

## **GMEP Year 2 Citizen Summary**

### **What is the purpose of Glastir Monitoring and Evaluation Programme?**

Glastir is the main scheme by which the Welsh Government pays for environmental goods and services whilst the Glastir Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (GMEP) evaluates the scheme's success. Commissioning of the monitoring programme in parallel with the launch of the Glastir scheme provides fast feedback and means payments can be modified to increase effectiveness. The Glastir scheme is jointly funded by the Welsh Government (through the Rural Development Plan) and the EU. GMEP will also support a wide range of other national and international reporting requirements.

### **What is the GMEP approach?**

GMEP collects evidence for the 6 intended outcomes from the Glastir scheme which are focussed on climate change, water and soil quality, biodiversity, landscape, access and historic environment, woodland creation and management. Activities include; a national rolling monitoring programme of 1km squares; new analysis of long term data from other schemes combining with GMEP data where possible; modelling to estimate future outcomes so that adjustments can be made to maximise impact of payments; surveys to assess wider socio-economic benefits; and development of novel technologies to increase detection and efficiency of future assessments.

### **How has GMEP progressed in this 2<sup>nd</sup> year?**

90 GMEP squares were surveyed in Year 2 to add to the 60 completed in Year 1 resulting in 50% of the 300 GMEP survey squares now being completed. Squares will be revisited on a 4 year cycle providing evidence of change in response to Glastir and other pressures such as changing economics of the farm business, climate change and air pollution. This first survey cycle collects the baseline against which future changes will be assessed. This is important as GMEP work this year has demonstrated land coming into the scheme is different in some respects to land outside the scheme. Therefore, future analysis to detect impact of Glastir will be made both against the national backdrop from land outside the scheme and this baseline data from land in scheme. A wide range of analyses of longterm data has been completed for all Glastir Outcomes with the exception of landscape quality and historic features condition for which limited data is available. This has involved combining data with 2013/14 GMEP data when methods allow. Overall analysis of long term data indicates one of stability but with little evidence of improvement with the exception of headwater quality, greenhouse gas emissions and woodland area for which there has been improvement over the last 20 years. Some headline statistics include: 51% of historic features in excellent or sound condition; two thirds of public rights of way fully open and accessible; improvement in hedgerow management with 85% surveyed cut in the last 3 years but < 1% recently planted; 91% of streams had some level of modification but 60% retained good ecological quality; no change topsoil carbon content over last 25 years.

### **What is innovative?**

GMEP has developed various new metrics to allow for more streamlined reporting in the future. For example a new Priority Bird species Index for Wales which combines data from 35 species indicates at least half have stable or increasing populations. The new GMEP Visual Quality Landscape Index has been tested involving over 2600 respondents. Results have demonstrated its value as an objective and repeatable method for quantifying change in visual landscape quality. A new unified peat map for Wales has been developed which has been passed to Glastir Contract Managers to improve targeting of payments when negotiating Glastir contracts. An estimate of peat soil contribution to current greenhouse gas emissions due to human modification has been calculated. Models have allowed quantification of land area helping to mitigate rainfall runoff. We are using new molecular tools to explore the effects of Glastir on soil organisms and satellite technologies to quantify e.g. small woody features and landcover change. Finally we are using a community approach to develop a consensus on how to define and report change in High Nature Value Farmland which will be reported in the Year 3 GMEP report.