

## Inaugural Local Action Group Workshop March 2026

Chair: Callum Sinclair    Rapporteur: John Kelly

### BREAKOUT SESSION SUMMARY: INVASIVE SPECIES TIMELINE MANAGEMENT

Callum Sinclair provided the overview and context from Scotland and highlighted that getting the start of the project is incredibly important.

**Key lesson is that some proposals are too short term**

### KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Lack of ownership is a crucial issue
- Establishing a project takes time, establishing partnerships
- Fragmentation is a real challenge. Different jurisdictions and different responsibilities.
- Landowner engagement will always be a challenge, permissions and complications are difficult
- Insurance can be an issues in Ireland
- Stakeholders are interested in organic approaches which may impact on decision making for control of plants
- A landscape scale approach does rely on the use of herbicides

### IDENTIFYING RESOLUTIONS

- Good practice is to define the geographic scope of a project
- We need to be outcome led, and not funding led
- Need support from County Council
- Remove the barriers
- Training up locals
- It is possible to do some great things with a small number of people. Callum doing his project with nine people across a third of Scotland
- Be systematic
- General approach is start at the top of a catchment
- Embedded staff in more local organisations
- Central equipment budgets; supervision of volunteers by organisations
- Dedicated people responsible for an area
- Partners employing staff can help central agencies overcome stakeholders trust challenges
- Engagement with Tidy Towns to include invasive species officially
- A framework for setting local priorities will be needed. What should projects target – earlier in the invasion process, later for the well established
- Good data is needed to show a reduction in herbicide use

### EXAMPLE PROJECTS

- Connemara – Dulra project
- ACRES

-pilot sites for islands

- eight areas from Donegal to Kerry

- PhD studentship at QUB looking at controlling Japanese knotweed with liquid Nitrogen
- LAWPRO have used drones to survey invasive plants
- Kildare Himalayan Balsam project –being driven by the community and supported by a consultant

#### KEY IDEAS

- We need partnership approaches to catchment management, the discussion and actions need to be framed appropriately. The public sector can drive the vision and the change.
- Reframe the cost / benefit analysis. Even if a project is on private land, the public will benefit.
- Governance will also be a key consideration.
- Do we have the funding mechanisms ready to drive the change we need to see.
- We need to find the right approach for Ireland and Northern Ireland to design effective long-term projects.
- Trust is key! Community engagement is going to be critical.