Board.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Project Consultant

The Consultant will undertake the work as agreed in the Schedule in the Contract and according to the agreed timescales and fees and quality measures. The work will include:

- production of an agreed Project Plan to meet key targets and ensure deliverables;
- attendance at meetings of the Project Board and other IEEM Committees as required (maximum 4);
- recording of contact details and production of notes and action points following meetings undertaken as part of the Project;
- milestone reports to the Project Board to track delivery of agreed outputs in line with Project Plan;
- the production of an interim report by an agreed date in line with the Project Plan;
- help with promoting and publicising the project;
- assistance in planning the content and delivery of a successful one day conference/workshop;
- the production of a final report (format to be agreed with the Project Board), and
- project assurance to monitor changes to the Project Plan in order to identify any impact on the needs of IEEM in relation to this work.

IEEM Secretariat

The Secretariat will, through the Deputy CEO:

- manage this Phase of the Project on a day to day basis, including the work of the Consultant
- keep records of meetings and action points;
- assist the Consultant in identifying and facilitating the engagement of key contacts (including IEEM members);
- help to publicise and promote the project;
- undertake practical organisation of a one day conference/workshop (including all related costs), and
- disseminate the final report.

Key Stakeholders

The **Project Board** will be consulted by email, telephone and/or face to face, meetings as required. They will be responsible for approving the choice of Project Consultant, providing advice and guidance, monitoring progress against the agreed Project Plan, making decisions to amend the Project Plan within the financial and scope boundaries agreed by Council and commenting on the interim and Final Reports.

The **Steering Group** comprises IEEM members with particular expertise and interest in the Ecological Skills Gap. The Steering Group will act as corresponding participants for this Phase of the project.

The **Training, Education and Career Development Committee** has responsibility for this Project on behalf of Council. They will consider the interim and Final Reports and make appropriate recommendations to Council.

Other Stakeholders

The following will have a major interest in the work and/or should be consulted:

- IEEM members (NB: some work already undertaken).
- International and supranational organisations (e.g. European Network of Environmental Professionals).
- Government departments (e.g. Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, Department of Energy and Climate Change, Department of the Environment (NI), Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Ire), Department of Education and Skills (Ire), Department of Environment, Heritage and local Government (IRE)).
- Statutory nature conservation and environmental protection Bodies (e.g. Natural England, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Scottish Natural Heritage, Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency, Environmental Protection Agency (Ireland), Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Environmental and Heritage Service (Northern Ireland)).
- Non Government Organisations (e.g. Field Studies Council, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, National Trust).
- Formal Education: Universities, further education and teacher training colleges (running relevant ecological courses).
- Committee of Heads of Environmental Sciences (CHES) / Heads of University Biological Sciences (HUBS).
- Natural History Museum.
- Research institutions (e.g. Centre for Ecology and Hydrology) and Research Councils.

- Scientific societies (e.g. British Ecological Society, Freshwater Biological Association).
- Ecological/Environmental consultancies.
- Professional organisations (e.g. Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE)).
- Lantra (Sector Skills Council for Land Based Industries).

TIMESCALES AND MILESTONES

The key milestones leading to the production of the outputs are shown below.

Table 1. Milestone Timescales

ECOLOGICAL SKILLS GAP PROJECT: TIMETABLE		
	Milestone	Completion by:
1.	Desk-based review of information already available	End Sept 2010
2.	Analysis of survey of IEEM's graduate members that was undertaken in November 2009	End Sept 2010
3.	Design, distribution and analysis of employer's questionnaire	End-Oct 2010
4.	Initial promotion of one day Technical Conference/Workshop	Mid-Dec 2010
5.	Detailed discussions with selected stakeholders (e.g. face to face meetings, structured telephone conversations)	Mid-January 2011
6.	Interim report produced for Project Board, ESGP Steering Group, TECDC	Mid-January 2011
7.	One-day Technical Conference/Workshop	End Feb 2011
8.	Draft final report submitted to Project Board and ESGP SG	End March 2011
9.	Final report submitted to TECDC	Early May 2011
10.	Final report submitted to Council	Mid-June 2011

BUDGET

The maximum budget available for this work is £20,000 (inclusive of VAT) including all associated costs (e.g. travel and expenses)

FORMAT OF PROPOSAL

Your proposal should include a project plan and contain the following information:

1. Background to your company and relevant experience appropriate to this type of project.
2. Proposed methodology.
3. Number of days allocated to completing the project (broken down by task and member of your team if more than one person will be involved in delivery).
4. Cost broken down into key outputs.
5. Confirmation that you can meet the deadlines/timescales identified in this project brief.
6. Contact details of three referees.

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF PROPOSALS

The deadline for receipt of proposals is 12 noon **16 August 2010**. Proposals may be delivered by post (hard copy, in which case an electronic copy will also be required) or electronically only and must arrive on or before the deadline. You may be contacted subsequently to provide further information/clarification.

You will be notified of the outcome of your proposal by no later than **12 noon on 27 August 2010**.

If you require any further information or would like to arrange a meeting to discuss the project further please contact the Project Manager.

Linda Yost CEnv MIEEM
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Tel: 01962 868626
Email: lindayost@ieem.net