



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Corncrake/Traonach Conservation Programme

Tender-Contract for Services

Provision of services for 2 x Seasonal Contract Fieldworker

March 27th 2023 – September 29th 2023 (130 days)

Areas of operation available

- 1) Donegal (Malin Head, Fanad Head, Marblehill to Meenlaragh). Fieldworker will also cover areas where birds establish territory in the hinterland of these core areas.
- 2) Donegal (West Donegal and islands). Fieldworker will also cover areas where birds establish territory in the hinterland of these core areas and islands.

The closing time and date for receipt of quotes is:

Friday February 17th 2023



This project has received funding from the European Union's LIFE programme under Grant Agreement No. LIFE18 IPE/IE/000002.



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Introduction

The fieldworkers will work under the auspices of the Corncrake/Traonach LIFE project and in conjunction with the National Parks and Wildlife Service Corncrake/Traonach Conservation Programme. The overall objective of Corncrake/Traonach LIFE is to improve the conservation status in Ireland of the corncrake by the enhancement of the Special Protection Area (SPA) network and surrounding farmland. The Corncrake is listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC); is classed as 'Least Concern' by the IUCN Red List criteria. However, in Ireland, on account of the large decreases in both numbers and range, it is on the Red List of Conservation Concern. The most recent assessment of Corncrakes in Ireland, submitted in Ireland's report to the EU under Article 12 of the Birds Directive, notes an 85% decrease in population since 1978 and a 92% decrease in range. The birds are now only regularly found in coastal area of north and west Donegal, including several islands, the Mullet peninsula in Co. Mayo and the Connemara islands in west Co. Galway.

Changes in agricultural practices, particularly a shift to mechanised grass harvesting and early summer cutting of meadows for silage, has been a key factor in the decline of the species. Coastal corncrake populations are also reliant on habitat mosaics which incorporate areas of early and late cover (ELC) to provide refuge to the birds when growth is slow in the spring and when meadows are harvested later in the summer. A lack of ELC is a major limiting factor in the bird's ability to breed in more coastal areas as landscapes have become increasingly homogenised.

This project will take place on 8 project sites (in 9 SPAs and adjacent supporting farmland). Adjacent supporting farmland is critical to the project as circa 85% of the population occurs within the SPAs and associated hinterland. All these areas (referred to as "Corncrake catchments") will be targeted in the project. Detailed maps are available on the project website: <https://www.corncrakelife.ie/rbps-target-areas>

The project aims to deliver actions across a total of 1,000ha of its total target area of 4,300 hectares, subject to landowner agreement. It is envisioned that 50 hectares of this area will be managed as early and late cover plots which are essential for coastal corncrake populations. Habitat management will be achieved through a combination of the development and implementation of a pilot results-based payment scheme for farmers (RBPS), habitat management agreements for non-farmers, land leasing, and strategic land purchases. Conservation measures will take place on all lands within the programme managed via one of these four strategies.

The Corncrake/Traonach Conservation Programme works on behalf of the NPWS (and under the auspices of the Corncrake/Traonach LIFE project) to undertake:

- A national census of the corncrake population in the republic of Ireland
- Habitat management works to improve the status of the corncrake
- A grant scheme to reward farmers/landowners who manage grass harvesting at dates to align with the birds breeding cycle
- Research and outreach to improve knowledge of corncrake ecology
- Gather information of bird locations and habitat condition

Background

Project area and land use objectives of Corncrake/Traonach LIFE

The overall objective of Corncrake/Traonach LIFE is to improve the conservation status in Ireland of the Corncrake by the enhancement of the Special Protection Area (SPA) network and surrounding farmland. This project will take place on 8 project sites (in 9 SPAs and adjacent supporting farmland). Adjacent supporting farmland is critical to the project as circa 85% of the population occurs within the SPAs and associated hinterland. All these areas (referred to as "Corncrake catchments") will be targeted in the project.

The specific component objectives of the project are:

- securing landowner cooperation and local community involvement and support;
- improving targeting and delivery of effective conservation measures, underpinned by science;
- improving management regimes for Corncrake in project sites;
- creation and maintenance of Early and Late Cover (ELC);
- improving knowledge exchange with farmers and planners in project sites;
- promoting the Corncrake as an asset for local areas and communities

The achievement of the objectives is expected to lead to an improvement in habitat condition conducive to Corncrake population increase in the medium term. While the creation of improved habitat condition cannot in itself guarantee an increase in population, the project will strive to achieve a 20% increase in calling males across the project sites over the course of the project.

The primary driver behind the reduction in population and range of the corncrake is pressure from land uses, particularly intensification, but also land abandonment in some instances which reduces habitat quality for the birds. Damaging activities on the ground are diverse and include inappropriate grazing regimes, early season mowing, and lack of wildlife friendly mowing, grassland intensification and/or abandonment, and loss of habitat mosaics which incorporate early and late cover plots. Predation is a secondary factor but prevalent in some areas and exacerbated by sub-optimal habitat quality. These activities arise as a result of divergent messages from our broader agriculture, nature, water and climate policies. A lack of specialist knowledge and support for farmers at local level has also lead to poor outcomes from existing corncrake conservation strategies.

Key to addressing the decline of the corncrake is a comprehensive annual survey to identify bird locations and initiate measures to protect the birds.

The NPWS/Corncrake/Traonach LIFE currently seek contractors to deliver the following services:

- To work with the NPWS/Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Team in the delivery of Habitat Management works and the establishment of ELC.
- To work with the NPWS/Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Team in the management and monitoring of bird location using a standardised protocol (corncrake census)
- To assist the NPWS/Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Team and their associates on predation risk management, research and other tasks related to the day-to-day needs of the project.
- To work with the NPWS/Corncrake/Traonach LIFE team to administer habitat management Agreements and grant schemes relevant to the protection of habitats.
- To draft an annual report on the work in their target area for submission to the grant scheme and census coordinator
- To gather relevant information on land use and habitat condition
- To abide by the project Fieldworker code of conduct

Organisation of Work:

- Seasonal Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Field Workers will work under the direction of the Corncrake LIFE Project Manager, Corncrake LIFE Field Officers in Donegal/Mayo/Galway and the Corncrake Census and Grant Scheme Coordinator
- The candidate will at times be assigned work by the LIFE project team and will work as an integrated member of team during their service contract; this includes adherence to the projects data protection and privacy standards and code of conduct.
- Successful candidates will liaise at all times with the Corncrake/Traonach LIFE project team ensuring clear communication and data exchange.
- The project is considered full-time work for a 37.5 hour week, over seven days, and will involve unsociable hours especially in the census period when night time work is required.
- Daily timesheets must be kept and submitted with monthly invoicing.
- Contactors will collect data on and monitor the timing and methods of habitat management & grant scheme compliance where required by the LIFE team.
- Liaise with the Predator Control Contractors on a regular basis.
- The tender is awarded based upon an assessment of the skills of one individual for each post; no substitution or delegation is permitted.
- Where organisations wish to apply on behalf of individual employees they must specify the individual who will conduct the work and relevant skills. Individuals who are on contract will be directly accountable to Corncrake LIFE project team and not through any intermediate third party.
- The Seasonal Field Workers must provide their own vehicle, and incur all fuel and running costs and all overnight and subsistence costs.
- All costs should be included in the tender price e.g. travel, fuel, subsistence.

- The project will cover costs relating to visits to offshore islands upon preapproval from the project manager.
- They will publicise the project locally through talks, school visits, press releases, etc. (all press releases/publicity to be approved in advance with Corncrake Project Manager). Any publicity should be carried out in conjunction with the Corncrake LIFE project.
- Publicise the 'Corncrake Hotline' to generate reports from the general public.
- Carry out the Corncrake census of populations in their allocated area and any other relevant locations following established methodology.
- Fieldworkers will consult at all times with the LIFE team regarding habitat management works being considered for corncrake in their area.
- Fieldworkers will be aware of NATURA 2000 sites and their qualifying interests.
- Carry out mowing surveys to collect data on timing and methods of mowing.
- Attend **all** mowing operations to monitor grant scheme compliance and look for signs of breeding.
- Provide scheme details to the project administrator to generate payment.
- Provide regular weekly reports to the project team.
- Write reports when required and contribute towards the overall project reporting

Deliverables

Interim payments will be dependent on satisfactory progress with the following deliverables to Corncrake LIFE:

- Compliance with the work programme outlined by the project team.
- Regular update reports to Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Project Team.
- Adherence to data collection protocols
- Verification of signed timesheets
- Attendance at meetings with up to date summaries of progress, including attendance at Corncrake/Traonach LIFE meetings where required.
- Updated databases (including shape files, Excel and Access). Mapping of areas undertaken in early/late cover, habitat management, locations of birds and areas must be mapped in an agreed GIS format with the Project.
- Delivery of task in a timely, professional and efficient manner

Project specifics and details will be discussed at a project kick-off stage with the successful contractor.

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) is seeking one supplier for the requirements of this RFT.

Timescale

It is envisaged that this contract would be awarded in March 2023.

Format of the proposal

For the RFT please provide:

- A cover letter outlining suitability, experience and relevant qualifications for the role (2 pages max.)
- Total cost (excluding VAT) in € (euro) for the provision of Contract for Services for Seasonal Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Contract Fieldworker as outlined above.
- Cost should be given as a daily rate with maximum cost calculated based on the delivery of 130 days of service.
- Please provide two referees who may be contacted to confirm details within the application
- Please note that tenderers may be called to interview to confirm their application details

Qualification criteria

Tenderers must demonstrate competencies in the following:

- A good knowledge of ornithology and bird ecology
- Demonstrable knowledge and experience of the requirements of Corncrakes is desirable
- Demonstrate understanding of factors impacting on Corncrakes locally and nationally.
- Demonstrate understanding of agriculture schemes (eg. Basic Payment Schemes, EIP/Locally-Led Agri-Environmental Schemes) and conservation schemes, (e.g. Corncrake LIFE RBPS, Corncrake Grant Scheme, NPWS Farm Plan Scheme, ACRES)
- Knowledge and experience of predator control is desirable
- Knowledge and experience of habitat monitoring is desirable
- Demonstrable ability to work with the local land-owning community
- Experience of working autonomously but reporting to a central system and maintaining excellent lines of communication
- Good Report Writing and communication skills
- Updated databases (including shape files, Excel and Access).
- Knowledge of farming practices and farming for conservation is essential
- Demonstrate experience of habitat surveys and mapping using GIS is desirable.

Award Criteria

The Contract for Services will be awarded on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender. This will be evaluated based on the following:

- Demonstration of understanding of the contract requirement (30%)
- Applicants must demonstrate a good knowledge of bird ecology (in particular with Corncrake), and they must also demonstrate a history of working with the Agricultural Sector, Habitat Management and the delivery of conservations measures (30%)
- Value for money (40%)

Services Contract

- Before the services contract can be awarded, the successful tenderer will be required to supply a Tax Clearance Access Number and Tax Reference Number. It is a condition that the successful tenderer shall, for the term of such contract, comply with all EU and domestic tax laws.
- Evidence of Public Liability and Employer Liability Insurance for the Consultant will be required before a contract is awarded.
- Successful contractors must provide a safe working method statement at the time of signing contracts.

Instructions to the Supplier

Email:

julie.kearney@housing.gov.ie

Deadline

RFT must be received not later than **17th February 2023 at 15:00**. RFT that are received late will not be considered for this procurement. Queries related to the tender should be made to julie.kearney@housing.gov.ie before **17th February 2023 at 15:00**. All RFTs must be clearly marked – subject line **Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Census and Grant Scheme Fieldworkers**

Costs

All costs and expenses incurred by Tenderers relating to their participation in the procurement competition including, but not being limited to, site visits, field trails, demonstration and/or presentation shall be borne by and are a matter for discharge by the Tenderers exclusively.

All prices quoted must be all-inclusive (i.e. including but not being limited to all cost/expenses/indexation), be expressed in Euro only and exclusive of VAT. The VAT rate(s) where applicable should be indicated separately. Costs should be given as a daily rate – all inclusive.

Tenderers must confirm that all prices quoted in the Tender will remain valid for 3 months commencing from the closing date for the receipt of quotations.

Covid-19

Please note that the applicant must be compliant with the latest Government and HSE advice and guidelines on Covid-19, particularly in relation to social/physical distancing, hygiene and travel. The tenderer should consider and, where necessary, allow contingencies, for any potential impacts on project delivery of measures to control the spread of Covid-19. This should include the possibility of further restrictions on travel. Please note, this RFQ relates to entirely desk-based exercises and communications with the project team can be effectively conducted remotely. In the event that

guidance or other rulings by Government around Covid-19 prevents any work related to the contract from proceeding for any period of time, then the Contractor must inform the Client, and in agreement between Contractor and Client, the deadline for submission of contractual outputs may be extended by an appropriate period of time. The Client shall not be liable for any costs arising from such a delay. If the contract cannot be completed before its expiry date owing to Covid-19 restrictions, and the contract is extended, the payment schedule will be adjusted accordingly; final payment will not be made until the new completion date agreed between the parties and all deliverables are satisfactorily received.

General Conditions of Tender

1. This Request for Tender shall form part of the contract documents. The contract will not be concluded / take effect until 7 days after unsuccessful tenderers have been notified of the result of this tendering procedure.
2. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE will use its best efforts to hold confidential any information provided by tenderers subject to their obligation under law, including the Freedom of Information Act which came into force on 21 April, 1998. Tenderers should indicate, when tendering, what parts of their tenders are commercially sensitive and which they consider should be kept confidential should an FOI request be received. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE will consult with tenderers about any such sensitive information before making a decision on any FOI request received. Similarly, Corncrake/Traonach LIFE requires that all information provided pursuant to this invitation to tender will be treated in strict confidence by tenderers.
3. Tenderers should be aware that national legislation applies in other matters such as Official Secrets, Data Protection and Health and Safety.
4. Tenderers must have regard to statutory terms relating to minimum pay and to legally binding industrial or sectoral agreements in preparing tenders.
5. Information supplied by tenderers will be treated as contractually binding. However, Corncrake/Traonach LIFE reserves the right to seek clarification or verification of any such information.
6. Any conflicts of interest involving a tenderer must be fully disclosed to Corncrake/Traonach LIFE particularly where there is a conflict of interest in relation to any recommendations or proposals put forward by the tenderer.
7. Any registerable interest involving the tenderer and the Corncrake/Traonach LIFE members of the Government, members of the Oireachtas or their relatives must be fully disclosed in the response to this RFT, or should be communicated to Corncrake/Traonach LIFE immediately upon such information becoming known to the tenderer, in the event of this information only coming to their notice after the submission of a bid and prior to the award of the contract. The terms 'registerable interest' and 'relative' shall be interpreted as per section 2 of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1994.

8. The tender is awarded based upon an assessment of the skills of one individual for each post; no substitution or delegation is permitted. Where organisations wish to apply on behalf of individual employees they must specify the individual and skills. No substitution or delegation is permitted. Individuals who are on contract will be directly accountable to Corncrake/Traonach LIFE Project Team and not through any intermediate third party.
9. Before a contract is awarded the successful tenderer (and agent, where appropriate) will be required to promptly produce a Tax Clearance Certificate
10. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred by tenderers in the preparation of tenders or any associated work effort.
11. Responses to this RFT will be evaluated in their own right. No recognition will be given to information previously submitted.
12. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender submitted.
13. Tenders must be completed in accordance with the format specified in **Section 3**. Tenders which are incomplete will not be evaluated.
14. Any attempt by a tenderer to influence the process of tender evaluation and award of a contract through canvassing or other means shall result in that Tender being rejected. Tenderers are advised that the use of improper influence will also result in a Tender being automatically disqualified.
15. During the evaluation period clarification may be sought in writing from tenderers. Responses to requests for clarification may not materially change any of the elements of the tenders submitted. No unsolicited communications from tenderers will be entertained during the evaluation period. (A number of the most competitive tenderers may be invited to make presentations on their proposals for the purpose of elaboration, clarification and/or aiding mutual understanding. Invited tenderers must be in a position to make such a presentation if requested. Any proposed subcontractors may be required to participate in the presentation.)
16. Tenderers will treat the details of all documents supplied in connection with this request for tender and evaluation as private and confidential.
17. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE will use its best efforts to hold confidential any information provided by tenderers subject to its obligation under law, including the Freedom of Information Act which came into force on 21 April, 1998. Tenderers should indicate, when tendering, what parts of their tenders are commercially sensitive and which they consider should be kept confidential should an FOI request be received. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE will consult with tenderers about any such sensitive information before making a decision on any FOI request received. Similarly, the Corncrake/Traonach LIFE requires that all information provided pursuant to this invitation to tender will be treated in strict confidence by tenderers.
18. Tenderers should be aware that national legislation applies in other matters such as Official Secrets, Data Protection and Health and Safety.
19. Tenderers must have regard to statutory terms relating to minimum pay and to legally binding industrial or sectoral agreements in preparing tenders. Information supplied by tenderers

will be treated as contractually binding. However, Corncrake/Traonach LIFE reserves the right to seek clarification or verification of any such information.

20. Any conflicts of interest involving a tenderer must be fully disclosed to Corncrake/Traonach LIFE particularly where there is a conflict of interest in relation to any recommendations or proposals put forward by the tenderer. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE reserves the right to take whatever action it considers appropriate in the case of failure to disclose a conflict of interest or in a case of a mis-declaration of a conflict of interest.

21. Any registrable interest involving the tenderer and Corncrake/Traonach LIFE, members of the Government, members of the Oireachtas or their relatives must be fully disclosed in the response to this RFT, or should be communicated to Corncrake/Traonach LIFE immediately upon such information becoming known to the tenderer, in the event of this information only coming to their notice after the submission of a bid and prior to the award of the contract. The terms 'registrable interest' and 'relative' shall be interpreted as per section 2 of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1994.

22. Before a contract is awarded the successful tenderer (and agent, where appropriate) will be required to promptly produce a Tax Clearance Certificate or in the case of a non-resident tenderer, a statement from the Revenue Commissioners confirming suitability on tax grounds. Non-residents should contact the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Revenue Residence Section, Government Offices, Nenagh Co. Tipperary. In addition, contractors must retain records of tax reference numbers for any subcontractors where payments exceed €650 (incl.VAT).

23. Tenderers should note that the provisions of Department of Finance Circular 22/95 apply and Corncrake/Traonach LIFE, may require sight of Tax Clearance Certificates for any subcontractor where payments exceed €2,600. Forms are attainable from the following address: Office of the Revenue Commissioners, Sarsfield House, Limerick. Where a Tax Clearance Certificate expires within the course of the contract, Corncrake/Traonach LIFE reserves the right to seek a renewed certificate. All payments under the contract will be conditional on the contractor(s) being in possession of a valid certificate at all times.

24. The successful tenderer shall be responsible for the delivery of all services provided for within the contract on the basis of a fixed price agreement set at the beginning of the contract. Prices quoted in the tender cannot be increased during the currency of the tender.

25. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE retains the right to withhold payment where a contractor has failed to meet his/her contractual obligations in relation to the delivery of services to an acceptable level of quality.

26. Corncrake/Traonach LIFE will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred by tenderers in the preparation of tenders or any associated work effort.

27. The successful tenderer shall be responsible for the delivery of all services provided for within the contract on the basis of a fixed price agreement set at the beginning of the contract. Prices quoted in the tender cannot be increased during the currency of the tender. Similarly, terms and conditions cannot be altered.

28. RFT is an invitation to tender and contains no contractual offer of any kind. Any submission will be regarded as an offer by the Tenderer and not as an acceptance by the Tenderer of an offer made by Corncrake/Traonach LIFE. No contractual relationship will exist except pursuant to a written contract signed by Corncrake/Traonach LIFE and any successful Tenderer for specific services Corncrake/Traonach LIFE is under no obligation to appoint any Tenderer as a result of this competition. Tenderers should note that receipt of an offer does not guarantee appointment as a Service Provider even if that offer contains what appears to be an acceptable proposal. Submission of a proposal will not form a commitment on the part of Corncrake/Traonach LIFE to enter into a contract with any party.

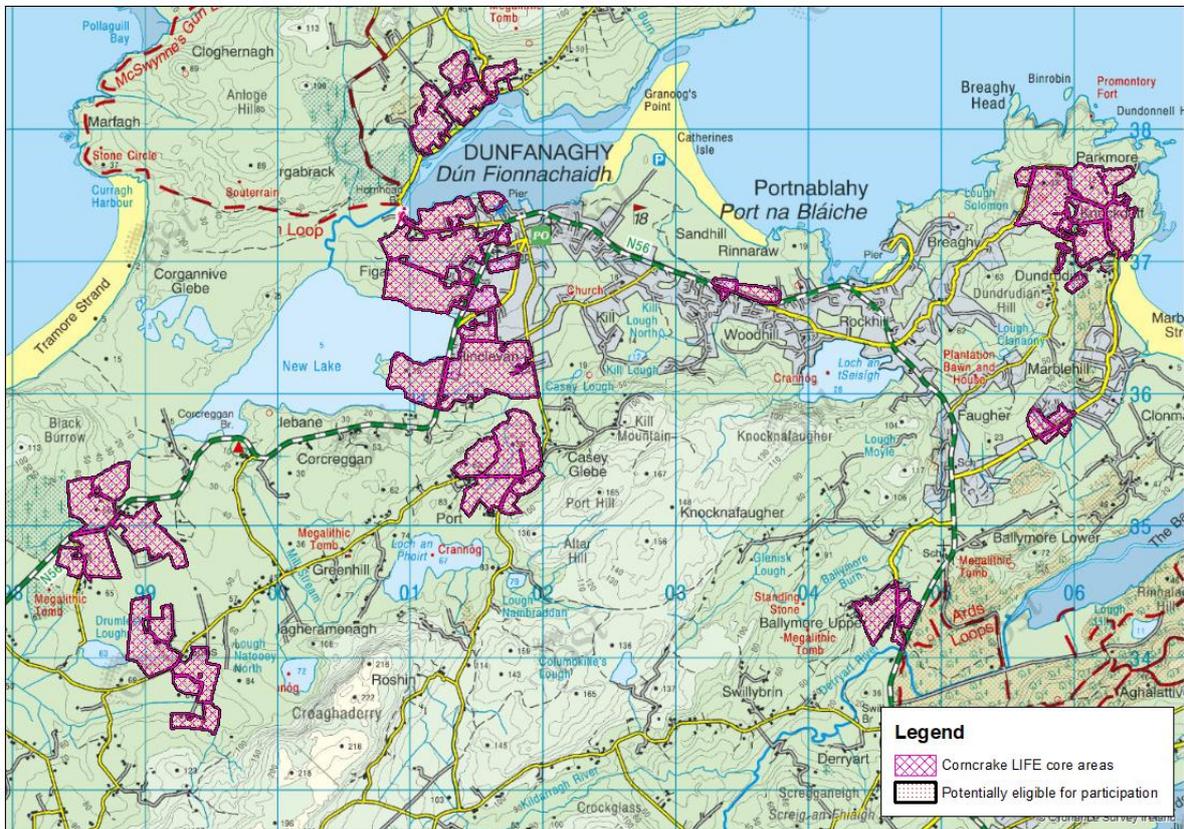
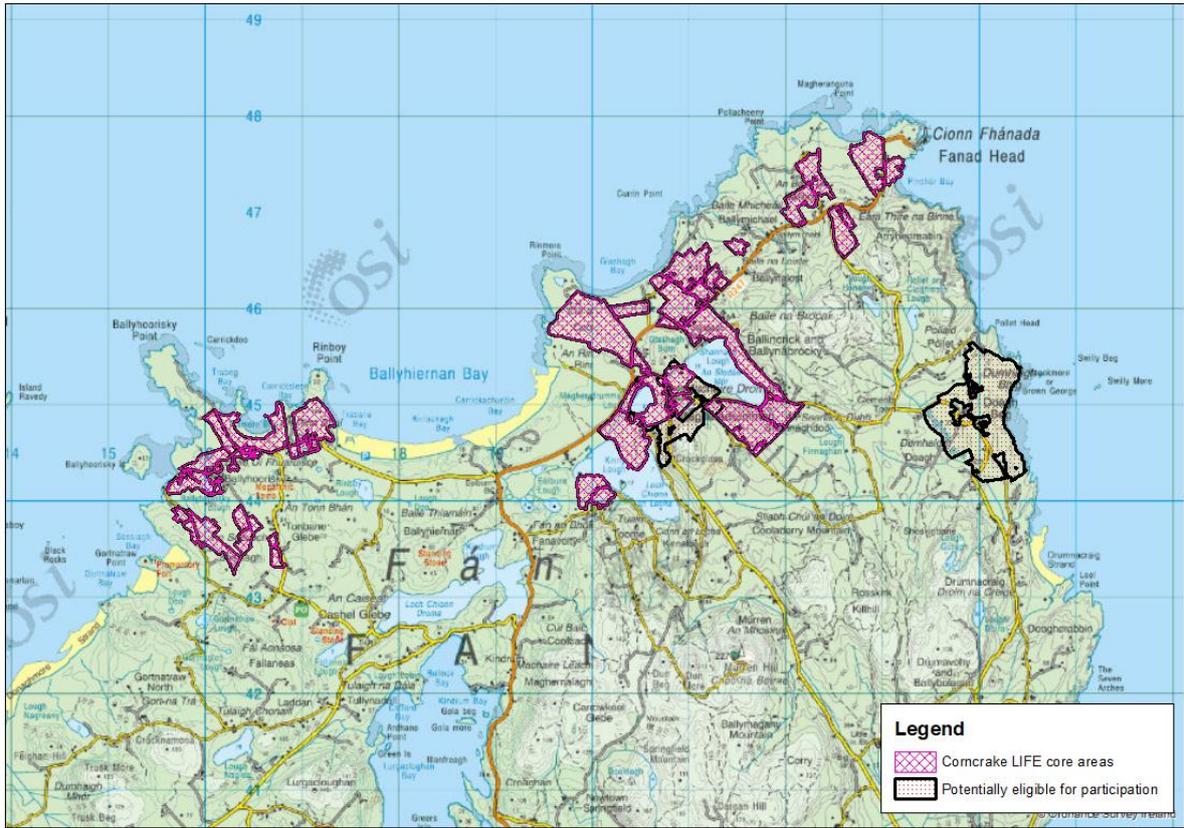
29. The successful Tenderer must abide by all Health and Safety requirements under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and any other Acts amending those Acts and with any Statutory Instruments or Regulations issued there under.

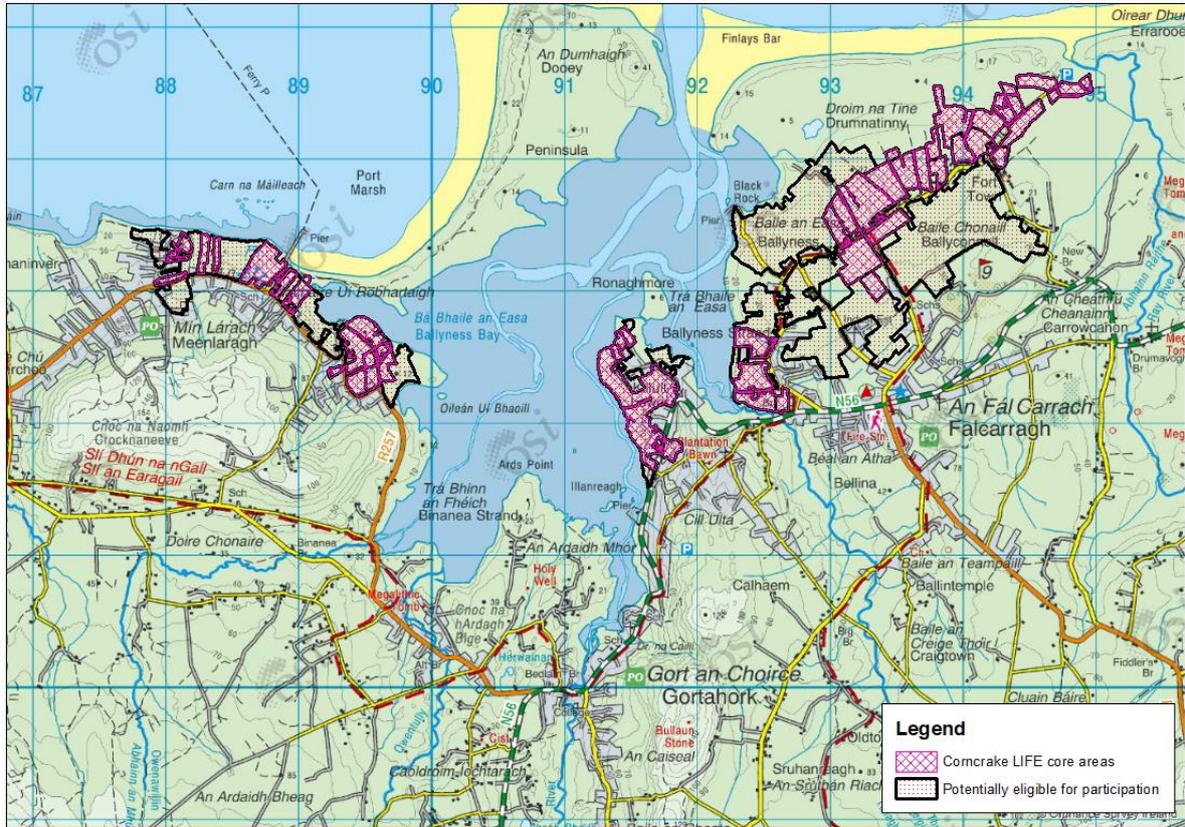
Appendix I: Maps of Areas

Donegal (Malin Head, Fanad Head, Marblehill to Meenlaragh)

Note: these are core areas but birds must also be recorded and protection measures implemented in all areas in North and West Donegal







Donegal (West Donegal and islands)

Note: Includes wider hinterland, other island (e.g. Arranmore etc.) and south Donegal should birds establish territory.

