

## **Knowledge Transfer Groups - Frequently Asked Questions**

***N.B. The following responses are issued without prejudice to the  
Terms & Conditions of the Knowledge Transfer measure***

### **Participant**

#### **Q. How do I apply for the Knowledge Transfer Programme?**

A. You can apply for the programme by contacting any Agricultural Advisers that are approved Knowledge Transfer Facilitators. There is a list of approved KT Facilitators, and their contact details, available on the DAFM website.

#### **Q. When is the start date for the scheme?**

A. The Scheme is open for applications from 19<sup>th</sup> May, to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 – through the approved Knowledge Transfer Facilitators only.

#### **Q. Who is considered a new member?**

A. A new member is a person who has not participated in previously DAFM funded discussion group programme for the sector.

#### **Q. Will there be a call for new participants after the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016?**

A. Participants apply for this programme through approved KT Facilitators (Agricultural Advisors) prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016. New applications will not be accepted into the programme after that date.

#### **Q. Will funding be available for actions recommended under the Farm Improvement Plan?**

A. No - the focus of this programme is on advice from the Adviser (Facilitator) and Farm Peers, as well as sharing of knowledge and experience in a group setting. Funding may however be available under other DAFM schemes.

#### **Q. Why are inspections part of the programme?**

A. Funding for the programme is provided by the EU Commission and the Irish Exchequer. In common with other DAFM schemes audits and inspections are carried out to ensure that the scheme is administered correctly in order to meet the overall scheme objectives.

#### **Q. Do participants have to sign up a Nominee to attend on their behalf?**

A. While not compulsory all Participants are advised to have a nominee to attend meetings on

their behalf and therefore gain meeting credits, this should be submitted by the application date.

**Q. What name does a nominee sign in as?**

A. A nominee signs in under their own name and not that of the participant.

**Q. Can a nominee join the programme at any stage?**

A. No – a nominee cannot be a participant, and a nominee must be nominated by the participant on applying for the programme.

**Q. Do I have to hold a meeting on my farm?**

A. Participants are not obliged to host meetings on every farm. However, the arrangement for meetings will be agreed between the participants and the facilitators. The location of the discussion should be held in the most appropriate place for the topic. For example, farm progression may be appropriate to a town hall where as farm walks would be more appropriate to practical matters related to the farm.

**Q. Do I need to maintain the animals for the lifetime of the programme?**

A. Yes the overall number of animals needs to be maintained for the lifetime of the programme. However, new animals purchased during the course of the programme can be substituted for animals that are sold or die throughout the programme years.

**Q. What if I am a new entrant in any sector, with a new herd number and don't meet the stocking criteria for the programme?**

A. New entrants to any sector who can provide proof of ownership of the stocking level will be deemed to meet this eligibility criterion. Such evidence should be provided through your KT Facilitator on application.

**Q. Will I be penalised by the inactions of the other participants in the group?**

A. Participants will not be penalised by the inactions of the participants in the group. However, there needs to be a 60% attendance at all meetings for it to be considered valid. Therefore there is an onus on all participants to attend or give the Adviser (Facilitator) adequate notice of non attendance at meetings.

**Q. Will I be penalised if I don't act on the advice given over the course of the programme?**

A. No - participants will not be penalised in this instance. This programme centers on giving the participant advice in relation to best practice. The advice is delivered to give farmers the

tools to make the best decisions on their enterprise, which they may or may not be able to implement at that time.

**Q. Is the health and safety meeting compulsory for the participant?**

A. Attendance at the dedicated Health and Safety meeting is not compulsory for the participant. However, Health and Safety is an essential component of the Farm Improvement Plan (FIP). This does not replace a farmer's statutory health and safety requirements.

**Q. Who are considered as the additional expertise?**

A. Under ranking and selection facilitators may have selected additional expertise for a group. Any person with demonstrable expertise or experience in a specific area relevant to the sector is considered as additional expertise for that sector.

**Q. Is breeding a requirement of the programme?**

A. A Breeding Plan is a requirement of the Farm Improvement Plan for some sectors of the Programme. The advice delivered equips farmers to make the best decisions on their enterprise, which they may or may not be able to implement at that time.

**Q. I am awaiting a herd number; can I apply for the programme?**

A. You may apply through your KT facilitator for the programme with evidence of your application to DAFM for a new herd number.

**Q. Are nominees allowed attend meetings on behalf of participant?**

A. Yes. Nominees aged over 18 years are allowed to attend meetings on behalf of participants provided they are registered as the nominee at the time of application the programme.

**Q. Where there are two directors in a farm company can both be participants?**

A. One participant per company is permitted.

**Meetings**

**Q. How many group meetings must a participant attend to receive the maximum payment available?**

A. The participant must attend 5 meetings or 4 meetings and 1 DAFM approved KT Event and satisfy the criteria outlined in the Terms and Conditions in order to receive payment.

**Q. How many group meetings does an Adviser (Facilitator) need to have?**

A. DAFM approved facilitators shall hold a minimum of FIVE meetings per Knowledge Transfer Group per year up to a maximum of TEN meetings. It is anticipated that an Adviser (Facilitator) will have to hold seven or eight meetings per group per year, in order to ensure that all members meet their commitments.

**Q. Can I just cancel a meeting on the day?**

A. A minimum of 5 hours notice cancellation is required by DAFM before the time scheduled as Inspection staff may already be on the road to inspect a meeting. There is an onus on all participants to give the Adviser (Facilitator) adequate notice if they cannot attend the meeting. This should be discussed at the first meeting of the group as this can also impact on participants in relation to the 60% attendance requirement.

**Q. Can 2 or more groups join together for a particular meeting?**

A. Joint/Combined meeting are not permitted under the Knowledge Transfer Programme.

**Joint Herd Numbers & Partnerships**

*Please note Partnerships relates to DAFM approved Registered Farm Partnerships (RFP)*

**Q. In the case of Joint Herd numbers where the herd owner was previously in BTAP/STAP/Dairy Efficiency Scheme etc., is this considered a new member?**

A. Where one party in a joint herd number has not previously participated in a DAFM discussion group in that sector he/she will qualify as a new member.

**Q. If two or more people are registered on the one herd number, who can be a participant?**

A. Where a number of people are registered on the herd number only one person can participate. They cannot alternate over the course of the Knowledge Transfer Programme. However, one could act as the participant and another as the nominee. One payment is due.

**Q. If two or more people are registered in an RFP, who can be a participant?**

A. In a RFP where only one partner brought land to the partnership, either of the partners is eligible to apply. One payment will issue.

Multiple applications will be accepted for each partner that brings land to the partnership. Payment will be due on each application.

**Q. Who qualifies as a participant in a partnership?**

A. ANY participant in a RFP who has brought land to the partnership (declared on the appropriate years BPS application) is eligible to apply for this scheme. Not all partners have to apply for the scheme. Each participant must complete a Farm Improvement Plan on the land parcel they brought to the RFP.

Where more than one partner in a RFP is participating in the same sector of the Programme they must be a member of the same Knowledge Transfer Group.

**Q. How do you complete a Farm Improvement Plan for a Partnership?**

A. Each qualifying participant of the RFP is required to complete a FIP on their holding. As

with all other participants, the advice given must **be** tailored to the individual enterprise.

### **Group**

**Q. If an adviser registers a group with 18 people and subsequently finds that less than 18 but more than 12 wish to participate. Is this OK?**

A. Provided the group is within the 12 – 18 member range there will not be a problem.

**Q. If an adviser registers a group with 12 people and subsequently finds that less than 12 to participate. Is this OK?**

A. No. Exceptions to the 12 – 18 range for group members were only considered prior to ranking and selection (RASS). A group that fails to fill its proposed numbers following RASS will not be validated.

**Q. During the programme if a group drops to below 12, what happens?**

A. If during the scheme numbers drop to below 12 members the Adviser (Facilitator) **MUST** notify the Innovation Unit at [KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie). DAFM will then consider on a case by case basis to determine if the group is viable.

**Q. Can group numbers be increased to more than 18?**

A. No – submissions for numbers outside of the 12-18 size were considered at group registrations stage. Unless a group has already been approved to be larger than 18 it is not permitted at this stage.

**Q. There are 14 in a group and 3 of them do not meet the attendance criteria. Now 11 meet the criteria but this is less than 12 and what are implications there?**

A. For the three individuals who have not met the attendance requirements a reduced payment may issue (see penalty schedule). There are no implications for the Group as a whole unless the attendance has dropped below 60% or the group membership is below 12. Where the Adviser (Facilitator) becomes aware of this issue, the Adviser (Facilitator) should immediately contact the Innovation Unit at [KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie) to discuss the issue.

**Q. Where there are 18 participants in group is it permitted for non members to attend meetings?**

A. No. The programme has been designed on the basis of an Adviser (Facilitator) managing groups of between 12 and 18 members, including the meetings for those groups. Nominees are the only people that can attend in addition to participants. The exception to this is a meeting on progression planning where it would be appropriate for a successor to be present with the participant.

**Q. Will the 60% attendance at meetings rule be based on the final number participating or the number originally applied for?**

A. It will be based on the number of approved participants in the KT Group.

**Q. How many groups can participants join?**

A. Knowledge Transfer Participants can join a maximum of 2 groups. However, there will be a reduced payment linked to the 2<sup>nd</sup> group. The primary sector is determined by the chronological order of the registration of the participant and a €750 payment per annum will apply to this application. The secondary sector is determined as above and a €375 payment per annum will apply to this application. (All payments are subject to penalties).

**Q. Can a farmer join a group next year?**

A. Once a group has been submitted to the DAFM by the Adviser (Facilitator) by the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 no new entrants will be allowed.

#### **Adviser (Facilitator)**

**Q. When registering my group participants what is the difference between validate and submit?**

A. The validate button triggers a check on the herd number. The application remains in draft format until you press the Submit button. It is only on pressing submit that the group is actually registered with DAFM. This has particular significance for primary and secondary group status.

**Q. Can an Adviser (Facilitator) substitute for another Adviser (Facilitator)?**

A. No – if an Adviser (Facilitator) cannot hold one of their meetings they should cancel the meeting on the KT online system giving at least 5 hours notice.

**Q. Will an Adviser (Facilitator) have further opportunities to apply to be a Knowledge Transfer Facilitator?**

A. Not at the present time. The closing date for Advisers (Facilitators) to apply to become Knowledge Transfer Facilitators was 22nd March 2016.

**Q. If an Adviser (Facilitator) applies for 4 groups but only fills two groups is this a problem?**

A. No. Any such groups that fail to meet the scheme criteria will be rejected.

**Q. If an Adviser (Facilitator) applies for 4 groups and can now only fill two groups but can also fill groups in other sectors is this a problem?**

A. Facilitators are only permitted to run groups for the groups for which an approval notice issued after completion ranking and selection.

**Q. What happens if an approved Adviser (Facilitator) leaves their advisory role? Can a colleague with a similar qualification take over these groups?**

A. While it is expected that a KT Facilitator will run the KT Group for the three years of the Programme DAFM accepts exceptional circumstances may arise where the Adviser (Facilitator) can no longer continue in this role. In this event the Adviser (Facilitator) should immediately contact the Innovation Unit at [KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie). Each situation will be considered on its own merits. Any Adviser (Facilitator) taking over a group would have to meet any RASS criteria or undertakings and could not exceed his/her maximum of 5 KT groups.

**Q. What do I do if I, as an Adviser (Facilitator), get approval for a group with new entrants but some of these fail to take part in the scheme reducing the new entrant participation below 20%.**

A. Any proposed group that has received any extra credit under RASS must follow through on those undertakings. The Department has a responsibility to ensure that such commitments are met and also in consideration of those who may have failed to have groups approved.

**Q. What does an Adviser (Facilitator) do if a group member drops out?**

A. Where an Adviser (Facilitator) becomes aware that a participant has left the group, the Adviser (Facilitator) should immediately contact the Innovation Unit at [KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:KTInformation@agriculture.gov.ie).

**Q. Where a name has been added to herd number subsequent to setting up the KT Group can either party then attend the meetings?**

A. No. The person who initially registers as a participant is the only possible attendee with the exception of nominees who have been selected at application stage by each participant.

### **Payments**

**Q. How much will each participant be paid?**

A. Each participant is due €750 per annum for their primary sector and €375 per annum for the secondary sector over the three year Programme subject to fulfilling the Terms & Condition of the scheme. On receipt of funding from DAFM the Adviser (Facilitator) reimburses the participant directly.

**Q. How much will each Adviser (Facilitator) be paid?**

A. Each Adviser (Facilitator) is due €500 per participant in the primary sector and €250 per annum in the secondary sector subject to fulfilling the Terms & Condition of the scheme.

**Q. How will the payment to the participant be made?**

A. Under EU Regulation 1305/2013 the KT Facilitator is the beneficiary of the measure and payment for each participant will issue to him. Once DAFM has confirmed that this payment has passed on to the participant the Advisers (Facilitators) payment will issue then.

**Q. When are payments made to participants?**

A. Once a participant has satisfied all the requirements of the Terms and Conditions payments will be made on an annual basis to the participant. Verification checks will commence after the 31<sup>st</sup> May for each scheme year.

**Q. Why is there a reduced payment for the Secondary Sector?**

A. The reduced payment for the secondary sector reflects the exclusion of those components of the Farm Improvement Plan which overlap between sectors. Secondary sector participants are not required to complete either the health and safety or the financial element of the secondary FIP.

**Q. Why is the Adviser (Facilitator) being paid for the participant and not the participant directly?**

A. This is a requirement under EU Regulation 1305/2013 which provides that the Knowledge Transfer Provider is the beneficiary.

**Farm Improvement Plan (FIP)**

**Q. Who completes the Farm Improvement Plan (FIP)**

A. The Adviser (Facilitator) and the participant complete the FIP together. This should be done on a one to one basis on the participant's farm.

**Q. When will the Farm Improvement Plan (FIP) system be available and what is the deadline for completing the FIP?**

A. Facilitators will be notified when the DAFM FIP module is available for update. However, some elements can be started immediately and updated on the DAFM FIP system when available e.g. E-Profit Monitor.

**Q. Is soil sampling compulsory?**

A. While Soil sampling is not compulsory for the FIP; in order to get tailored advice on the farm's grasslands it will facilitate informed recommendations.

**Q. Will the FIP be inspected?**

A. Yes – the FIP is a critical element of this programme and accordingly will be subject to inspection. The focus of such inspections will be to verify completion and to ensure that it is specific to the individual farm.



**Q. When does the Farm Improvement Plan have to be completed?**

A. The Farm Improvement Plan has to be completed by the end of the scheme year. It is expected that initially the focus of the KT groups will be get to know each other, set group parameters, identify topics of common interest as well as building up trust between group members.

**Q. For what year does the E-Profit monitor have to be completed?**

A. For payment validation purposed at the end of year 1 an E-Profit monitor for 2015 or 2016 will be accepted. For the 3 scheme years of the KT Programme the profit monitor must for a consecutive pattern i.e. 2015/2016/2017 or 2016/2017/2018.

**Q. If you have two Advisers (Facilitators) for two different sectors who completes each element of the Farm Improvement Plan?**

A. In this instance the Adviser (Facilitator) for the primary sector completes a full Farm Improvement Farm. The facilitator for the secondary group completes all the components specific to the second sector with the exception of the health and safety and the financial elements.

**DAFM approved KT Events**

**Q. How can I apply for a DAFM approved KT Event?**

A. Applications to host a DAFM approved KT Events must be made to the Innovation Unit on the KT4 form by email [KTEvents@agriculture.gov.ie](mailto:KTEvents@agriculture.gov.ie) at least 15 working days prior to the proposed event. Details of approved DAFM approved KT Events will be published on the Department website.

**Q. How many DAFM approved KT Events can participants attend?**

A. A participant can attend as many DAFM approved KT Events as they wish, however they will only gain credit for attending one DAFM approved KT Event per sector per annum in lieu of a meeting.

**Q. How does a participant gain credit for attending a DAFM approved KT Event?**

A. In order to gain credit for attendance at the DAFM approved KT Event the participant must register with DAFM official during a pre-determined time, providing details of their herd number. This information will be available on the DAFM website prior to the event. No late registration will be accepted and credit at the event will not be given without the required documentation being completed. Identification may be requested by DAFM officials from either the participant or the nominee.

**Q. What i.d. will be requested at DAFM approved KT Events?**

A. The usual photo i.d. will be sufficient i.e. driving licence etc. if requested.

**Q. Does a participant sign an attendance sheet with their Adviser (Facilitator) at a DAFM approved KT Event?**

A. No – participants must register with the designated DAFM official. They will not gain credit for a DAFM approved KT Event and a meeting on the same day.

### **Vet**

**Q. Who pays the vet for completion of the Animal Health Measure under the Farm Improvement Plan?**

A. The farmer pays the vet for the Animal Health Measure aspect of the Farm Improvement Plan.

**Q. Why is the Vet paid by the farmer rather than through the KT Programme?**

A. The vet payment is not an eligible cost under article 14 of EU regulation 1305/2013. Therefore, the vet cost falls due to the participant.

**Q. When will the list of KT Approved Vets be available?**

A. DAFM are currently compiling a list of KT approved Vet and will notify facilitators when available. It will also be published on the DAFM website.

**Q. Can I use my own Vet for the Animal Health Measures of the Farm Improvement Plan?**

A. If they are a KT approved Vet your own vet can be used for the animal health measures FIP.

**Q. What is the price of the Vet for the participant?**

A. This is a matter between the farmer and the vet.

**Q. How long should the animal health measures take the Vet?**

A. It is expected that this element should take the Vet 2 hours.

### **Sector Specific FAQ**

**Q. Can participants transfer between sectors?**

A. No, the participant is expected to remain in their chosen group and sector for the duration of the KT Programme. However, if the participant meets all the eligibility criteria as set out in the Terms and Conditions they can join 2 sectors at the beginning of the Programme.

### **Dairy**

**Q. Is a previous participant in BTAP/STAP considered a new member for KT Dairy?**

A. Yes, they are considered a new participant in the Dairy Sector. Note however, these

participants would not be considered new members for a Beef or a Sheep group etc.

**Q. Does the same deadlines and cancellation policy apply for the Cell Check workshops as for meetings?**

A. No – due to the nature of the training this cannot be changed at short notice you will have to contact Animal Health Ireland for any issues you have in relation to Cell Check dates.

**Q. Will there be a cost to and a certificate for the Cell Check workshops?**

A. Yes there is a cost to the participant of €40 for cell check. However, this will ordinarily be deducted from Co-op payment rather than the participant paying for the workshop directly. Participants sign an authorization for this at the workshop. Certificates will be given for this workshop.

**Q. Do you have to sign up to ICBF, and if so when?**

A. Participants will have to be signed up to ICBF to complete their Farm Improvement Plan (FIP). The sooner you sign up to ICBF the sooner that element of the FIP can be completed.

**Beef**

**Q. If you only have calves can you apply for programme?**

A. As set out in the terms and conditions farmers with 2 beef breed animals are eligible to apply.

**Q. Can Beef farmers join a Beef KT Group for year one and switch to a dairy group for year two and three when they enter dairying?**

A. No. A farmer can join two group(s) within different sector and whichever group he joins, he commits to remaining in for the three years of the Programme.

**Q. Do Knowledge Transfer Beef participants have to be participants in the Beef Data & Genomics Programme?**

A. No.

**Q. Do you have to sign up to ICBF, and if so when?**

A. Participants will have to be signed up to ICBF to complete their Farm Improvement Plan (FIP). The sooner you sign up to ICBF the sooner that element of the FIP can be completed.

**Sheep**

**Q. Do you have to sign up to ICBF, and if so when?**

A. Participants will have to be signed up to ICBF to complete their Farm Improvement Plan (FIP). The sooner you sign up to ICBF the sooner that element of the FIP can be completed.

## **Equine**

### **Q. What if a mare fails an inspection?**

A. If a mare fails inspection HSI will continue to include the Mare in the same entry class for the purpose of Knowledge Transfer Programme.

### **Q. Can a thoroughbred horse be included?**

A. No for this programme Sports Horses are the target group.