



*CHY 15746*

Governing Document

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## **Introduction**

### **The Purpose of this Handbook**

This handbook sets out the policies and procedures of the Irish Natural Forestry Foundation *trading as* Green Economy Foundation (GEF) in relation to all aspects of the charity's governance from the perspective of the Board of Trustees. The handbook documents the legal obligations of the charity trustees as well as the processes that the charity has in place to meet good governance standards, including those set out in the Charities Governance Code.

This handbook will be reviewed every three years, although changes can be proposed at Board meetings and the handbook adapted accordingly. Any change that would affect the constitution of the charity must be ratified at an Annual General Meeting or Emergency General Meeting.

### **Principles Guiding the Board of Charity Trustees of GEF**

The Board of GEF is committed to the principles of the Charities Governance Code. As such, each member of the Board of is understood to commit to:

1. Advancing the Charitable Purpose of GEF
2. Behaving with integrity
3. Leading people within GEF
4. Exercising control over GEF
5. Working effectively.
6. Being accountable and transparent.

GEF is currently compliant with the Charities Governance Code.

#### **1. Advancing the Charitable Purpose of GEF**

*Charitable purpose has a specific meaning in charity law. The Charities Act 2009 sets out four categories of charitable purpose: prevention or relief of poverty or economic hardship; advancement of education; advancement of religion; and any other purpose that is of benefit to the community – Charities Governance Code.*

1.1 The main objects of GEF are to promote sustainability in all aspects of policy and development in Ireland

#### **See Appendix 1 for a full copy of our constitution (Memorandum and Articles of Association)**

These objects fall under the definition of charitable purpose for public benefit as set out in the Charities Act 2009.

1.2 GEF is satisfied that any private benefit arising to anyone employed or providing services to

GEF is reasonable, necessary and ancillary to the public benefit that the charity provides.

1.3 GEF conducts a strategic planning process involving the charity trustees, management, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders and develops a 5-year strategy plan. This plan is supported by annual operational plans for each functional area.

#### **See Appendix 2 Strategic Plan 2020-2025**

1.4 The Board of charity trustees commits to ensuring that GEF has the resources it needs to carry out planned activities.

1.5 The Board of charity trustees regularly review our work to ensure we continue to act in line with our charity's purpose and provide public benefit. We regularly review our constitution.

## **2. Behaving with integrity**

*Ethics are fundamental in the charity sector. Statements about ethos can undoubtedly play an important role, but it is when these values are lived out that they are at their most powerful. Charity trustees have the power to create an ethical culture and set a tone where agreed values are reflected in everything the charity does. The behaviour of individual charity trustees is very important; they must lead by example – Charities Governance Code.*

2.1 The Board of Trustees have agreed the values of GEF and publicise them widely. Our core values:

- Integrity, Accountability, Equality, Honesty, Trustworthiness and Transparency.
- The principles of Sustainable Development are at the heart of how we operate our own projects and activities.
- Communication, growth, learning and respect provide the ground rules by which we work with all staff, contractors, partners and volunteers.

2.2 GEF has a Conflicts of Interest Policy which is distributed to all Trustees on joining the board. The purpose of this policy is to assist charity trustees to effectively identify, record and manage any conflicts of interest or loyalty in order to protect the integrity of GEF and to ensure that charity trustees act in the best interest of the charity.

#### **See Appendix 3 Conflicts of Interest Policy**

2.3 GEF has a Code of Conduct which all charity trustees are required to sign. This document

sets out the standard of behaviour expected from trustees in order to ensure that:

- GEF is effective, open and accountable
- the highest standards of integrity and stewardship are achieved
- the working relationship between charity trustees and any volunteers or employees is productive and supportive.

**See Appendix 4 Code of Conduct**

### **3. Leading people within GEF**

*The most essential resource of any charity is its people. This means people should feel valued and have clarity around their own roles and the roles of others. Charity trustees are responsible for providing leadership to volunteers, employees and contractors. This includes taking their duty of care towards these people seriously and promoting a culture of respect – Charities Governance Code.*

3.1 All new charity trustees joining the board of GEF receive an induction where their roles and duties as trustees are discussed. All staff members and volunteers are given a job description which sets out their role and responsibilities.

3.2 GEF has developed a Volunteer Handbook (including Volunteer Policy and Volunteer Agreement) in order that volunteers are clear about their roles and have all the support they need in carrying out their duties.

3.3 GEF has developed a Child Protection Policy

3.4 GEF has developed an Employment Contract and Employment Policy

3.5 GEF has arrangements in place that comply with employment legislation for staff members  
[https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/publications\\_forms/sample\\_terms\\_of\\_employment1.pdf](https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/publications_forms/sample_terms_of_employment1.pdf)

3.6 GEF has developed a Grievance Procedure Policy

3.7 Trustees on the board of GEF are responsible for the development, approval and review of all the charity's policies.

**See Appendix 5 Volunteer Policy.**

**See Appendix 6 Child Protection Policy**

**See Appendix 7 Employment Policies**

**See Appendix 8 Grievance Procedure Policy**

#### **4. Exercising control over GEF**

*All charities, no matter what their complexity, must abide by all legal and regulatory requirements that are relevant to the work they do. The charity trustees are responsible for making sure this happens. Charity trustees must understand that the governing document of a charity is a legally binding document in its own right. The trustees are also responsible for a charity's funds and any property or other assets that it holds. As much as is possible, they must also consider and reduce risks to which their charity is exposed – Charities Governance Code.*

4.1 GEF is a non-profit organisation and is registered as a charity. As such, it is governed by the Charities Act 2009. The Board is responsible for ensuring it remains aware and informed of future changes to the Act. It is the responsibility of the CEO to keep the Board updated on this.

GEF is a company limited by guarantee not having share capital.

As per the legal requirement of a company, the constitution of GEF is comprised of a Memorandum and Articles of Association.

All trustees are provided with a copy of the constitution on joining the Board. In line with legal requirements, the constitution is lodged with the Companies Registration Office (CRO) and Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) and is publicly available. The Board is responsible for ensuring the constitution accurately describes the organisation's structure and activities.

Where there is a change in charity mission, objectives or structure, or a significant change in activities or governance procedures, the constitution is reviewed and amended if necessary. Legal advice may be sought where any significant changes are made and changes are made at an AGM or EGM. The Company Secretary ensures the CRA and the CRO is informed of any changes.

Trustees are made aware of and understand the legal duties of charity trustees as prescribed by the Charities Regulator in their presentation:

<https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/1273/charity-trustees-legal-duties-presentation.pdf>

4.2 The CEO provides a full compliance report to Trustees once a year. The CEO may provide updates on some items during the year if needed. The compliance report includes updates on the following topics:

- Health and Safety
- Complaints
- Child Protection
- Staff Performance Management /Human Resources issues
- Data Protection
- Compliance with funders reporting requirements
- Any other issues in relation to risk management
- Compliance Requirements – CRO

- Compliance Requirements – CRA
- Standard Operating Compliance Requirements
- Employment Law Compliance Requirements
- Finance Compliance Requirements
- Register of Lobbying compliance Requirements

The CEO is responsible for informing the Board of any significant issues in a timely manner, determined by the nature of the issue. In serious or urgent matters requiring Board input, the Chairperson is informed as soon as possible. The Chairperson in conjunction with the CEO then determines the next steps in resolving the issue and ensures the Board is updated within an appropriate timeframe.

4.3 GEF has a fundraising policy which complies with standards according to the Charity Regulator's *Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public* and the CEO reports to the Board on all fundraising issues.

See link to Charity Regulator Guidelines:

<https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/1265/guidance-for-fundraising-english.pdf>

4.4 Financial Controls - GEF takes seriously its duty to maintain proper accounts. The CEO presents management accounts to the Board at each board meeting.

Filing Accounts - GEF takes seriously its duty to file an Annual Return and Annual Accounts, which are true copies as laid before the AGM and include:

- Balance sheet
- Statement of financial activities
- Directors' report
- Auditor's report

Auditing - As per the legal requirements of a company, GEF accounts are audited annually. The audit is an examination of financial statements, providing an informed statement regarding to what extent the financial statements:

- have been prepared according to the companies acts, relevant legislation and standard accounting practices, and:
- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs, profit or loss for the financial year and assets and liabilities at the end of that year.

The Board of GEF is responsible for ensuring there are adequate internal financial controls and risk

management systems including: budgeting and planning, appropriate financial procedures, monitoring of these and adherence to relevant legislation.

Auditor - The appointment, remuneration and removal of the auditor is dealt with by the Board. The removal of the auditor needs to be passed by ordinary resolution at a general meeting of the company.

Remuneration and Charity Trustees - Charity trustees on the Board of are entirely voluntary and receive no payment for their work. Expenses are reimbursed in accordance with the Employment Policy. Charity trustees can choose not to reclaim expenses if they so wish. Trustees will not receive payment for a professional service from GEF.

4.5 Risk Management – The Board of GEF is responsible for ensuring that the charity has a risk management system in place, this is included within the Strategic Plan.

4.6 GEF takes advice on insurance needs as needed and has appropriate and adequate cover in place including Public Liability, Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity, Directors & Officers Liability, Cyber Risk, Personal Accident.

## **5. Working effectively**

*Running a charity well means you need capable charity trustees who work together as an effective team. Board meetings are especially important, as this is where charity trustees exercise their collective authority. It is also important that there is a good mix of skills, experience and background amongst charity trustees and that these are refreshed on an ongoing basis. It is vital that new charity trustees receive a proper induction to the charity – Charities Governance Code.*

5.1 Charity trustees are appointed to the Board of GEF in accordance with the constitution and the Charities Act 2009. When recruiting new charity trustees GEF also follows the guidance from the Charities Regulator as set out in their documents:

- Succession Planning
- Due Diligence for prospective Charity Trustees
- Recruitment and Induction of Charity Trustees and
- Induction Pack Checklist

Before recruiting a new charity trustee, the board of GEF will always consider what is working well with the current Board and what could work better. The Board will also be mindful of what skills, experience and knowledge are available from existing charity trustees as well as the need for an overall balance and broad perspective.



5.2 The Board of GEF meets 6-8 times a year with meetings planned a year ahead. Board members are expected to attend all meetings, although it is understood that there may be times where other events prevent attendance. Where appropriate, participation by conference call will be arranged. Where a Board member cannot attend, they are asked to send apologies in advance to the Chair as far as possible in advance.

In the event that a specific decision must be made/ input is required, but the Board member cannot attend the meeting, the Chair may invite the Board member to indicate their position, which will be reported to the meeting.

Board members who miss three meetings in a row or four meetings in a rolling 12 month period will be contacted by the Chair. Non-attendance may result in a requirement to resign from the Board.

### 5.3 Agenda setting

The Chair of the Board should consult (in person or via telephone or email) with the CEO in advance of the Board meeting to discuss any issues arising and develop the agenda for the Board meeting.

Board members can propose items for the agenda by communicating directly with the Chairperson, Company Secretary or the CEO.

The CEO or the Company Secretary will ensure that the agenda for the upcoming meeting is communicated to the members of the Board and any additional attendees (either by e-mail or post). Supporting material should be circulated with the agenda to provide background to any topics included, i.e. minutes of previous meetings, agreed actions, management accounts, and relevant reports at least five days prior to the meeting.

Members of the Management Team wishing to address the Board should apply in the first instance to the CEO at least 7 days in advance of the Board convening, outlining the nature of their request. The CEO will discuss the request with the Chair of the Board in advance of the agenda being developed

The Chair of the Board will then decide whether to include the request/issue on the agenda.

Where it is not appropriate to apply to the CEO, management team member should apply in the second instance to the Chairperson outlining the nature of their request.

In agreeing the agenda, the Chair of the Board and the CEO should confirm the appropriate members of the Management Team to attend specific Board meetings.

The Chair has discretion as to whether or not items can be raised under Any Other Business (AOB) section of the meeting agenda. Items that require a board decision should not be taken as items under AOB, unless in exceptional circumstances and there is unanimous agreement by all Board members present that a Board decision can be taken on the item raised under AOB. It is good governance practice to restrict items raised under AOB to matters of information and not matters requiring a board decision.

#### 5.4 Minutes and Action Items

The Company Secretary, or a designated individual approved by the Board, will be responsible for taking the minutes:

- Minutes are a record of key actions and decisions discussed and agreed at the meetings.
- Before the meeting concludes, the Company Secretary or designated individual may be asked by the Chair to provide a summary of meeting's captured main points
- The Chair of the Board will review the minutes once they are drafted, prior to circulation.

The Company Secretary or CEO will ensure that the minutes are circulated (within two weeks of the Board meeting). The minutes will include a summary document (1-2 pages) outlining key issues discussed, key decisions made, key actions agreed and associated completion responsibility and timeframe and a detailed minute of the meeting. These key actions agreed should be the fourth item agenda item at the next sitting of the Board (following apologies, declarations of any conflicts and previous meeting minutes).

Every effort should be made to ensure that key decisions have the full support of the board members. However, where necessary key decisions will be made using a majority of votes:

- Every board member shall have one vote
- Where there is an equality of votes, the meeting Chair shall be entitled to a casting vote
- Attendees and ex-officio members do not have voting rights. They may be asked to leave the meeting if a vote is deemed necessary.

Board decisions/approvals in between scheduled meetings: There may from time-to-time be a requirement for the Board to decide or approval a matter outside of a normal scheduled meeting. In situations where the CEO requests a board decision or approval for a matter that cannot wait until the next scheduled Board meeting, the CEO should contact either the Chairperson, Vice Chair or Treasurer setting out the background to the matter and outlining why a decision or approval is required before the next scheduled meeting of the Board.

The Chairperson, Vice Chair or Treasurer may decide depending on the nature of item requiring decision/approval to call a special board meeting where board members are physically present at the meeting or via conference call. The required quorum of 4 board members also applies to this type of meeting. If it is not practical to call a meeting, he/she may alternatively ask the CEO or Company Secretary to email the board members setting out the matter requiring the decision/approval. A minimum of 4 board members must give their consent by email for the approval to be valid. The matter must then be formally ratified and minuted at the next meeting of the Board.

The use of the email to board members procedure for board approvals in between scheduled meetings should only be used infrequently and should not become standard practice for making board decisions.

5.5 The induction process for new charity trustees to the Board of GEF involves the provision of an induction pack, and meetings with the existing charity trustees, the Chairperson and other key employee(s) or volunteer(s) within the charity. An induction pack will also be given to each new trustee which will include the following key documents:

- The charity's governing document
- A brief history of the charity and an outline of the current work
- The current Strategic Plan
- A list of current charity trustees and the Chairperson, the charity secretary and their contact details
- The minutes of recent board meetings
- Template for board meetings
- A schedule of forthcoming board meetings
- The annual report and accounts for the past two years
- The charity's Code of Conduct for charity trustees
- A Register of Interests form
- All policies within the charity, or a list of such policies and an indication of where they can be obtained
- Details of the guidance documents available on the Charities Regulator's website
- The Charities Governance Code.

#### **See Appendix 9 Meeting Template**

5.6 Board of Charity Trustee Roles - The Board has both the authority and responsibility to carry out the following roles:

##### **Leadership**

- To define, uphold and work towards the vision, mission, values and objectives of GEF and to fully comply with the constitution, charitable purpose and public benefit
- To provide overall strategic direction and leadership by developing and approving a strategic plan in line with the constitution of GEF
- To monitor progress against the strategic plan through regular reporting from the CEO and Board sub-committees as relevant and to review the plan periodically
- To ensure that an appropriate system is in place to assess the impact of the work of GEF

- To approve all policy, systems and controls necessary to govern the activity and maintain the ethos of GEF

#### Roles

- To appoint a CEO, agree the CEO's job description and put appropriate systems in place for their support and performance management
- To ensure that appropriate systems are in place for the support and supervision of all staff by delegating the responsibility for other staff management to the CEO
- To establish and agree the terms of reference of any sub-committees that may be necessary

#### Resources

- To ensure that GEF has the financial and human resources needed to implement its strategic plan and to promote the prudent and effective management of those resources.
- To ensure that appropriate financial management procedures are in place and are being implemented.
- To agree a risk management policy (included within the Strategic Plan) for the organisation.

#### Accountability

- To agree an appropriate process for communicating with and being accountable to funders, stakeholders and the general public.
- To identify and comply with all relevant legal, regulatory and funding requirements as outlined in this Board Handbook.
- To carry out board business efficiently and effectively.

#### Role of Individual Charity Trustees:

- Comply with the GEF constitution
- Ensure that GEF is carrying out its charitable purposes for the public benefit
- Act in the best interests of GEF
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Manage the assets of GEF
- Make appropriate investment decisions
- Ensure that GEF is registered on the Charities Regulator's Register of Charities
- Ensure that GEF keeps proper books of account

- Ensure that GEF prepares and furnishes financial accounts to the Charities Regulator
- Ensure that GEF prepares and furnishes an annual report to the Charities Regulator
- Ensure the Charities Regulator is informed if you are of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds for believing a theft or fraud has occurred (Disclosure obligation)
- Ensure that you comply with directions issued by the Regulator

#### Role of the Chairperson

Each board of charity trustees should have a Chairperson whose duties include:

- Leading the Board of charity trustees
- Promoting good governance among fellow trustees

To ensure smooth running of Board meetings:

- Liaising with the CEO and Company Secretary to ensure all relevant items are on the agenda.
- Consulting with other trustees to ensure concerns are reflected in the agenda.
- Allowing sufficient time for discussion and ensuring that meetings are kept to time (prioritising discussions when necessary).
- Ensuring adequate information is available for productive discussion.
- Promoting maximum participation from all directors.
- Ensuring decisions are understood, recorded, implemented and/or followed up on.

To promote good governance:

- Initiating annual performance reviews/skills audits/etc.
- Leading on recruitment of new trustees.
- Supporting new trustees thorough induction.

To supervise and provide support to the CEO:

- The CEO reports to the Board, and the Chairperson is line manager to the CEO.
- To support the CEO in leading GEF at the strategic level.
- To act as a Spokesperson for the Board or for GEF if required

In the case where the Chairperson is aware that they will be unable to attend a Board meeting he/she will appoint another trustee to chair the meeting in their absence. In the case where the Chairperson is unable to attend and does not give advance notice of same, the trustees who are in attendance may approve one trustee from their number to chair the meeting.

Where there is an unexpected or ongoing vacancy in the position of Chairperson the existing trustees may nominate from their number an interim Chairperson, for a period of up to six months.

#### Role of the Company Secretary

As per the legal requirements of a registered company, GEF has a Company Secretary. The Company Secretary will be one of the directors of the company supported by a member of staff who is not the CEO. However, it is the Company Secretary's responsibility to ensure duties are completed. The duties of the Company Secretary follow the guidelines and requirements of the Companies Registration Office.

#### Role of the Secretary

The secretary of GEF is a trustee with a specific role on the board whose duties include:

- Administration and compliance
- Preparing for board meetings
- Notification of Board meetings
- Circulation of papers prior to Board meetings
- Taking meeting minutes
- Keeping an action log of all decisions taken
- Attending other meetings

GEF trustees must ensure that the person has the skills and resources to perform these duties.

#### Sub-committees

Sub-committees of the Board are established, when deemed necessary by the Board, to deal with ongoing areas of work or to progress specific pieces of work. There are currently no sub-committees in place within GEF.

All sub-committee members are appointed by the trustees and all trustees can be members of sub-committees. Each sub-committee will have a minimum of two trustees with one of them chairing the sub-committee. External individuals may be invited to join based on their particular skills and/or experience. The Audit & Finance sub-committee should have a minimum of two trustees and at least one with recent and relevant financial experience. Each sub-committee will nominate a Chair and their appointment will be approved by Board. The Chairperson of GEF does not Chair of the Audit & Finance sub-committee.

At the behest of the CEO and approval of the Chair of the sub-committee, members of staff may also be asked to attend sub-committee meetings but are not considered members of the sub-committee. Any trustee, including the Chair, may attend any sub-committee meeting and may be invited by the sub-committee to do so.

Meetings of sub-committees may take place in person or virtually (e.g. via conference calls). All sub-committee members, apart from any additional trustees in attendance, have voting rights on sub-committees.

Sub-committees always have Terms of Reference agreed by the full Board and detailing the name, purpose, membership and authority of the group. Sub-committees deliberate issues within their remit separately from the full Board, and present recommendations to the full Board for ratification.

#### Working Groups

From time to time, Board working groups may be established to progress specific pieces of work. There are currently no specific working groups in place.

5.7 Trustees are committed to resolving problems and emerging issues as quickly as possible and in the best interests of GEF. This is achieved by:

- Effective engagement in the strategic planning process
- Holding regular board meetings and ensuring that emerging problems or issues are included in the CEO's report or put on the meeting agenda
- Board sub-committees reviewing and assessing emerging issues or problems
- The development and review of the Strategic Plan
- Comprehensive financial management

5.8 Review of the Board – Good practice recommends that the performance of the Board should be formally appraised on an annual basis. The Chair of the Board of GEF will ensure that a process is put in place with the approval of the Board to assess the performance of the Board. The Chair will recommend an appropriate approach for conducting this performance appraisal.

## 6. Being accountable and transparent

*Accountability refers to the funds which are generated and spent by the charity and also involves being open and transparent about all charity matters. It is about being able to: stand over what your charity does and how it does it; and justify this to any person or group who queries what your charity has done or is doing. As an organisation set up to provide public benefit, this means you should be able to explain this to anyone who asks – Charities Governance Code.*

6.1 GEF displays our RCN, CRO and CHY numbers on our official Charity letterheads, website, emails, annual report and social media platforms.

6.2 GEF stakeholders are any individuals or groups of people who have a legitimate interest in

our work. Identifying who they are is important in order for us to consider how we might communicate with them and how they might communicate with us. GEF stakeholders include:

- Beneficiaries
- Members
- Employees and volunteers
- Partner organisations and supporters
- Funders and donors
- Regulators
- Public representatives
- The general public

GEF has a Communications Strategy in place to ensure that all stakeholders are communicated with and can easily communicate with GEF

**See Appendix 10 Communications Policy**

6.3 GEF involves relevant stakeholders in the strategic planning process and, where appropriate and possible, involves stakeholders in other significant decisions involving GEF.

6.4 GEF is committed to following the reporting requirements of all of our funders and donors, both public and private.



**Appendix 1: Constitution**

*COMPANIES ACTS, 1963 TO 2001*

*COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL*

*MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION*

*OF*

*THE IRISH NATURAL FORESTRY FOUNDATION LIMITED*  
*[THE GREEN ECONOMY FOUNDATION – LIMITED)]*

*AM Hourihane,*  
*Solicitor,*  
*67 North Street,*  
*Skibbereen,*  
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***COMPANIES ACTS, 1963 TO 2001***

***COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE AND NOT HAVING A SHARE CAPITAL***

***MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION***

***OF***

***THE IRISH NATURAL FORESTRY FOUNDATION LIMITED***

***[THE GREEN ECONOMY FOUNDATION LIMITED]***

1. The name of the Company is ***THE IRISH NATURAL FORESTRY FOUNDATION LIMITED. [THE GREEN ECONOMY FOUNDATION LIMITED]***

2. The main objects for which the Company is established are; to promote sustainability in all aspects of policy and development in Ireland.

3. The subsidiary objects: in furtherance exclusively of the foregoing main object the Company shall have the following subsidiary objects:-

(a) To research and promote the development of strategies and tools for the development of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable forestry in Ireland.

(b) To research and promote integrated concepts for the multi-purpose utilisation of forest resources and the integrated forestry/wood chain including environment friendly processes and technologies.

(c) To promote exchange of educational information and expertise about sustainable forestry practices and multi-purpose utilisation of forest resources between International Forestry Institutes, Academics, Experts, Foresters, Public Authorities, Commercial Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations, including the organisation of study and demonstration tours, conferences and workshops.

(d) To raise public awareness of sustainable forestry through educational projects including conferences, events, workshops, lectures and demonstration forests.

(e) To acquire appropriate sites to establish working examples of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable forest management.

(f) To organise educational sustainable forest management training programs for farmers and landowners in

Ireland, both nationally and internationally.

4. Powers: the Company shall exercise the following powers:-

(1) (a) To provide gardens, greenhouses and grounds for recreation and amusement.

(b) To raise funds and help raise funds for any charitable purpose.

(c) To provide places and facilities for curricular and extra curricular activities for pupils of the Schools of the Parish.

(d) To carry on any business which may seem to the Company capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with the above main objects or calculated directly or indirectly to enhance the value of [or render profitable – conflict with UK HMRC etc] any of the Company's property, rights or interests.

(2) To carry on all or any of the following businesses, namely Builders and Contractors, Decorators, Merchants, Engineers, Surveyors, Estate Agents, Valuers, Auctioneers, Carriers, Shippers, Forwarding Agents, Garagemen, Caterers, Licensed Publicans, Fuel Suppliers, Textile Manufacturers and Dealers, Insurance Agents and Brokers, Entertainment Caterers, Farmers and generally to import, export, manufacture, make, grow, produce, repair, adapt for sale and prepare for market, goods and materials of every kind, or otherwise to carry on any business which may seem to the Company capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with the above or any one of the above or calculated directly or indirectly to enhance the value of or render more profitable any of the Company's property or rights.

(3) To carry on the business of a trust and investment company and to invest the funds of the Company in or upon or otherwise acquire, hold and deal in securities and investments of every kind.

(4) To make, draw, accept, endorse, issue, discount and otherwise deal with promissory notes, bills of exchange, cheques, letters of credit, circular notes and other mercantile instruments.

(5) To acquire by purchase, exchange, lease, fee farm grant or otherwise, either for an estate in fee simple or for any less estate or interest, whether immediate or reversionary and whether vested or contingent, any lands, tenements or hereditaments of any tenure, whether subject or not to any charges or encumbrances and to hold and farm and work or manage or to sell, let, alienate, mortgage, lease or charge land, house property, shops, flats, maisonettes, reversions, interest annuities, life policies and any other property real or personal, movable or immovable, either absolutely or conditionally and either subject to or not to any mortgage, charge, ground rent or other rents or encumbrances and to pay for any lands, tenements, hereditaments or assets acquired by the Company in cash or debentures or obligations of the Company, whether fully paid or otherwise, or in any other

manner.

(6) To undertake the office of Trustee, Executor, Administrator, Committee, Manager, Secretary, Registrar, Attorney, Delegate, Substitute or Treasurer, and any other offices or situations of trust or confidence, and to perform and discharge the duties and functions incident thereto, and generally to transact all kinds of trust and agency business either gratuitously or otherwise.

(7) To facilitate and encourage the creation, issue or conversion of debentures, debenture stock, bonds, obligations, shares, stocks or securities and to act as Trustees in connection with any such securities and to take part in the conversion of business concerns and undertakings into companies.

(8) To take part in the management, supervision or control of the business or operations of any company or undertaking, and for that purpose to appoint and remunerate any Accountants or other experts or Agents.

(9) To constitute any trusts with a view to the issue of preferred and deferred or any other special stocks or securities based on representing any shares, stocks or other assets specifically appropriated for the purposes of any such trust, and to settle and regulate, and if thought fit to undertake and execute any such trusts, and to issue, dispose of or hold any such preferred, deferred or other special stocks or securities.

(10) To guarantee, support and secure, whether by personal covenant or by mortgaging or charging all or any part of the undertaking, property and assets (present and future) of the Company, or all such methods, the performance of the obligations of and the repayment or payment of the principle amounts and interest of any person, firm or company or the dividends or interest of any securities, including (without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing) any company which is the Company's holding company or a subsidiary or associated company.

(11) To carry on and undertake any business, transaction or operation commonly carried on or undertaken by Financial Agents, Financiers, Underwriters, Concessionaires, Contractors for Public and other works or Merchants.

(12) To carry on any other business which may seem to the Company capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with the above.

(13) To purchase or otherwise acquire and carry on the whole or any part of the business, property, goodwill and assets of any company carrying on or proposing to carry on any business which the Company is authorised to carry on or which can be conveniently carried on in connection with the same, or may seem calculated directly or indirectly to benefit the Company, or possessed of property suitable for the purposes of the Company, and as part of the consideration for any of the acts or things aforesaid or property acquired to undertake all or any of the

liabilities of such company or to acquire an interest therein, amalgamate with or enter into any arrangement for sharing profits, or for co-operation, or for limiting competition or for mutual assistance with any such company and to give, issue or accept cash or any shares, debentures or securities that may be agreed upon, and to hold and retain or sell, mortgage and deal with any shares, debentures or securities so received.

(14) To enter into partnership or into any arrangement for sharing profits, union of interest, joint adventure, reciprocal concession, co-operation or otherwise with any company carrying on or engaged in any business or transaction which the Company is authorised to carry on or engage in, or any business or transaction capable of being conducted so as directly or indirectly to benefit the Company, and to lend money to, guarantee the contracts and debentures of or otherwise assist any such company, and to take or otherwise acquire and hold shares or stock in or securities of, and to subsidise or otherwise assist any such company, and to sell, hold, re-issue, with or without guarantee, or otherwise deal with such shares, stock or securities.

(15) To apply for, purchase or otherwise acquire and protect, prolong and renew, whether in Ireland or elsewhere, any patents, patent rights, *brevets d'invention*, licences, protections, concessions and the like, conferring any exclusive or non-exclusive or limited right to use, or any secret or other information as to any invention, process or privilege which may seem capable of being used for any of the purposes of the Company, or the acquisition of which may seem calculated directly or indirectly to benefit the Company, and to use, exercise, develop, manufacture under or grant licences or privileges in respect thereof or otherwise turn to account the property, rights and information so acquired, and to carry on any business in any way connected therewith, and to expend money in experimenting upon and testing, and in improving or seeking to improve any patents, inventions or rights which the Company may acquire or propose to acquire.

(16) To promote any company for the purpose of acquiring all or any of the property liabilities of the Company, or of undertaking any business or operations which may appear likely to assist or benefit the Company or to enhance the value of or render more profitable any property, assets or business of the Company, or for any other purpose which may seem directly or indirectly calculated to benefit the Company.

(17) To guarantee the payments of dividends or interest on any stocks, shares, debentures or other securities issued by, or any other contract or obligation of any company, *societe anonyme*, association, undertaking or public or private body and the performance of contracts by or become security for members of any company having dealings with the Company.

(18) To accumulate capital for any of the purposes of the Company, and to appropriate any of the Company's assets to specific purposes, either conditionally or unconditionally. Prior permission to be obtained from Revenue where it is intended to accumulate funds for a period in excess of two years.

(19) To apply for and obtain any legislative, municipal or other acts or authorisations for enabling the Company

to carry any of its objects into effect or for any extension or alteration of its powers, or for effecting any modification of the Company's constitution, or for any other purpose which may seem expedient, and to oppose any proceedings or applications which may seem calculated directly or indirectly to prejudice the Company's interest.

(20) To enter into any arrangements with any Government or Authority, Supreme, Municipal, Local or otherwise, or company that may seem conducive to the Company's main objects or any of them, and to obtain from any such government, authority or company, any charters, contracts, decrees, rights, privileges and concessions, and to carry out, exercise and comply with any such arrangements, charters, contracts, decrees, rights, privileges and concessions.

(21) To raise or borrow money, and to secure the payment of money by the issue of or upon debentures or debenture stock, perpetual, terminable or otherwise, or bonds or other obligations, charged or not charged upon, or by mortgage, charge, hypothecation, lien or pledge of the whole or any part of the undertaking, property, assets and rights of the Company, both present and future, and generally in such other manner and on such terms as may seem expedient, and to issue any of the Company's securities, for such consideration and on such terms as may be thought fit, including the power to pay a proportion of the profits of the Company by way of interest on any money so raised or borrowed; and also by a similar mortgage, charge, hypothecation, lien or pledge, to secure and guarantee the performance by the Company of any obligation or liability it may undertake, and to redeem or pay off any such securities.

(22) To create, maintain, invest and deal with any reserve or sinking funds for redemption of obligations of the Company, or for depreciation of works or stock, or any other purpose of the Company.

(23) To grant pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid to any person who may have served the Company as an employee, or to the wives, husbands, children or other dependants of such person provided that such pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid shall be no more than that provided by an occupational pension scheme and provided that such occupational pension scheme has been operated by the Company and the beneficiary of the pensions, gratuities, allowances or charitable aid, or their spouse or parent, has been a member of the occupational pension scheme while employed by the Company; and to make payments towards insurance and to form and contribute to provident and benefit funds for the benefit of any persons employed by the Company and to subscribe or guarantee money for charitable objects.

(24) To subscribe or guarantee money for any national, charitable, benevolent, public, general or useful object, or for any exhibition.

(25) To promote freedom of contract and to resist, insure against, counteract and discourage interference therewith, to join any lawful federation, union, association or party and to contribute to the funds thereof, or do

any other lawful act or thing with a view to preventing or resisting directly or indirectly any interruption of or interference with the Company or any other trade or business or providing or safeguarding against the same, or resisting or opposing any strike movement or organisation which may be thought detrimental to the interests of the Company or its employees and to subscribe to any association or fund for any such purposes.

(26) To procure the Company to be registered or recognised in any foreign country, colony, dependency or place.

(27) To pay all or any expenses of, incidental to or incurred in connection with the formation and incorporation of the Company and the raising of its loan capital, or to contract with any person or company to pay the same, and to pay Commissions to Brokers and others for underwriting, placing, selling or guaranteeing the subscription of any debentures or securities of the Company.

(28) To do all or any of the above things in any part of the world, and as Principals, Agents, Contractors, Trustees or otherwise, and either by or through Trustees, Agents, Sub-Contractors or otherwise and either alone or in partnership or conjunction with any person or company, and to contract for the carrying on of any operation connected with the Company's business by any person or company.

(29) To do all such other things as may be deemed incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above main objects.

And it is hereby declared that in the construction of this Clause, the word "Company" except where used in reference to this Company, shall be deemed to include any person or partnership or other body of persons, whether incorporated or not incorporated, and whether domiciled in Ireland or elsewhere, and words denoting the singular number only shall include the plural number and *vice versa* and the intention is that the objects specified in each paragraph of this Clause shall, except where otherwise expressed in such paragraph, be in nowise restricted by reference to or inference from the terms of any other paragraph or the name of the Company.

5. The liability of the Members is limited.

6. Every Member of the Company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Company in the event of its being wound up while he is a Member or within one year afterwards, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the Company contracted before he ceases to be a Member and the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributories among themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding one euro.

7. Income and Property

The income and property of the Company shall be applied solely towards the promotion of its main object(s) as set forth in this Memorandum of Association. No portion of the Company's income and property shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to Members of the Company. No director shall be appointed to any office of the Company paid by salary or fees, or receive any remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth from the Company. However, nothing shall prevent any payment in good faith by the Company of:

- a) reasonable and proper remuneration to any Member, Officer or Servant of the Company (not being a Director) for any services rendered to the Company;
- b) interest at a rate not exceeding 5% per annum on money lent by Directors or other Members of the Company to the Company;
- c) reasonable and proper rent for premises demised and let by any Member of the Company (including any Director) to the Company;
- d) reasonable and proper out-of-pocket expenses incurred by any Director in connection with their attendance and to any matter affecting the Company;
- e) fees, remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth to any Company of which a Director may be a Member holding not more than one hundredth part of the issued capital of such Company;

#### 8. Winding-Up

If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Company there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the Members of the Company but shall be given or transferred to some other charitable institution or institutions having main objects similar to the main objects of the Company and which shall prohibit the distribution of its or their income and property among its or their Members to an extent at least as great as imposed on the Company under or by virtue of Clause 7 hereof, such institution or institutions to be determined by the Members of the Company at or before the time of dissolution, and if and so far as effect cannot be given to such provisions, then the same charitable object.

#### 9. Additions, Alterations or Amendments

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made to or in the provisions of this Memorandum for the time being in force unless the same shall have been previously approved in writing by the Revenue Commissioners.



10. Keeping of Accounts

Annual accounts shall be kept and made available to the Revenue Commissioners on request.

**We, the several persons whose names and addresses are subscribed, wish to be formed into a Company in pursuance of this Memorandum of Association.**

<i><b>NAMES, ADDRESSES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF SUBSCRIBERS</b></i>	
Shirley Clerkin	Bill Chase
Naturalist	Horticulturalist
13 Castle Heights	Deelish
Dundalk	Skibbereen
Co. Louth	Co. Cork
Ian Wright	Giana Ferguson
Forrester/Artist	Cheesemaker
Kilnaclasha	Gubbeen
Skibbereen	Schull
Co. Cork	Co. Cork
Linda Donovan	Lindsay Mann
Interior Designer	Retired Banker
Glendooneen House	Kilnaclasha
Riverstick	Skibbereen
Co. Cork	Co. Cork
Andrew Dillon	
Solicitor	
Coolmoreen	
Innishannon	
Co. Cork	

*Dated this            day of*

*Witness to the above signatures:*

## **Appendix 2 – Strategic Plan 2020-2025**

Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025. Green Economy Foundation

*Cillian Lohan and Nikki Keeling*

Contents:

1. Executive Summary
2. Vision and Mission Statement
3. Values
4. Activities and Projects: Manch, Education, Trees on the Land, Partnerships, Policy.
5. Priority Tasks
6. Threats and Solutions

### **Executive Summary**

Green Economy Foundation is facing a critical five-year period. Financials have been stabilised in the previous five-year period, and we have completed a range of reviews on strategic planning and on governance.

We have added a variety of sources of funding, and have a successful range of projects to promote the further work of GEF, most notably crossing the landmark of over one million trees planted in Ireland.

Our work on projects and building partnerships is a testament to the expertise and dedication of our team of staff, project managers, contractors and volunteers.

There is a sense of an organisation ready to move into the next phase of its development. Our strong track record should now form the foundation to increase our visibility and secure a broader base of support.

While all areas of our work need to be supported, our staff and board brainstorming sessions have highlighted one area that is a common issue across all that we do. Namely our lack of effective communications.

The added value this NGO brings to the sector is in our practical results and tangible deliverables. But it is now time to collate the outputs and communicate them effectively as a means of driving the change we want to see in the world.

Our track record, and our ongoing projects require us to take the lessons we are continually learning and share them with other interested stakeholders, and use them to inform policy that can be supportive of a wider transition to a more sustainable country.

I am confident this document can be the basis for achieving that next step.

## **2. Vision and Mission**

### **Vision:**

The Green Economy Foundation is an environmental non-government organisation based at The Manch Estate in Co. Cork, Ireland. We work to promote the development of a Green Economy – where the economy functions within planetary boundaries and delivers for all people in society, including the most vulnerable. This is the Sustainable Development approach.

### **Mission Statement:**

GEF seeks to empower its team to achieve the vision of the NGO. Our primary modus operandi has been to focus on specific projects or tasks and to concentrate resources on delivering for that specific focus.

GEF seeks to focus on content and practical solutions to the barriers to transitioning to sustainability. GEF can be a tool to build synergies and amplify the work of others through collaborations and partnerships.

GEF operates in a structure that allows for resilience in times of reduced resources and supports, and allows for flexibility in approaching different methodologies for achieving the vision.

## **3. Values**

At Green Economy Foundation, we have core values that underpin all we do. It is important for us to acknowledge these in our strategic plan both to remind ourselves and to be explicit to external stakeholders.

Integrity, Accountability, Equality, Honesty, Trustworthiness and Transparency, are core values. We also put the principles of Sustainable Development at the heart of how we operate our own projects and activities.

We have always placed high value on the ability to learn from honest mistakes, and insist that our staff, contractors, partners and volunteers all work and communicate with each other in the spirit of growing and learning and with the utmost respect.

## **4. Activities and Purpose**

In this third strategic plan, we build on the previous work of establishing clear division between various projects, and identifying where each of them go next.

We look at projected priorities and cross dependencies between different working projects.

#### a. Manch Project

The Manch Project was the inaugural project of Green Economy Foundation. It is a unique collaboration between private/public and NGO stakeholders.

The estate at Manch, West Cork is privately owned by the Connor family and since 2003 has served as the headquarters of our NGO (then known as INFF).

As an NGO, we partnered with the private landowner, the Forest Service, and a private Forestry Company Green Belt. We established national forestry trials at Manch, planting the estate with a unique mix of native broadleaf trees, focussing on native provenance, and managing the planted land without use of chemical weed-killers.

We established and continue to maintain 25km of walks through the estate, and take regular groups on educational walks, giving talks on different related subjects.

We use the estate at Manch as a working practical example for landowners who wish to have a sustainable forestry model to replicate on their own land.

*The Manch Project comprises ancient woodland and newly planted woodland. It is a unique demonstration of sustainable forestry in action in Ireland.*

The Manch Project is defined by two priority areas

1. Established ancient woodland (over 200 years old)
2. New afforestation project (planted between 2004 and 2007)

The trees that have been planted between 2004 and 2007 were ready for first thinning, which began in 2018. We have managed this process, favouring the more labour-intensive approach of “thinning by crown” which involves assessing each tree before choosing which to thin. This is in contrast to an industrial model of thinning trees at regular numerical intervals, irrespective of the health of the surrounding specimens.

The ancient woodland site has undergone notable change in recent years. There has been significant work required managing this part estate in the last two years. This work is ongoing, involving clearing fallen trees from storm damage, arranging for the wood to be processed and sold, and organising the under-planting of the forest to ensure continuous cover forest. This work has focussed on the old established woodland which comprises part of the estate.

GEF manages all of the estate, except for a few green field sites which are leased by a farmer and used to grown grain for animal feed. The pathways through the estate are maintained by GEF and allow members to enjoy extensive walks, or for guided walks to take place at specific dates and times.

The Manch Project typically receives between 1500 and 2000 visitors a year. Its core purposes are

1. as a demonstration site for stakeholders interested in forestry
2. as a resource for groups or individuals to have an immersive natural experience
3. as a centre that allows other project collaborations to take place.

*The Manch Project is a 320-acre estate, hosting over 1,500 visitors a year, and demonstrating practical alternatives to the current unsustainable practice of non-native monocultures in Irish Forestry.*

#### b. Education Centre

GEF established a multi-level Education Centre which has moved through some changes in the course of previous strategic plans. At its core, the education project receives student groups to the purpose built Education Centre, which is located on the Manch Estate. Primary school, secondary school, and third level, and home-school groups visit the Centre.

There are curriculum linked group visits and non-curriculum linked visits. The curriculum linked visits include Junior Certificate cycle courses and Leaving Certificate cycle courses. For primary schools our Education Centre is a Discovery Primary Science Centre, in the prestigious company to the west of Killarney National Park, and to the East Fota Wildlife Park. Although most school visits are from within the county and city of Cork, third level and University regular visitors include groups from Limerick and Kerry.

*A purpose-built Education Centre, certified as a Discover Primary Science Centre, with a strong reputation for delivering high quality curriculum and extra-curriculum courses to groups from primary school to university.*

Although there is overlap in terms of physical location, the Education Centre is a distinct project from the Manch Project.

#### c. Tree Planting Project

## Trees on the Land

In 2012, we launched an ambitious project to plant a million trees in one day throughout Ireland. This project has since evolved into what is now known as Trees on the Land.

This project plants over 150,000 trees a year on the island of Ireland. We have partnered with The Woodland Trust UK to deliver the project over the border in Northern Ireland.

We provide simple schemes for landowners to access quality native tree mixes each season. We work with farmers, smallholders, community groups, councils, schools, colleges, sports clubs and many other landowners to coordinate sites to accommodate trees.

*We have planted over a million trees in Ireland since 2013, transforming large swathes of landscape into continuous cover forestry and tree-cover.*

Our vision is to establish tree cover and woodland in rural and urban areas that will grow for many years and provide valuable resources, beneficial ecosystem services and a lasting legacy for future generations.

We plant small woodlands, coppices, orchards, hedgerows, shelter belts, agroforestry projects, reforestation sites and larger woodlands. We have planted more than a million trees at several thousand sites in Ireland and Northern Ireland since 2013.

### d. Partnership Projects

GEF plays a role in facilitating other projects. This is a principle of how we work as an NGO. This comes from a desire to amplify solutions, promote practical work, and be content orientated, as set out in our Mission.

*We have experience in developing partnerships that deliver – whether its working with private business, other NGO's, community groups or on ad hoc projects, we pride ourselves on achieving our goals through helping others achieve theirs.*

GEF takes the lead in some partnerships, most notably Trees on the Land, but in others we offer support and share expertise. This can range from allowing the use of our infrastructure at The Manch Project (for walking groups, forest schools, scouting groups, Family Resource Centre, Community Arts groups) to the use of our Education Centre (screening shows, hosting lectures/talks).

GEF seeks to build on opportunities to work on specific partnerships, often in the area of research to inform policy, for example a partnership with a private researcher and academic on Green Public Procurement. Through our Trees on the Land Project we partner with The Woodland Trust in the UK, and have just launched a partnership with Self Help Africa in a bid to plant a million trees in Africa. We also helped to establish and continue to support an innovative biodiversity project in Tobago that seeks to restore native rain forest biodiversity, through education, and habitat restoration and replenishment (Corbin Local Wildlife Park).

A recent partnership with a documentary team allowed us to play a central role in the [feature length documentary Habitat](#)

#### e. Policy

The practical projects and partnerships developed by GEF are used to inform policy changes where required.

GEF started from a focus on forestry. This naturally led to engagement in general land use policy, and to wider agriculture issues. The interconnected nature of land use, freshwater pollution, oceans, carbon sequestration, climate issues, resource use has meant that as GEF we have inputted into policy discussions and pushed for change on a variety of specific areas.

As a member of the Irish Environmental Pillar we have inputted into policy submissions, and worked with other NGO's to build consensus positions on policy. We have focused on using the Environmental Pillar as the conduit through which our policy inputs are channelled.

Through the Environmental Pillar our CEO has been active as a member of the European Economic and Social Committee. Cillian Lohan has worked on EU level policy in that role, bringing a consequential new focus to GEF on issues around resource use, specifically on Circular Economy and a wider focus on the value of high quality stakeholder engagement in policy.

### 5. Priority Tasks to achieve next steps

Manch Project:

- Continue to offer consultancy on management of old growth and afforestation woodlands.
- Continue to use as demonstration for continuous cover forestry
- Amplify the lessons learnt from the project
- Identify key stakeholders that can gain most value for the outputs of the project
- Create a resource that allows the forestry/land management lessons to be effectively shared with different stakeholder groups
- Maintain pathways to allow for access in the context of above priorities.

#### Education Centre:

- Maintain building and resources as valuable infrastructure
- Build a partnership to run the curriculum based teaching activities
- Develop a strong non-curriculum/extra-curriculum program of training, courses, seminars and information sessions
- Strengthen the links between the education priorities and focus and the overall aims and goals of GEF, promoting sustainable development understanding and application.

#### Trees on the Land

- Continue to plant in excess of 100,000 trees a year.
- Continue to build relationships with thousands of landowners across the country
- New partnership with Self Help Africa to plant one million trees in Africa
- Design a means of upscaling the project to be replicated in other northern European countries
- Link outcomes with focussed policy change goals

#### Partnerships:

- Map all existing partnerships
- Identify best fit partners for amplifying the expertise already in-house from completed projects
- Connect with local and national organisations, formal and informal, with a view to making the connection between environmental, social and economic issues – as a means of helping with a wider understanding of sustainable development
- Focus on content and output with partnerships, ensuring resources and energies are prioritised for outputs that align with our wider mission and vision.

## 6. Analysis of Threats

The strengths of GEF are founded in our strong history of achievements, engaged volunteers, a strong physical presence from our headquarters, and a core team with complimentary skills.

We have identified core threats, or potential weaknesses and have noted means of minimising these over times.

#### Synonymous with Manch

For many years the organisation has been indistinguishable from The Manch Project. This has been a difficulty on a number of levels. The Manch Project is located on private land. We have a 20-year



lease on this estate, and a management agreement. This is up for renewal in 2025, at the end of this Strategic Plan.

It is important to note, as we negotiate any new agreement that GEF is distinct from Manch. The project can be completed, or at least be left to continue growing and be used as a demonstration plot for sustainable forestry, and GEF could relocate headquarters, and relocate or redesign the Education Centre as a mobile service.

It is important that any move away from our headquarters, for practical reasons, is not seen as a negative for all the other functions of GEF, and all the other projects that are at early stages than Manch.

### Dependency on loyal volunteers

Linked to lack of financial resources to support the human resources we depend on, there is a risk that without our loyal and productive team of volunteers that we could not function on the scale we currently do.

To date, our volunteers are kept motivated by knowing about the good work they are supporting. However, our lack of a good structured communication, makes this a weak point on the organisation. The documentary Habitat, released in 2019, goes a long way towards highlighting some of our work, and served as a motivational tool for volunteers.

But it will be essential to effectively communicate the successes we have had, and the essential added value and critical role volunteers play in the organisation.

This approach seems more realistic and achievable than trying to raise fund to pay everybody. The nature of our work is that volunteers will always play an important role.

### Financials

Ten years ago, Core Funding from IEN was 70% of our income, and we were operating at a loss of €30,000 a year. We could withstand this due to large donations and funding received on establishment.

However, our restructuring since 2010 means that we have spread our reliance on funding, so that Core funding from IEN is now 10% of our income. We have reduced our operating deficit year on year, and are now consistently operating within our budget.

This is sustainable as we take on new projects only when funding is secured. Any reduction in funding can be balanced by a reduction in activity, effectively “mothballing” projects until they can be funded again.

While this is a positive development, it is restrictive in terms of planning and being able to invest in GEF. The IEN Core Funding remains the only unrestricted funding that we receive. Although it has been reduced to 10% of our income it remains a critical dependency. It is important to find other

sources of non-restricted funding, either through a new ambitious membership program, increased philanthropic funding

#### Failure to communicate successes

This has been a repeated failing on an organisational level. Resources and efforts have been focussed on delivering projects, facilitating local groups, connecting with other NGO's, and planting trees. These successes are highly valued but there has been a gap in collating the outputs and communicating them effectively.

This gap has run through many of the activities in GEF and needs to be dealt with during this strategic plan lifetime.

The risks associated with poor communication put funding, future projects, reputation, long term strategizing all at risk.

## **Appendix 3a - Conflict of Interest Template – from Charities Regulatory Authority**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to assist charity trustees of GEF to effectively identify, record and manage any conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of the charity and to ensure that the charity trustees act in the best interest of their charity.

### **2. Objective**

The GEF board aims to ensure that the charity trustees are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of GEF.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to the trustees of GEF and all staff members of GEF.

### **4. Definition of conflicts of interests**

A conflict of interest is any situation in which a charity trustee's personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent the charity trustee from making a decision in the best interests of the charity. This personal interest may be direct or indirect, and can include interests of a person connected to the charity trustee. These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of the charity and therefore must be managed accordingly.

### **5. Policy**

This policy has been developed because conflicts of interest commonly arise, and do not need to present a problem to the charity if they are openly and effectively managed. It is the policy of the GEF as well as a responsibility of its charity trustees, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with their obligations to GEF. GEF will manage conflicts of interest by requiring charity trustees to: avoid conflicts of interest where possible identify and record any conflicts of interest carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

#### **5.1 Responsibility of the board of charity trustees**

The board is responsible for: establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest across the charity; monitoring compliance with this policy; and reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively. The charity trustees should ensure they are aware of their legal obligations in the management and control of their charity and should refer to the Charities Regulator's 'Guidance for Charity Trustees' for further information on this see the Charities Regulator website.

#### **5.2 Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest**

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into GEF's register of interests (**see Appendix 3b Register of Interest Template**) as well as being raised with the board of charity trustees. The register of interests must be maintained by GEF, and record all information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it).

### **5.3 Confidentiality of disclosures**

[In order to support charity trustees to disclose their conflicts of interest, the level of confidentiality associated with any disclosure should be set out. Include details of who will have access to the information disclosed, such as restricting this to the board of charity trustees and the secretary to the board. It may also be necessary to provide for an alternative disclosure mechanism if additional restrictions on disclosure are required.]

## **6. Action required for management of conflicts of interest**

### **6.1 Conflicts of interest of members of the board of charity trustees**

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the board of charity trustees (excluding the disclosing charity trustee and any other conflicted person) must decide whether or not a conflicted charity trustee should: vote on the matter (this is a minimum), participate in any debate, or be present in the room during the debate and the voting. In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a charity trustee from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth the board of charity trustees considering whether it is appropriate for the person with the relevant conflict to resign from the board of charity trustees.

### **6.2 What should be considered when deciding what action to take**

In deciding what approach to take, the board of charity trustees will consider whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making alternative options to avoid the conflict the charity's objects and resources, and the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the charity. The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the board of charity trustees (excluding any conflicted charity trustee) who are present and voting (if applicable) at the meeting. All details regarding the conflict of interest, including the action arising, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## **7. Compliance with this policy**

If the board of charity trustees has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances. If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the board of charity trustees may take action against the person. This may include seeking the person's resignation from the charity. If a person suspects that a charity trustee has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they must notify the board.

### **Contacts**

For questions about this policy, contact the board of charity trustees.

### Appendix 3b – Register of Interest Template

Green Economy Foundation

Name of charity trustee	Date of appointment	Description of interest	Has the board of charity trustees been notified of the interest?	Date of disclosure

Signed: Date: [   /   /   ]

[Insert name of charity trustee]

## **Appendix 4 - Code of Conduct Template – from Charities Regulatory Authority**

Green Economy Foundation

By reading this document and accepting the role of a charity trustee of GEF, all charity trustees agree to the following responsibilities:

### **General Conduct**

- Charity trustees are required to act with honesty and integrity and exercise good judgement which may include seeking professional advice on appropriate matters on which charity trustees do not have relevant expertise.
- Charity trustees are required to act in the best interests of the charity at all times.

### **Independence**

- Charity trustees are required to act independently, particularly in relation to assets, property, legal and regulatory obligations.
- Charity trustees should conduct themselves with integrity and in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of the charity or its volunteers and employees. More specifically charity trustees:
  - should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their duties;
  - must avoid actual impropriety and any appearance of improper behaviour.
- Charity trustees must not act in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves or for any persons connected to them such as their family, their friends, or any organisation that they own, manage or work for.
- Charity trustees should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence them in carrying out their role as charity trustee. Any gifts or hospitality received in any connection to GEF should be declared to the Board.

### **Charity Trustee Roles**

Charity trustees should:

- Understand and perform their roles and responsibilities to the best of their abilities at all times.
- Be prepared to provide adequate time and commitment as required to fulfil the role of charity trustee, adequately preparing for meetings and participating in committees and special events when required.

### **Board Meetings**

Charity trustees should:

- Aim to attend all meetings, contribute appropriately and effectively, and avoid dominating the contributions of others.
- Always respect the authority of the Chairperson of the board, and the Chairperson of any meeting.
- Bring a fair and open-minded view to all discussions of the board, maintain a respectful balance between

speaking and listening, treating different views with respect, and ensuring that all decisions are made in the best interests of the charity.

- Bring a genuinely independent perspective to enhance decision-making, given that charity trustees share responsibility for board decisions.
- Ensure their contributions are informed and impartial when presenting views on topics in meetings while listening to and respecting the input and experience of other charity trustees.

### **Volunteers/Employees within the Charity**

Charity trustees should:

- Aim to support volunteers and employees in carrying out their duties and always, in terms of their conduct, serve as an example of how everyone in the charity should conduct themselves in order to reflect the values of the charity.
- Work considerately and fairly with everyone in a way that respects diversity, different roles and boundaries and avoids giving offence.
- Accept and respect the difference in roles between the board on the one hand and volunteers and any employees on the other, ensuring that the board, volunteers and any employees work effectively and cohesively for the benefit of the charity and develop a mutually supportive and loyal relationship by:
  - respecting management arrangements and avoiding any actions that might undermine such arrangements;
  - not interfering in the performance by volunteers or employees of duties delegated to them within the charity while ensuring that volunteers and any employees working for the charity are held to account through the manager/CEO, as appropriate.

### **Legal Requirements and Policies**

Charity trustees must:

- Act in accordance with the charity's governing document and ensure that the charity complies with all applicable laws including charity law, company law, health and safety law, data protection law and employment law.
- Promote and preserve the obligations of confidentiality about sensitive board matters. However, the requirement for confidentiality may not apply if it becomes necessary for the charity trustee to inform the Charities Regulator or any other statutory body about any matter, which could threaten the future of the charity or could represent a breach of any law with which the charity is required to comply.
- Abide by the charity's conflict of interests or loyalties policy and ensure the charity's conflict of interest register is completed and updated as required.
- Abide by any equality, diversity, safeguarding, health and safety, bullying and harassment policies and any other policies agreed by the board.
- Ensure that claims for out of pocket expenses are made in accordance with agreed procedures.

Where a charity trustee is found to be in breach of the standards outlined by the board in its Code of Conduct he or she will be asked to meet with the Chairperson of the board to assess his or her suitability for the role. Consistent breach of the Code of Conduct by a charity trustee may result in the trustee's tenure being terminated.

The board of charity trustees should review this Code of Conduct for trustees at 3-year intervals or as appropriate.

Signed .....

Name .....

Date .....





### **Volunteering with Green Economy Foundation:**

#### **About us:**

The Green Economy Foundation is an environmental non-government organisation based at The Manch Estate in Co. Cork, Ireland. We work to promote the development of a Green Economy – where sustainable and resource-efficient business models will out-perform and ultimately replace those dependent on profit alone.

Founded in 2002 as the 'Irish Natural Forestry Foundation', we work to advocate economically, socially and environmentally sustainable forestry in Ireland. Over the years our work has diversified into the areas of biodiversity, climate change, sustainable agriculture and resource efficiency.

Now re-named the Green Economy Foundation our aim is to support the development of a Green Economy in Ireland and beyond.

#### **The purpose of our volunteer policy**

Our volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Green Economy Foundation. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

## **Our vision and mission for volunteering**

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for Green Economy Foundation you will be making a positive contribution to community development in our area. Volunteers are vital to our work.

## **Attracting volunteers and volunteer agreement**

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in. Once we receive a copy of your completed registration form, a member of our team will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together which option best matches your interests and time availability and also our needs. Your help will be greatly appreciated and really will make a difference.

## **Garda Vetting**

Some volunteer roles will require a Garda vetting to inform Green Economy Foundation of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have. For example, any volunteer position which involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to a Garda vetting check.

## **Induction and training**

It does not matter how much you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise.

There will be an induction prepared and delivered by one of our staff. This will include:

**1.** Some information about Green Economy Foundation, our vision, mission and our future plans;

**2.** ☐ the role of the volunteer;

**3.** ☐ introduction to some volunteers;

**4.** ☐ tour around our facilities and see some of our initiatives;

**5.** ☐ essential procedures such as timekeeping, rota;

**6.** ☐ information about training and ongoing learning opportunities

There will be a trial period of four weeks to give Green Economy Foundation and you time to discover if you are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial

period and also at the end. This is not an assessment, it is just so that we can be sure that you benefit the most from the volunteering experience and maximise the time you are giving freely.

### **Support**

Our Volunteer Manager/Co-ordinator will offer support to you. They will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. This will include regular meetings with you to discuss how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with issues arising. This will also ensure that Green Economy Foundation are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

### **Recognition and reward**

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. There will always be a listening ear or shoulder to lean on.

### **Expenses**

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out of pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed. In order to claim expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed, a valid receipt provided and this should be handed in at the office/to the volunteer co-ordinator.

### **Insurance, health and safety, accidents and risk assessment**

Green Economy Foundation has a valid insurance policy so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance, which you are advised to read. It covers the volunteering activities you will be doing. We will keep reminding you of our Health and Safety Policy and give simple instructions on how to perform each task safely. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always have a first aider on field sites.

### **Resolving problems**

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. First of all, talk to

the person who leads the team where you volunteer and he or she should be able to sort it out with you before it becomes a problem. If you do not feel this will resolve things you can speak to the Volunteer co-ordinator.

### **Confidentiality**

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us and this also includes use of social media and contact with any press.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Green Economy Foundation is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing Green Economy Foundation as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality.

**This is the Volunteer Policy of Green Economy Foundation**

**It will be reviewed every 12 months**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Cillian Lohan**

**Position: Chief Executive Officer**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



We appreciate your commitment to us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding. To make sure you have the best possible experience we have created this agreement which sets out our commitment to you and what we hope you can contribute.

GREEN ECONOMY FOUNDATION is committed to:

2. Giving you a great experience.
3. Being responsive to your requirements.
4. Providing you with an induction.
5. Providing support throughout your volunteer experience.
6. Explaining the standards we expect and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.
7. Providing a named person who will be your point of contact whilst volunteering. This might be someone other than the volunteer manager who will discuss your volunteering and any achievements and issues arising on a regular basis.
8. Doing our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.
9. Being flexible in relation to your volunteering hours, recognising your need for holiday time and other commitments.
10. Honouring the time commitment you have agreed to give us and not to expect more from you unless offered and agreed.
11. Providing training required to undertake the role.
12. Reimbursing agreed out-of-pocket expenses following procedures set out in our Expenses Policy.
13. Providing adequate training and ensure you know what to do to stay safe, in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.
14. Providing adequate insurance to cover for volunteers whilst undertaking volunteering approved and authorised by us.
15. Ensuring that all volunteers are treated fairly and in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.

**16.** Trying to resolve fairly any issues or difficulties you may have whilst you volunteer with us before they become problems. In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issue in accordance with the relevant policies.

**17.** Follow up on any feedback or questions you may have regarding your involvement as a volunteer.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to volunteer with

GREEN ECONOMY FOUNDATION and am committed to the following:

3. Performing my volunteering role to the best of my ability.
4. Working as agreed in my volunteer role description.
5. Following the organisation's policies and procedures.
6. Familiarise myself and ask if I'm not sure about what to do stay safe whilst volunteering.
7. Maintaining the confidential information of the organisation.
8. Meeting time and other commitments as agreed but when unable to do so to give reasonable notice so that other arrangements can be made.
9. Providing references and to agree to checks under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme, as required.
10. Return any loaned equipment when ending my volunteering.

This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be stopped at any time by either party.

Signed:

Volunteer Name in Block Capitals: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed:

Volunteer Manager Name in Block Capitals:

Date:



### **5c Volunteer Application Form**

This volunteer application form assists Green Economy Foundation in the process of recruitment and screening of volunteers by gathering information about an individual's suitability for a given volunteer role.

**Volunteer Name:**

**Volunteer Address:**

**Volunteer Email:**

**Volunteer Phone Number:**

**If you have volunteered before, please give details of where you have volunteered, for how long and describe your volunteer role:**

**What hobbies, skills, special interests or qualities do you have that may be relevant to the volunteer role you are applying for?**

**When are you available to volunteer? (Please specify days, times and the length of commitment you would like to make).**

**Do you have any special needs or requirements?**

**Any other comments:**

**References:**

Please supply us with the names of two referees (non-relatives)

**1 - Name of referee:**

**Contact for referee:**

**2 - Name of referee:**

**Contact for referee:**

**\*Note: Garda Vetting is a requirement for some volunteer roles within our organisation**

**Please return to:**

Green Economy Foundation  
Manch Estate, Ballineen, Co. Cork, Ireland.

**Or email to:**

info@greeneconomyfoundation.ie





## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Manch Project, the Green Economy Foundation and all individuals and activities associated with the organisation are committed to safeguarding the well-being of all children and young people with whom our staff come into contact. Our Child Protection Policy has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015, the *Children First: National Guidance*, and Tusla's *Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice*.

Staff at The Manch Project accept and recognise our responsibility to develop awareness of child protection and child safety issues.

We will endeavour to safeguard children by implementing the following procedures:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through a code of behaviour for staff, facilitators and volunteers.
- Ensuring that all groups and organisations we work with adopt a child protection policy where appropriate.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff, facilitators and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies.
- Following careful procedures for recruitment and selection of staff, facilitators and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff, facilitators and volunteers through supervision, practical support and training.
- Ensuring that temporary staff and facilitators are at all times supported by a member of staff.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice at regular intervals. We will provide on-going training for our staff, facilitators and volunteers.

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers who have contact with children and young people on Manch Project premises or through their work on behalf of the Green Economy Foundation.



## **GREEN ECONOMY FOUNDATION – Employment Policy.**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the Personnel Policy is to set down the policies, conditions, rights and obligations of Green Economy Foundation employees subject to their performing of the duties and responsibilities in their respective job descriptions.

From the time of hiring, each employee will have access to this policy, so that he/she can adhere to it with full knowledge and information.

The policies described below may at any time be subject to modification if the Board of Members of Green Economy Foundation deems it necessary. In such cases, employees will be fully informed of the changes made.

### **1.2 Categories of Personnel**

All personnel working for Green Economy Foundation are classified into following types

#### **1.2.1 Employees**

Employees designate salaried individuals who, after a probationary period, are given ongoing assignments, either part-time or full-time, and are paid on monthly basis. They will be contracted on long-term basis subject to periodic evaluations and performance assessments. They will have the responsibility towards the day to day functioning and/or in any one of more ongoing/prospective projects of the Green Economy Foundation.

All the employees of the organization are classified into categories. These categories are as follows:

##### **1. Management Category:**

a. Executive Director

##### **2. Professional Category:**

a. Program Officer

b. Researcher

c. Finance Officer

##### **3. Support Category:**

a. Administrative Assistant

b. Office Boy

#### **1.2.2 Consultants**

Consultants are professional experts hired by Green Economy Foundation on short-term basis only for the completion of specific tasks and assignments related to Green Economy Foundation or one or more of its projects. Separate and limited contracts, defining their job description, timeline, deliverables, reporting procedures and payment details will be issued to consultants. They will be

paid on daily/monthly/weekly basis depending upon the nature of their assignment. They will not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of the organization.

### **1.2.3 Volunteers**

Volunteers are individuals who work at Green Economy Foundation out of their own choice or have been deputed at Green Economy Foundation by other organizations. They will be assigned tasks from time to time as deemed necessary by Green Economy Foundation. Green Economy Foundation will have a limited contract with volunteers and will not provide any compensation except under special conditions. They will not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of the organization.

### **1.3 Personnel Recruitment**

Green Economy Foundation believes in equal employment opportunity to each individual, regardless of race, color, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant condition. This policy applies to recruitment and advertising; hiring and job assignment; promotion, demotion and transfer; layoff or termination; rates of pay and benefits; selection for training; and the provision of any other human resources service.

#### **1.3.1 Notice of Vacant or New Position**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Members to fill vacant positions as well as new regular positions and new temporary positions of a duration exceeding more than six months. The Board must make sure that the positions can be filled under the organizational budget.

For all new positions, a job description shall be established and include the following elements:

- position summary
- description of duties and responsibilities
- conditions of work
- qualifications

Notice of a new or vacant position must be approved by the Board before it is released publicly.

Recruitment for a new or vacant position can be opened to internal and external competition. For external recruitment, positions in the professional category can be advertised publicly through newspapers if they are regular positions, or if there is a limited tendering process for consultation.

#### **1.3.2 Interview and selection**

As a general rule, a selection committee comprising of, at least two members shall be assembled for filling all positions.

The committee will go through the applications received, retaining those that show the best qualifications. It will evaluate each candidate's application with the help of an evaluation form created beforehand, containing well-defined criteria.

A list of the candidates chosen to be interviewed will be shortlisted by the Selection Committee. The interviews will serve to make a final choice and also to establish a database of potential future candidates.

#### **1.3.3 Appointment Letter**

Any personnel employed with Green Economy Foundation will be issued an appointment letter prior to his/her [employment](#) by Green Economy Foundation. The appointment letter will officially announce his/her position within the [organization](#), the place of assignment and the effective date of employment. The appointment letter will carry annexes, specifying the employee's job description,

terms of reference, salary and benefits and other relevant terms of employment (Refer 1.4 Employment).

#### **1.3.4 Probationary Period**

A probation period of three months shall apply to all new employees from the date of hire. Exceptionally, the probation period may be extended to six months. In case, if a new employee fails to perform in accordance to expectations of Green Economy Foundation staff/board, he/she will be given a notice, terminating the contract at the end of the probationary period.

#### **1.3.5 Staff orientation**

All new employees will get an orientation about the organization's mission and strategies, its structure and the staff within it, the policies and conditions of employment, the internal rules and regulations, etc.

#### **1.4 Remuneration**

Green Economy Foundation believes in attracting and retaining a qualified and effective workforce through a system of payment that is both appealing and fair. All employees of Green Economy Foundation are entitled to a basic salary, depending upon their skills, qualification and experience. The basic salary will be mentioned in the appointment letter.

##### **1.4.1 Salary Increment**

Salary increment will be based upon an employee's position and performance. Increment will be provided to employees on annual basis after their performance evaluation.

Salary increment is calculated on the basis of basic salary of the staff.

##### **1.4.2 Compensation against Accident of the staff during Service**

In the event that the staff succumbs to an accident while working for Green Economy Foundation, i.e. during the office hours or during field trips, he/she is entitled to receive compensation amounting to a maximum of two-month salary of the individual to cover the medical expenses.

#### **1.5 Working Days and Hours**

##### **1.5.1 Working Days**

Green Economy Foundation will follow a 5 days a week working schedule from Monday to Friday. Saturdays and Sundays are considered non-working days.

Unless otherwise specified, Green Economy Foundation will observe the same public holidays as those prescribed by the Government. The Executive Director will prepare a calendar of public holidays at the beginning of each fiscal year and circulate it to all staff.

##### **1.5.2 Office Hours**

The office shall open from 09.00 am in the morning till 18.00 in the evening. All employees are expected to complete their work within these hours unless required as below.

##### **1.5.3 Overtime**

Various factors, such as workloads, operational efficiency, and staffing needs, may require variations in an employee's total hours worked each day. In such circumstances, the employee may have to work beyond the scheduled office hours.

Under such circumstances, the staff working overtime is entitled to payment for working overtime and is authorized by its immediate supervisor for the same. However, no overtime compensation will be provided for staff during field trips. The overtime rate will be paid on hourly basis and will be calculated on the basis of the basic salary.

## **1.6 Travel**

Staff members may be asked to travel away from their usual workplaces on authorized missions. The policy on payment of travel allowances adopted Green Economy Foundation applies to all employees regardless of job category or status. It also applies to the consultants, when mentioned in their agreement.

After reimbursable expenses are made, the person making an expense claim shall use the appropriate forms available.

The expenses will not be reimbursed if proper justifying documents (original receipts) are not attached except for per diem. Eligible expenses include:

### **1.6.1 Accommodation**

All employees and volunteers are entitled to claim expenses incurred for accommodation for official trips outside Co. Cork. Maximum claims for accommodation shall not exceed €\_\_\_\_. Claim for accommodation will be reimbursed upon submission of bills/receipts.

### **1.6.2 Mode of Transport**

Green Economy Foundation will pay only surface transport as far as possible, i.e. bus. If any individual is using personal vehicle for Green Economy Foundation related work, they can be reimbursed the actual fuel cost based upon the mileage. Some maintenance will also be awarded if required. However, the private transport must be shared by more than one Green Economy Foundation member or employee.

## **1.7 Leave and Holidays**

### **1.7.1 Leave**

All employees are entitled to the following leave with pay.

#### **(1) Annual Leave**

All employees of Green Economy Foundation are entitled to XX working days off as paid leave per year. This leave is accrued monthly at the rate of XX working days.

#### **(2) Sick Leave**

Employees are entitled to 12 working days of sick leave with pay per calendar year. Sick leave is accumulated at the rate of 1 day for every full month worked.

Employees have to present a medical certificate to substantiate claims for sick leave with pay for absences exceeding two successive days.

#### **(3) Maternity Leave**

All female employees are entitled to maternity leave of 90 calendar days twice.

#### **(4) Paternity Leave**

Male employees are entitled to paternity leave of 11 calendar days twice.

#### **(5) Mourning Leave**

In case of death of a parent, child or spouse, employees be given mourning leave of 15 days each.

#### **(6) Emergency Leave**

Emergency leave is granted to employees for any serious illness of a parent, child or spouse and/or personal emergencies. A total of 7 days per year can be allowed for emergency leave.

### **1.7.2 Holidays**

All employees are entitled to 16 days of paid leave due to public holidays. Public holidays are specified in advance by the Executive Director in consultation with staff members.

Employees who are required to work on public holidays are entitled to compensatory day off. Green Economy Foundation will keep records of number of hours/days worked by its employees on public holidays. Request for compensatory leave shall be substantiated with this record and approved in advance by the Executive Director.

In the event that a public holiday is declared by the Government on a certain day without prior notice, Green Economy Foundation staff cannot consider it a holiday until and unless notified by the Executive Director or the Board. All public holidays are subject to the approval of the Executive Director or the Board.

### **1.7.3 Leave without Pay**

- (1) Leave without pay may be granted to employees up to 36 days per year.
- (2) Leave without pay that is taken for a month or more shall not be counted as time worked, hence no benefits shall accrue to the employees during such period.
- (3) Employees on probation are not entitled to leave with or without pay but can accrue such leave during the probationary period.
- (4) Leave without pay is applicable when the employee has exhausted all his annual and sick leave.

### **1.7.4 Absences**

- (1) An employee who is unable to come to the office is required to notify the office of the reason for his/her absence.
- (2) Unauthorized absences are grounds for disciplinary action. The following procedures shall apply:
  - i. An employee that has been absent for two consecutive working days without notice nor explanation shall be personally sought of by the Executive Director. He/she shall be asked to put in writing the reason(s) for his/her absence.
  - ii. If, after seven consecutive days of absence, the employee continues to fail to give any explanation of the cause of his/her absence, the employee will be considered to have resigned from his/her position.
  - iii. In cases where the employee cannot give any satisfactory answer to the cause of his/her absences, in the judgement of the Executive Director, the employee may be subjected to disciplinary action.

## **1.8 Staff Movement**

### **(1) Assignments and Transfers**

According to project needs, any employee can be transferred temporarily or permanently to any location where Green Economy Foundation conducts its activities. The transfer may be the result of a promotion, a change in role due to service requirements or other reasons. A permanent transfer to a new place of work that includes a new job mandate shall result in a contract renewal. In addition, the employee concerned shall be notified one month in advance of his change in situation.

### **(2) Interim positions and promotions**

An employee may be called on to temporarily perform a job in a higher category. That does not automatically give him the right to the salary and benefits of this position. However, after a reasonable amount of time, Green Economy Foundation shall reclassify the employee in the category of the new job or return him/her to his/her former duties.

An employee who receives a promotion can be required to complete a trial period in the new position. If the trial period is successfully concluded, the employee will be reclassified in the new job category and at a salary scale level higher than his former position. If the trial period is not satisfactorily completed, the employee will be reinstated in a position at the same level as his former position.

### **1.9 Prohibition on Outside Employment and/or Engagement**

Full-time regular employees of Green Economy Foundation are not allowed to undertake outside employment.

### **1.10 Termination of Employment**

#### **1.10.1 Conditions for Termination**

Employees shall lose their jobs under any of the following conditions:

##### **(1) Voluntary Resignation**

- i. Personnel wishing to resign from post may do so by giving a resignation letter to the Executive Director stating the reasons for resignation and effective date of the same. One month of prior notice is required for such resignations.
- ii. The date in which the resignation letter is received at the Green Economy Foundation office is considered the date on which notice of resignation is given. Failure to provide sufficient notice may be ground for forfeiture of all accrued employee benefits.

##### **(2) Redundancy of the Position**

Depending on the nature and volume of its operation, Green Economy Foundation may declare certain positions redundant. Persons occupying those positions will therefore be forced to be separated from Green Economy Foundation with proper notice. While doing so, Green Economy Foundation will give at least 2 months notice in advance.

##### **(3) Termination with Cause Grounds for employee termination are the following:**

- i. continuing inefficiency and gross negligence of duty.
- ii. fund embezzlement.
- iii. Misuse of office equipment, and other properties.
- iv. repeated unauthorized absences and leaves
- v. intoxication while on official business or within office premises
- vi. unauthorized disclosure of official information

##### **(4) Retirement**

When an employee reaches the age of retirement, according to the country's law, the employment relationship comes to an end. Green Economy Foundation shall notify the employee by letter, stating the date the employment terminates.

The retiring employee shall receive salary up the date of departure and other allowances such as the Provident Fund, as specified in his/her agreement.

##### **(5) Death**

When an employee dies, his/her salary and benefits will automatically be paid to his/her legal heirs.

#### **1.10.2 Procedures for Termination and/or Disciplinary Action**

- i. Green Economy Foundation will ask the employee for a written explanation on the offense deemed committed by the employee concerned, identifying the charges against him/her and the particulars of the facts relied upon to support it.
- ii. The employee is given 3 working days to submit his/her explanations.
- iii. Based on the written explanations submitted by the employee concerned and the strength of evidence presented, Green Economy Foundation may choose to decide on the charges or pursue further investigation of the case.
- iv. Green Economy Foundation can, shall it feel necessary to, suspend the employee in question from duty during the period of investigation subject to the following conditions:
  - a. should the employee be in a position to tamper with the evidence against him/her.

b. should the employee's continuing presence in the organization be deemed inimical to the interest of the organization.

## **1.11 Conflict Management**

### **1.11.1 Conflict Resolution**

Whenever a dispute arises among the Green Economy Foundation staff, it shall be resolved in a constructive manner, i.e. the solutions shall lead to positive changes. Employees who feel unfairly treated or who have complaints about a situation or about working conditions should notify the Executive Director immediately.

### **1.11.2 Staff Behavior**

Green Economy Foundation expects its employees to adopt attitudes and behaviour that maintain the good image of the organization. Green Economy Foundation employees shall display an exemplary level of professionalism and integrity.

Furthermore, besides the usual rules every good employee needs to follow (respect, courtesy, punctuality), there are particular procedures of conduct for members of the organization which must be observed.

#### **(1) Political Activities**

Since Green Economy Foundation is a non-political organization, employees shall not participate in activities of a purely political nature on work premises or during working hours. It is also prohibited to use the organization's materials for these purposes.

#### **(2) Discrimination and Harassment**

Under the principles established by Green Economy Foundation, no employee, man or woman, has the right to put pressure on another, make intimate advances, give preferential treatment or show sexual favoritism at work.

#### **(3) Conflict of Interest**

To avoid putting themselves in a conflict of interest with the objectives and operations pursued by Green Economy Foundation, employees shall respect the following guidelines:

- It is prohibited to use Green Economy Foundation property for illegal or unauthorized purposes.
- It is prohibited for any Green Economy Foundation employee having confidential information to disclose it without express authorization beforehand.
- Employees cannot at any time accept a job from another employer if this job interferes with their work schedule and their duties and responsibilities.
- Employees shall avoid putting themselves in situations where they may gain profit or derive direct or indirect interest by influencing a contract award.
- Employees cannot solicit or accept tips, gifts, favours or other forms of gratuities for services rendered or required to be rendered in performing their duties within the organization.

### **1.11.3 Grievances**

If an employee feels unfairly treated by circumstances that infringe on his/her rights or change his/her employment conditions, he/she should discuss the situation with his/her immediate supervisor. If, after the matter has been discussed and corrective measures taken, an employee feels it has not been satisfactorily settled, he/she can submit a grievance to the Executive Director, who will discuss and provide appropriate solution. All grievances shall be handled internally because there is no recourse to external mediation or arbitration.

## **1.12 Performance Evaluation and Skill Training**

### **1.12.1 Performance Evaluation System**



The performance evaluation system is a means by which Green Economy Foundation can increase its efficiency and that of its employees. The purpose of the system is for the organization to fulfil its mission by attaining its objectives and for employees to grow and feel fulfilled through proactive performance supervision.

The system enables, among other things, the harmonizing of individual employee objectives with those of the organization, the measuring of employee potential and work performance and the support of employee improvement by working with them on their development needs.

The annual performance evaluation seeks specifically to:

- promote communication between employees and their supervisors;
- clarify expectations concerning objectives and performance;
- improve employee performance through on-going monitoring and feedback;
- assess and reward individual performance;
- allow employees to express their career aspirations.

The performance evaluation focuses on the individual employee in relation to the tasks and responsibilities assigned to him. It is not necessarily a comparison of one employee's performance with that of another. Thus, the employee's work performance is to be assessed in relation to absolute procedures, that is, according to the evaluator's performance criteria and not according to relative procedures.

The performance evaluation also allows NGO Green Economy Foundation to assess the quality of human resources in their department or organization, note important information concerning expectations and needs and clarify decisions concerning transfers or work assignments.

### **1.12.2 Elements of the Performance Evaluation System**

A performance evaluation system is composed of three main stages that generally take place over a period of a year:

#### **(1) Performance planning**

The performance planning stage enables employees and supervisors to come to an agreement on what is to be accomplished during the year and how it will be carried out. The following procedures and tools are used to facilitate this stage:

##### **a) Job description or list of duties**

Each employee must have an up-to-date job description defining the purpose of the work and the responsibilities involved.

##### **b) Setting of objectives**

For each key responsibility associated with a position, at least one objective should be established for a particular period. The objectives should be clear and quantifiable, and the assessment criteria should be mentioned.

##### **c) Individual action plan**

The individual action plan is a planning tool used to specify the steps to be taken to achieve the objectives set beforehand. The action plan should be prepared jointly with the immediate supervisor. It may also involve new initiatives facilitating improved productivity or personal capacity development.

#### **(2) Performance Monitoring and Management**

Staff performance and productivity should be managed on an on-going basis throughout the year. The following elements, among others, are involved:

**a) On-going Supervision**

This means taking the time to observe, examine sources of difficulty and seek solutions.

**b) Regular Communication**

This involves regular exchanges so that employees can receive feedback about their performance and receive the necessary supervision.

**c) Periodic Evaluation**

This involves formal, scheduled meetings between an employee and supervisor to discuss activities carried out, end results and the adjustment of the action plan and objectives, if necessary. A minimum of one meeting every six months is suggested to ensure satisfactory results.

**(3) Annual Performance Evaluation**

The annual performance evaluation is the analysis, based on documentation from previous stages of the process, of an employee's work record. The evaluation addresses two fundamental questions. The first relates to the past and involves verifying what was accomplished qualitatively and quantitatively during the year. The second relates to the future and consists of identifying means to be considered to ensure the employee continues to grow and develop.

The performance evaluation form should include all the sections needed for the evaluation. This includes a section relating to performance evaluation in relation to the objectives established at the outset and in relation to the responsibilities of the position, a section that specifies or targets what is needed for the employee's development and finally a section allowing the employee and the evaluator to express their comments and affix their respective signatures. The form should also include a performance level classification and a definition of each of these levels.

The annual performance evaluation does not have any financial impact on salaries. It is first and foremost a tool to evaluate the employee's performance and take remedial action if necessary.

**1.12.3 Skill Training and Professional Development**

Depending on available funds, Green Economy Foundation should foster the professional development of its employees in order to be as effective as possible in its activities. The training programs chosen should address the actual needs identified and expressed during performance evaluation sessions.

**1.13 Bond**

As part of the staff and organizational development activities, Green Economy Foundation may at times decide to send a designated staff person for trainings and/or further studies both abroad as well as at local level. Green Economy Foundation will bear the full/partial costs of the trainings/studies for this. However, the designated staff sponsored for the trainings/studies is required to sign a bond with Green Economy Foundation that requires him/her to complete the full tenure of working with the organization.

## **Appendix 8: Grievance Procedure Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

The aim of this Grievance Procedure is to settle grievances or complaints fairly and it is intended to operate simply and quickly. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue at the earliest possible stage, and at each stage efforts will be made in order to avoid proceeding to the next stage and to settle the issue amicably.

If an employee has a problem with any other member of staff, and is unable to sort it out informally, the matter should be referred to his/her line-manager. You may be able to agree an informal solution between you.

Informal approaches are encouraged in the Acas Code of Practice for Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures ([www.acas.org.uk/dgcode2009](http://www.acas.org.uk/dgcode2009)). Often a quiet word or asking for support from a line manager may be all that is needed to resolve an issue.

ACAS recommends that in certain circumstances it may, with mutual agreement, be helpful to consider using an independent third party to help resolve the problem. In some cases an external mediator might be appropriate. Mediation does not decide on who is right or wrong. Nor can the parties be forced to undertake mediation – it must be a purely voluntary process. But if the issue cannot be resolved informally, the employee should be provided with the opportunity to raise a formal grievance.

If the problem is serious or remains unresolved or the employee wishes to raise the matter formally, the employee can use the formal grievance procedure.

In the case of a grievance being taken out as a counter-grievance, or in response to the start of disciplinary action, it may be appropriate to deal with both issues at the same time. If appropriate, the disciplinary procedure may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance.

#### **i. The Procedure**

Raise the grievance in writing

The employee should raise a grievance with their line manager without unreasonable delay, normally within one month of the incident (or final incident) which gives rise to the complaint.

If the grievance is against the line manager, the matter should be raised with the Chief Executive. In the case of the Chief Executive, the matter should be raised with the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Whoever deals with the grievance at the meeting, will normally be excluded from hearing any appeal.

The Acas Guide accompanying the Code of Practice recognises that small organisations may have a limited number of managers to provide alternatives to raise a grievance with. Therefore representatives of the Board of Trustees should deal with the grievance, but should wherever possible be excluded from hearing the case at an appeal.

However if this is not possible they should “make it clear that they will treat all grievances fairly and objectively even if the grievance is about something they have said or done.”

The employee must detail in writing the specific circumstance or circumstances which constitute the grievance, with dates, times, witnesses, etc. as applicable. Employees should stick to the facts and avoid insulting or abusive language.

The Acas Code also states that “where employees have difficulty expressing themselves because of language or other difficulties they may like to seek help from trade union or other employee representatives or from colleagues.”

## **ii. Invitation to a Grievance Meeting**

The line manager will invite the employee to attend a meeting, without unavoidable delay to discuss the matter.

The meeting should ideally be arranged within five working days of receiving the written grievance. The line manager will also state that the employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at the meeting.

The employee has a statutory right to be accompanied at any grievance or appeal meeting.

You must let them bring either a fellow worker, a trade union representative or official employed by a trade union. This companion can speak at the meeting on behalf of the employee, but they cannot answer questions put directly to the employee.

You may decide to also allow employees to be accompanied at any formal investigatory meetings but this is not essential under the Code.

Where the organisation employs only one worker, you may decide to allow the employee to be accompanied by a union representative or friend. Similarly you may allow them to be accompanied by a friend at any Appeal meeting.

You should also consider whether any reasonable adjustments are required for disabled employees, such as allowing a support worker or sign language interpreter to attend the meeting.

## **iii. Grievance Meeting**

Where possible, a note-taker, who must be uninvolved in the case will take down a record of the proceedings.

The line manager (or Chief Executive or Chair of the Board of Trustees as appropriate) will introduce the meeting, read out the grounds of the employee’s grievance, ask the employee if they are correct and require the employee to provide clarification regarding details of the grievance if unclear.

The employee will be given the opportunity to put forward her/his case and say how they would like to see it resolved. The employee may call witnesses and refer to any documents previously provided to the line manager (or Chief Executive or Chair).

The line manager (or Chief Executive or Chair) may question the employee and any of the employee’s witnesses.

The employee/companion will be given the opportunity to sum up but may not introduce any new material.

The meeting may be adjourned by the line manager (or Chief Executive or Chair) if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. Any necessary investigations will be carried out to establish the facts of the case. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible.

The Acas Code states: “Employers should carry out any necessary investigations, to establish the facts of the case” and that “consideration should be given to adjourning the meeting for any investigation that may be necessary.”

Ideally the person who is investigating the issue will not be the person making the final decision, particularly in serious grievance cases such as allegations about bullying and harassment. However the Code recognises that this may not always be possible for some small organisations with few managers.

The Acas guide accompanying the Code states that “it is generally good practice to adjourn a meeting before a decision is taken... This allows time for reflection and proper consideration. It also allows for any further checking of any matters raised.”

Having considered the grievance, the line manager (or Chief Executive or Chair) will give her/his decision regarding the case in writing to the employee which will normally be within five working days. If appropriate, the decision will set out what action the employer intends to take to resolve the grievance or if the grievance is not upheld, will explain the reasons. This will also include notifying the employee of her/his right of appeal and the procedure to be followed.

The Acas guide accompanying the Code warns employers to “bear in mind that actions taken to resolve a grievance may have an impact on other individuals, who may also feel aggrieved.” Any employee who is the subject of a grievance should be provided with an opportunity to respond to the complaints made against them.

#### **iv. Appeal**

If still unresolved, the employee may refer the matter, in writing, to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or if the Chair has already been involved in an earlier stage of the procedure, to the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees.

The employee wishing to appeal against a grievance decision, must do so in writing within five working days of receiving written notification of the grievance decision, stating the reasons for the appeal. Any documents submitted in support of the appeal must be attached.

Arrangements for the appeal meeting will be made by the Chair (or the Vice-Chair if appropriate) who will ensure that a note-taker is present if possible. The appeal meeting should be held without unavoidable delay. Where possible, at least two members of the Board will constitute an Appeal Panel. The trustee or trustees hearing the appeal should, if at all possible, have had no direct involvement in the case.

The employee is entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at the appeal.

The meeting may be adjourned by the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal, if it is considered necessary to undertake further investigation. The meeting will be reconvened as soon as possible. The decision of the Appeal Panel or person hearing the appeal shall be final.

**Appendix 9: Board meeting template**

*Template:*

**GEF Board Meeting Agenda**

Date: xx/xx/xx

Time: xx:xx

Location:

Type: physical/remote/hybrid

1. Agree Agenda
2. Conflicts of Interest
3. Report on activities
4. additional points
5. additional points
6. additional points
7. Review of finances
8. Date of next meeting
9. AOB

## **Strategic Approach to Communications**

### **Intro**

GEF aspires to creating a professional communications strategy. To date this has not been possible as we have allocated our limited resources elsewhere – in action and projects rather than strategies.

The result is that we now have a powerful list of achievements, and actions to communicate.

We are actively working on improving this area of our work. Currently communications are informal and ad hoc. Although we reach a wide audience with our messages we are working to have a more coherent approach and a more recognisable presence.

Below are some early notes on our ideas for that strategy, and the explanatory note on where we are intending to go.

### **Early Stage Key Areas Identification**

#### **Audience**

Identify audience for each communication. We did a workshop on this with the board in 2018.

Our policy work has a clear target audience in policy makers, but also a need to be translated for and communicated to citizens who are effected by the topics or interested in learning more.

Our education work mostly focuses its communications on schools, teachers, and a wider audience of individuals or groups interested in adult learning opportunities.

Our projects each have to develop their own communications strategies and targets for audiences. In each case it involves partners and stakeholders.

#### **Medium**

Social Media –

1. Facebook: this is such an overpopulated space that it is becoming difficult to have a voice heard and to verify the credentials of that voice. We continue to develop and use

our Facebook profile but very much focus it as a shop window for our Manch project. The target audience of the Trees on the Land project are mostly small landowners and farmers and interestingly they do not seem to engage with Facebook as much, and prefer an email or in many cases prefer a phone call.

2. Instagram: We have developed our following on Instagram with it useful for attracting partners for different projects and for spreading awareness about specific subjects. For example insta is very useful as a medium for promoting our Species of the Week, where we post a picture of a species at Manch and share information about it.
3. Twitter: This is policy focussed, and is a space for sharing policy initiatives, updates from conferences, and sharing networked data from other reliable sources and partners.

## **Messages**

We have worked on agreeing a sort of manifesto of the Green Economy Foundation, which outlines our beliefs. This is a living document, that we keep alive by writing additions on the whiteboard in the office. It includes our position on non-native trees, industrial plantations, GDP as measure of prosperity, and our support or criticisms of these things.

We continue to build a range of messages, and a coherent dialogue that will ultimately be an anthology for change, a selection of different ideas and perspectives that become the core of our clear messaging.

## **Notes on Communications Strategy:**

The first goal is to complete a strategy. We did some preparatory work on this in 2017 and 2018 but we soon realised we needed specialist skills to develop a coherent achievable strategy. We were limited by resources.

We fund raised to specifically help us cover this gap (plus a couple of other key areas). We were successful in securing funds towards the end of the year and have already started now to map our current communications.

The next step is to identify our key messages and our core audience(s).

Our goal is to be a source of information to help citizens make informed decisions on their consumption/lifestyle choices and on their political decisions. The communications to



achieve that will differ from the communications required for our other goal. That is to influence policy makers.

We want to fill the space between top down and bottom up activities. We are in a unique position to link the two. Our communication goal is to primarily achieve this.

We do this through having targeted messaging and mediums of messaging for each clear audience. Our technical policy specific messages are directed at the policy makers and come in the form of policy submissions and consultations.

Our other messaging is to an audience of bottom up actors, who are working and active in the space of achieving transition to a low carbon society and economy. For that audience we want to communicate clearly the messages on what the challenges and opportunities are for those who wish to be active.

How do we achieve that:

Our communications to the policy makers is currently strong. We achieve that through submissions, Opinions (reports from EESC), consultation responses, inputs into technical documents, preparing reports, speaking at briefings and conferences.

Our communications to activists, supporters, community groups needs to improve. We have some of the infrastructure to develop that; a good website, social media (facebook, twitter, Instagram). Cillian (CEO) has just done a Ted Talk, and we are renewing our newsletter (perhaps even to have a podcast or a blog instead), and we are having Open Days and events at Manch (and other locations) to create communication opportunities.

February 2019.