

## Masters in Agricultural Innovation Support (MAIS) 2023 PROJECT SUMMARY

### 1. Project Details

Project title

**Co-creating diversity and inclusion training resources for delivery to staff and learners on Teagasc further education and training courses**

### 2. Project background

This project will develop and adapt diversity and inclusion training resources for delivery to equip them to deliver the diversity and inclusion training to learners on Teagasc further education and training courses.

This project builds directly upon research conducted in two MAIS projects: "Diversity and Inclusion in Agricultural Education: The experiences and perspectives of staff working in vocational agricultural education in Ireland" which was completed by Margaret Farrell in 2021 and "Identifying, supporting, and attracting a diversity of learners to Teagasc further education and training courses," which is underway as undertaken by Marc McKeon starting in September 2022.

These projects have made explicit the implicit knowledge and experiences involved when staff and students accommodate diverse requirements within the mainstream pathways through Teagasc education. They indicate that our staff and learners would benefit from customised rather than off-the-shelf diversity and inclusion training.

Diversity and inclusiveness training will help ensure that our graduates are prepared for the increasingly diverse world they will find when they return to their home farms. And it will help ensure that Teagasc education attracts a student body that is diverse in terms of gender, race, age, ability and sexual orientation and that we prepare the diversity of graduates that our industry requires.

### 3. Project aims and objectives

This project aims to develop tailored diversity and inclusion training resources for delivery to and by staff and learners on Teagasc further education and training programmes, either as a course or a toolkit of teaching and learning events.

The project objectives are:

- Determine from previous MAIS research the diversity and inclusion issues experienced by staff and learners in Teagasc full time, distance, and part time education courses
- Develop, in consultation with staff and learners, the course specification, learning outcomes, teaching methodology, and assessment for a training course addressing these issues for delivery to education staff and our learners as a course or a toolkit of teaching / learning events and activities
- Develop and adapt in collaboration with staff and learners, course materials, lesson plans, audio visual content, worksheets, self-assessment, and other materials required to deliver the training course in accordance with its specification, in accessible formats
- Pilot test the delivery of the customised Teagasc Education Diversity and Inclusion training course, assess outcomes, and make recommendations for any future delivery

### 4. Suggestions for methodology

- Literature review: review academic and cultural sources of diversity and inclusion training to determine what needs they address in their context and determine from previous MAIS research the particular diversity and inclusion issues experienced by staff and learners in Teagasc full time and part time education courses
- Immersion / Ethnographic research: establish confidential, trust relationships with staff and students at a Teagasc college and develop means of engaging them in diversity and inclusion issues, such as ice-breaker events, informal presentations, workshops, discussion groups, online quizzes etc.
- Co-creation of training course specification: in consultation with staff and learners, co-create the course specification, learning outcomes, teaching methodology, and assessment for a training course for delivery to education staff and our learners that addresses these issues
- Co-creation of training course resources: in consultation with staff and learners, co-create the course materials, lesson plan, audio visual content, worksheets, self-assessment, and other materials required to deliver the training course in accordance with its specification
- Participatory Action Research: deliver a pilot of the customised Teagasc Education Diversity and Inclusion training course to 1) staff, and 2) learners, assess outcomes, and make recommendations for any future delivery

**5. How this project links to the Teagasc KT Programme objectives and best practice in innovation support, advisory and education? (max 150 words)**

The research project accords with several Teagasc objectives:

- The Teagasc 2021 Statement of Strategy specifies an ongoing theme to "Implement the commitments to gender equality and the promotion of diversity and inclusion set out in the People Strategy." (Teagasc, 2021, p. 67)
- The 2018 "Teagasc Education Vision - meeting future needs" report specifies that Teagasc will improve support for a diversity of learners, broaden the diversity of the student body, and take actions for gender diversity. (Teagasc 2018, p. 50)
- The 2018 Teagasc People Strategy has as one of its core principles "Diversity, equality and inclusiveness enhance our core purpose." (Teagasc, 2018, p. 14)

The research project will also address developing issues within Teagasc Education. Currently, our learner population is relatively uniform, particularly in agriculture courses. But the potential learner population is increasingly diverse, including a range of nationalities, abilities, and lived experiences. And an increasing number of our learners require learning support. Diversity and Inclusion training will also help staff and learners to develop transferrable skills such as resilience, critical thinking, adaptability, and communications.

To sufficiently prepare our future farmers and to attract different kinds of people into agriculture, we need to understand diversity and provide tailored diversity and inclusion training to our staff and our learners.