The Water Forum

AN FÓRAM UISCE

Annual Report 2020

Looking after Ireland's water resources

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Chairperson's Address

I am pleased to introduce the 4th Annual Report of An Fóram Uisce – The Water Forum.

THIS PAST YEAR has been a most unusual one, in some ways frustrating but also humbling with the abundance of care, sacrifice and innovation shown by front line workers. An Fóram Uisce would like to offer condolences to those people who have lost loved ones, colleagues and friends to Covid-19.

Members of An Fóram, their organisations, agencies and stakeholders with whom An Fóram interacts were not slow to innovate either, and business progressed very much as normal, albeit virtually. With travel time savings it could be said great efficiencies were also realised while opportunities to meet face to face were missed. At the beginning of the year the Research, Communications and Education strategies were each ratified by the members, thereby setting out a focused work programme for the year.

In the first quarter, An Fóram made submissions on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) Article 17 and the draft National Marine Planning Framework.

There needs to be an integrated approach to managing the interconnectivity of Ireland's river catchments, its transitional waters and its marine waters.

One of the key recommendations made by An Fóram is the need for policy integration within and between these strategies for a more holistic approach. *'There needs to be an integrated approach to managing the interconnectivity of Ireland's river catchments, its transitional waters and its marine waters'.* Such an approach will weaken governance silos, foster integration and collaboration to more effectively manage the environmental status of Ireland's near shore, transitional and marine environments.

While work on the implementation of the second River Basin Management Plan is progressing the latest EPA Report EPA(2019) Water Quality in Ireland 2013-2018[1] records a declining trend in water quality and reports the largest impacts coming from intensive agriculture, nitrogen in the southeast and phosphorous in the heavy clay soil regions of the country. To explore the Common Agricultural Policy reforms needed to optimise water quality returns from agriculture, the Forum commissioned a desk research study on the matter. Dr Charles Larkin completed the work and presented his findings for the consideration of academics, policy makers and stakeholders in an online webinar in December. We would like to thank the speakers for their time and deliberations on the topic and the contributions of the attendees at the meeting. The discussion is an important part of the discourse needed to identify the requirements necessary to facilitate farmers in the protection and remediation of the natural environment, while they can continue to make a living and support the rural economy.

1 EPA Report EPA(2019) Water Quality in Ireland 2013-2018. Report by the Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/waterqua/Water%20Quality%20in%20Ireland%202013-2018%20(web).pdf

Building on the Integrated Catchment Management approach and using the river catchment as the landscape management unit, actions that improve water quality can have benefits for biodiversity and climate.

An Fóram made a detailed submission on the Significant Water Management Issues consultation in preparation for the draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The submission was informed by the Forum's Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management (FILLM) . In recognition of the fact that all natural ecosystems (atmospheric systems, geosystems and ecosystems) are interconnected and interdependent, managing these systems in a holistic way will achieve environmental outcomes in all spheres. Building on the Integrated Catchment Management approach and using the river catchment as the landscape management unit, actions that improve water quality can have benefits for biodiversity and climate. Using the FILLM methodology, these synergies can be identified as agencies, stakeholders and communities work together in a collaborative way for more effective environmental outcomes.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members of An Fóram for their dedication, commitment and contribution to the work programme in difficult circumstances over the past year. I would like to express a particular word of thanks to those members whose terms came to an end during the year and also to welcome our new members. An Fóram is the only statutory stakeholder body with a remit for water quality and its central role in public engagement and consultation is widely acknowledged.

I wish to extend my deepest thanks to the officials in the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage; the Environmental Protection Agency, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities, Irish Water, the Local Authority Waters Programme and Tipperary County Council.

I would also like to thank the staff of An Fóram – Mr Donal Purcell, Dr Gretta Mc Carron, Dr Angelos Alamanos, Dr Triona Mc Grath and Ms Martina Ryan. A special word of thanks to Dr Alec Rolston who stepped down as Head of Research in An Fóram to take up a new post in Australia.

Dr. Tom Collins
Chairperson

Introduction to An Fóram Uisce

An Fóram Uisce (The Water Forum) was established on a statutory basis in June 2018, in accordance with the Water Services Act 2017. An Fóram has advisory roles in relation to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Irish Water, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and the Water Policy Advisory Committee.

AN FÓRAM IS the only statutory body representative of all stakeholders with an interest in the quality of Ireland's water bodies. Consisting of 26 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connection to issues relating to water quality and also public water consumers. Approximately 50 different organisations were involved in the nomination of members.

The Water Services Act 2017 provided the statutory basis for An Fóram. The Act also provided for the dissolution of the Public Water Forum (whose remit was primarily concerned with issues pertinent to Irish Water and the Regulator) and the National Rural Water Services Committee (the committee for addressing issues regarding rural water), with their functions being incorporated into An Fóram.

An Fóram provides an opportunity for stakeholders to debate and analyse a range of issues with regard to water quality, rural water concerns, issues affecting customers of Irish Water and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021. As an independent entity, An Fóram has discretion to determine its own work programme and means of communicating its views and analysis.

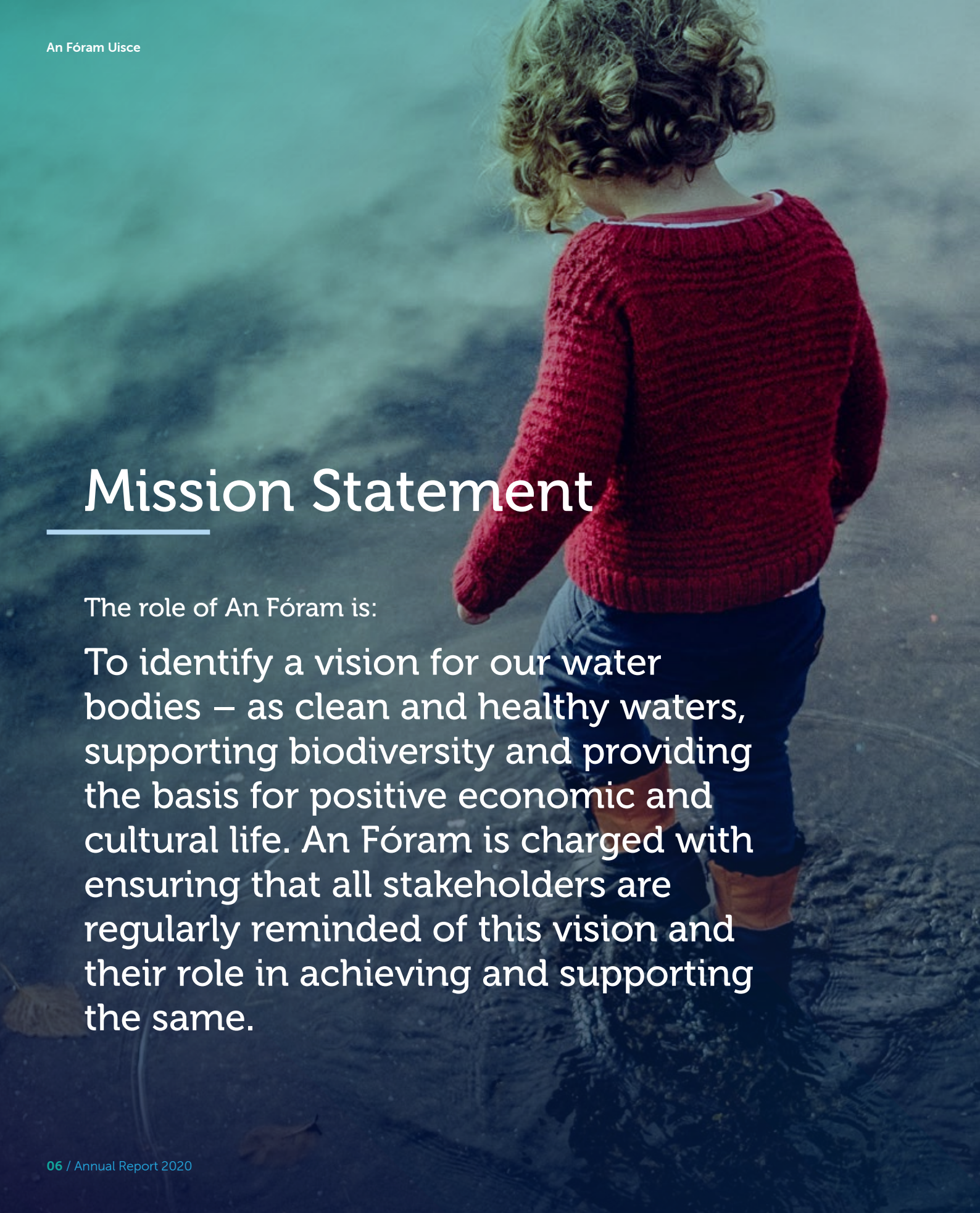
Dr Tom Collins, our Chairperson, was previously the Chair of the Public Water Forum and a former Chair of the National Rural Water Monitoring Committee.

Its work is supported by an executive team including: Senior Executive Officer: Donal Purcell; Research Lead, Dr Triona McGrath; and Communications and Education Lead, Dr Gretta McCarron. In October 2020, Dr Angelos Alamanos joined the team as a post-Doctoral researcher based at Dundalk Institute of Technology. Martina Ryan provides administration support.

Further information on the work of An Fóram Uisce is available at **www.thewaterforum.ie**

26 members

50 organisations



Mission Statement

The role of An Fóram is:

To identify a vision for our water bodies – as clean and healthy waters, supporting biodiversity and providing the basis for positive economic and cultural life. An Fóram is charged with ensuring that all stakeholders are regularly reminded of this vision and their role in achieving and supporting the same.

An Fóram will provide a unifying platform for multiple and sometimes competing interests to work together in a collaborative manner, and drawing on each other's expertise and experience, addressing the many challenges to the vision.

An Fóram also has a role in inspiring, informing, educating and challenging all stakeholders in matters relevant to this vision.

To achieve its vision:

An Fóram will support the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan and will actively monitor progress. If and when required, An Fóram will provide positive critical analysis of progress and issues which are of concern or which could compromise achieving our vision in relation to clean and healthy waters.

Based on its understanding of the vision and having regard to its interactions with stakeholders, An Fóram is responsible for drafting recommendations in relation to the on-going development of national policies and strategies in relation to all water issues. We work with all stakeholders and state agencies to achieve the common and shared goal as contained in the River Basin Management Plan of restoring our waters to good status.

Clean Waters

Vibrant Biodiversity

Healthy Communities

Strong Economy

An Fóram Uisce Membership

An Fóram has 26 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connections to issues relating to water quality and also public water consumers. Approximately 50 different organisations were involved in the nomination of members to the Forum.

Chairperson
Tom Collins

Agriculture
Denis Drennan, ICMSA
Dominic Cronin, ICOS
Paul O'Brien, IFA
Derrie Dillon, Macra na Feirme

Angling and water sports
Martin McEnroe, Angling
Tim Butter, Water sports

Business
Neil Walker, IBEC

Community and voluntary
Issy Petrie, St. Vincent de Paul
Gerald Quain, Irish Rural Link

Consumers
Keith Hyland
Connie Rochford
Laurie Kearon

Education
Suzanne Linnane, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Environment
Bernadette Connolly, Cork Env. Forum
Charles Stanley Smith, Environment Pillar
Elaine McGoff, An Taisce
Ollan Herr, Zero Waste Alliance
Sinead O'Brien, SWAN

Forestry
Brendan Fitzsimons, Tree Council of Ireland

Rivers trusts
Siobhan Ward, Moy Rivers Trust

Rural water
Barry Deane, NFGWS
Jean Rosney, NFGWS

Social housing
David Wright, ICSH

Tourism
Tim Fenn, Irish Hotels Federation

Trade unions
Liam Berney, ICTU

Since 2019, nomination requests to member organisations have sought the names of two nominees (one male and one female). As of November 2020, 37% of Plenary Committee members are women; 50% of the Water Services Standing Committee and 38% of the Catchment Management Standing Committee members are women.

We would like to thank Dr Tom Harrington of the Maigue Rivers Trust who made a very valuable contribution to the work of An Fóram during his membership and also to Kevin Ryan who ably represented Social Housing.

We would like to welcome Issy Petrie, Paul O'Brien and Siobhan Ward who joined the Forum in 2020 and wish them every success in their roles.

Meetings of An Fóram 2020

An Fóram Uisce held the following plenary meetings during 2020

14th January – Aisling Hotel, Dublin

18th February – Ashling Hotel, Dublin

7th April – Virtual meeting

26th May – Virtual meeting

24th July – Virtual meeting

5th September – Virtual meeting

20th October – Virtual meeting

23rd November – Virtual meeting

Presentations made to An Fóram Uisce Plenary

January 2020
Marine Environment Section, Water Division, Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government
Presentation regarding the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Consultation

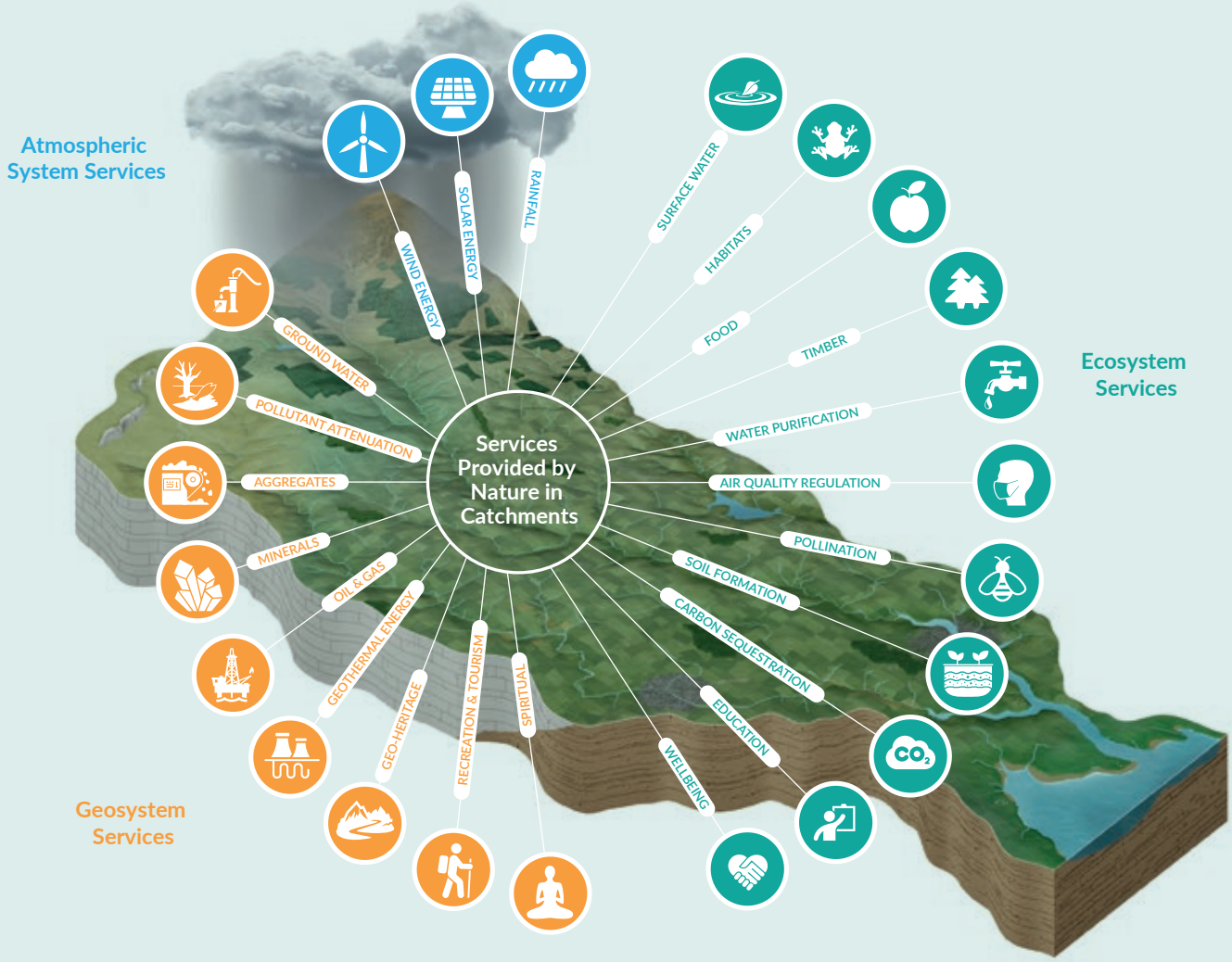
February 2020
Irish Water
Presentation on the progress on Wastewater Treatment Infrastructure upgrades.

May 2020
Local Authorities Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
Presentation regarding progress of LAWPRO's Work programme on the 2nd cycle RBMP and learnings for the 3rd cycle.

October 2020
Dr Charles Larkin, Institute of Policy and Research at the University of Bath
Presentation on his Rapid Evidence Research on *'Optimising Water Quality Returns from the Reform of CAP'*

Plenary meeting May 2020.

A Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management (FILLM)

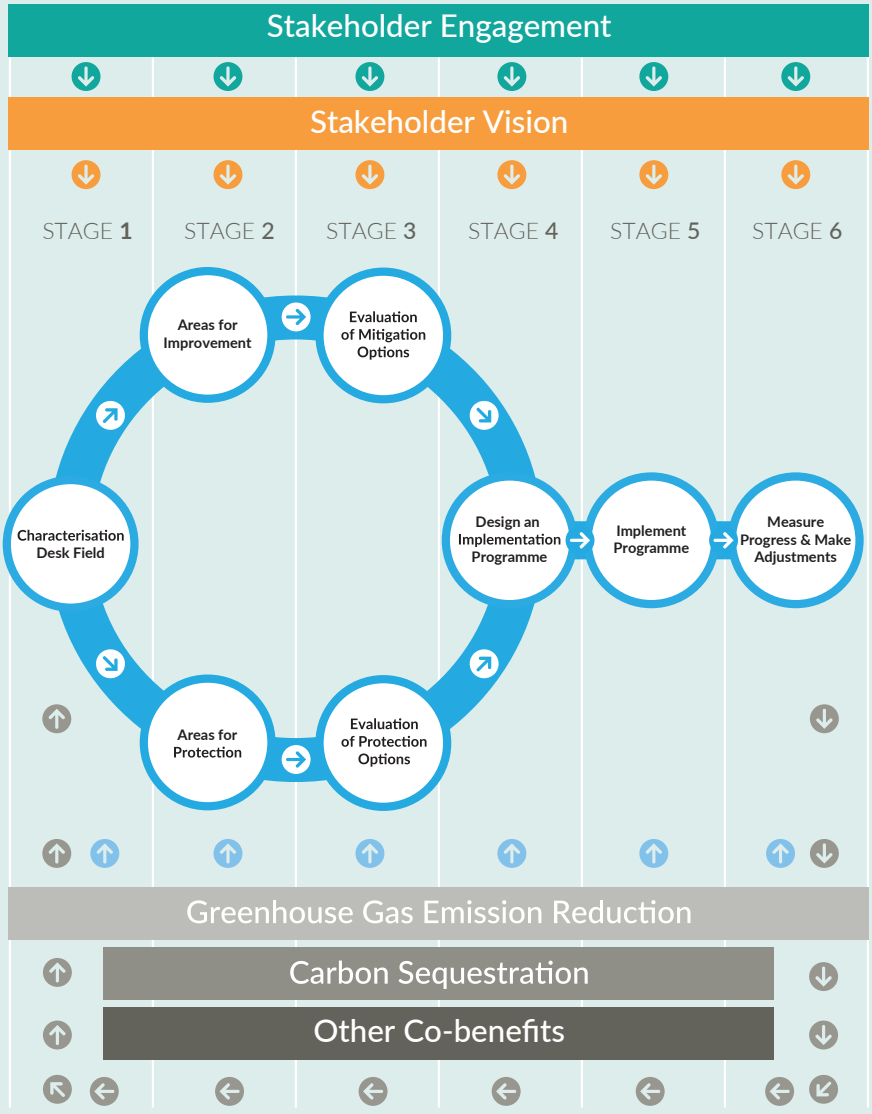


- A 'whole of environment' approach
- Catchment-based landscape management.
- Requires multi-stakeholder engagement for strategic environmental outcomes.

- Atmospheric system, geosystem and ecosystem services are interconnected and interdependent.
- They need to be managed in an integrated manner, with agencies working together to maximise actions.

- Catchment-based community involvement is key for social and economic wellbeing, and positive environmental outcomes.

Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) within the FILLM



- Build partnerships with local communities and other stake-holders to identify issues of concern.
- Develop a community vision for water and ecosystems.
- Characterise the catchment based on existing information, catchment walks, targeted monitoring, identification of pressure sources, evaluating hydromorphological pressures, pollutant load reduction analysis and location of critical source areas (CSAs).
- Identify and evaluate management strategies for protection and for improvement; locate the areas for appropriate actions within CSAs.
- Design an implementation programme based on achieving the required environmental objectives, using the 'right measure in the right place' approach, economic analysis and setting milestones.
- Implement the programme using metrics to track progress.
- Measure progress, analyse trends and outcomes, and make adjustments if necessary.
- Consult with stakeholders at all stages.
- Identify and take account of co-benefits for biodiversity, carbon sequestration and GHG emission reductions at all stages.
- Use the FILLM approach for water and biodiversity protection, and the implementation of the Habitats and Water Framework Directives.

Committees of An Fóram

Catchment Management Standing Committee

Established in 2018, the Catchment Management Standing Committee (CMSC) facilitates stakeholder engagement on all catchment management issues at a national, strategic policy level with the common goal of restoring our waters and improving the supply and quality of drinking water.

The role of the Committee is to debate and analyse issues relating but not limited to:

- Leading the debate on water in Ireland
- Review and advise on the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and the Water Framework Directive (WFD)
- Lead public awareness and education on the value of water
- Support and promote public consultation and engagement on all matters relevant to water.

The Committee has responsibility to report to An Fóram plenary meetings in relation to these strategic objectives.

The Standing Committee is chaired by Dr Tom Collins and comprises of members including Charles Stanley Smith, Connie Rochford, Denis Drennan, Dominic Cronin, Gerald Quain, Elaine McGoff, Sinead O'Brien, Paul O'Brien, Jean Rosney, Brendan Fitzsimons, Suzanne Linnane, Siobhan Ward and Martin McEnroe.

In 2020, the Standing Committee met on 11 occasions (7th January, 13th February, 7th April, 23rd April, 21st May, 25th June, 14th July, 12th October, 5th November, 13th November and 14th December).

Presentations to the Catchment Management Standing Committee

21st May

The Water Advisory Unit at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

Updates on SWMI consultation; 2nd cycle RBMP and Programme of measures for inclusion in 3rd cycle RBMP.

12th October

The Water Advisory Unit of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), EPA Catchments Unit and LAWPRO

Update on SWMI analysis, EPA Catchment Characterisation, Development of Programme of measures and Programme of work.

13th November

The Water Advisory Unit, DHLGH; EPA Catchments Unit and LAWPRO

Update on progress on the development of the draft RBMP

The Catchment Management Standing Committee made a number of significant contributions particularly to the consultation on the Significant Water Management Issues for consideration in the 3rd

Cycle RBMP. They were instrumental in drafting the proposed Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management that recommends a 'whole of environment' catchment-based approach to landscape management in order to achieve positive environmental outcomes in all components of the natural system (climate, water and biodiversity), further details on pages 10 and 11.

The Committee has engaged on an ongoing basis with the Department, Local Authority Waters Programme and the EPA to evaluate and support progress on the delivery of the 2nd RBMP and the development of the draft 3rd RBMP to ensure that all the significant issues identified by An Fóram will be addressed in the draft plan.

Some members of the CMSC participated in working groups to draft the Marine Planning Framework and Marine Strategy Submissions. Members also participated in a Research working group to inform the Common Agricultural Policy research project and review drafts.

Water Services Standing Committee

An Fóram Uisce, established a Water Services Standing Committee in 2018 and in so doing, re-iterated its commitment to facilitating stakeholder engagement on all water services issues (including drinking water and waste water) at a national, strategic policy level with the common goal of improving the supply and quality of drinking water and protecting and restoring our waters.

The committee is required to debate and analyse issues related to drinking water and waste water, including, but not limited to:

- Water conservation
- Rural water issues
- The interests of the customers of Irish Water.

The Committee submits its reports for consideration at the plenary meetings of An Fóram. It is chaired by Barry Deane and comprises the following members: David Wright, Keith Hyland, Neil Walker, Connie Rochford, Laurie Kearon, Dr Suzanne Linnane, Denis Drennan, Sinead O'Brien and Dr Tim Butter.

The Standing Committee met on 11 occasions (2nd February, 4th April, 12th May, 10th June, 1st July, 13th July, 1st September, 8th September, 30th September, 10th November and 8th December).

An Fóram Uisce established a Liaison Sub-Group of its membership to interact with Irish Water on an ongoing basis to improve engagement and build a partnership approach towards dealing with matters of concern to the Forum. The Group meet with Irish Water on a regular basis to get updates on the progress of their work against strategic plans.

Presentations to the Water Services Standing Committee

5th February

Water Policy Section, Department of Housing Planning & Local Government

Update on the Water Abstractions Legislation

3rd April

Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)

Presentation in regard to consultations on:

- Irish Water Non-Domestic Tariff Framework – Tariff Application Rules
- Irish Water Domestic Customer Handbook and
- Irish Water Non-Domestic Customer Handbook.

10th June

Rural Water Section, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Presentation on the Rural Water Programme:

- Multi Annual Rural Water Programme (MARWP); and
- The new Developer Provided Infrastructure (DPI) programme and progress to date.

Policy Submissions

An Fóram has a responsibility to comment and submit in relation to national policies pertinent to water quality. During the course of the year, An Fóram submitted responses to a number of consultation processes which are summarised as follows:

February 2020

- Submission to the Department for Housing Planning and Local Government public consultation on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) Article 17

March 2020

- Submission to Minister of Housing Planning and Local Government Briefing Note on Public Engagement in Managing Ireland's Waters

April 2020

- Submission to the Department for Housing Planning and Local Government public consultation on the draft National Marine Planning Framework
- Submission to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities on Irish Water Non-Domestic Tariff Application Rules

May 2020

- Submission to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities on Irish Water Non-Domestic Customer Handbook
- Submission to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities on Irish Water Domestic Customer Handbook

August 2020

- Submission to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage public consultation on the Significant Water Management Issues in Ireland
- Submission to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on a Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management

November 2020

- Submission to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities on Irish Water Performance Assessment Framework Review

December 2020

- Letter to Minister O'Brien, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding Irish Water meeting its wastewater treatment objectives and the requirements of the EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

Research Outputs and Reports

An Fóram Uisce Research Strategy was approved at the Plenary meeting in February.

The overarching research objective is:
To ensure all guidance concerning the management of inland aquatic environments and water resources provided by the Forum is supported by the best available science; and where knowledge gaps exist, to carry out or commission research to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan.

In February, An Fóram commissioned a body of research to investigate optimising water quality returns from the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. The Rapid Evidence Assessment carried out by Dr Charles Larkin of the Institute of Research and Policy at the University of Bath was presented as a report to the Forum and formed the basis for a public debate between Dr Larkin and agricultural economic academics and policy experts in an online webinar hosted by An Fóram in December.

Dr Larkin's research presentation is available at An Fóram Uisce Webinar – Charles Larkin presentation – YouTube and the expert panel response is available at An Fóram Uisce Webinar – Panel Response – YouTube.

Dr Larkin's research report is also available on The Water Forum website and a short summary of the discussion with further details are on pages 18 and 19.

Education and Awareness Resources

The plenary approved the An Fóram Uisce Education Strategy in May 2020.

The overarching objective of the Education Strategy 2020-2021 is:
To collaborate with agencies and education providers to enhance the scale and diversity of water education programmes; facilitate networking and support resource sharing; initiate awareness campaigns that illuminate the value of water for personal, societal, and economic well-being.

A survey of non-formal water educators was carried out to identify if they would be interested in forming a network to share resources and develop collaborations. Due to the strong interest in collaboration, the Forum hosted a networking event attended by over 20 water education networks, who have agreed to collaborate to share and disseminate water education resources going forward. Information on water education providers and their education resources will be made available on The Water Forum website.

For National Science Week, An Fóram developed a series of short videos on the Magic of Water, disseminated to all primary and secondary schools and made available on the Science week website. The videos have been viewed 8,000 times. Professor John Stephens from Maynooth University presented the Curious Chemistry of Water; Padraic Creedon from the Galway Altantaquaria presented the Phenomenal Physics of Water; and Suzanne Linnane and Caroline Stephens from the Centre for Freshwater Studies, Dundalk Institute of Technology presented the Ecological Wonder of Water.

The Forum's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is in development and should be in place in early 2021.

Filming the Magic of Water series.

Communications: Press Releases and Newsletters

An Fóram Uisce Communications Strategy was approved at the Plenary meeting in February.

The Forum website has been redeveloped and is updated on a regular basis with The Water Forum's research reports, policy submissions, meeting minutes and press releases.

A symposium on Ireland's Water Resources: Reimagining the Future, planned and organised for March 20th, was cancelled on March 10th owing to Covid-19. The Forum would like to thank all the speakers who had agreed to contribute to the debate and to those who registered for the conference. We look forward to hosting in-person meetings and events again soon.

A newsletter is issued every season with the first issue in Autumn 2020 and is circulated to all member organisations and the Forum's stakeholder network.

Newsletters and press releases are available on The Water Forum website: www.thewaterforum.ie

Representation and presentations

Mr Donal Purcell represents the Forum on the Water Advisory Body.

Dr Alec Rolston presented to the Water Policy Advisory Committee on The Water Forum's Public Participation research and the Policy brief on Public Engagement in Managing Ireland's Waters.

Dr Gretta McCarron presented on the work of An Fóram Uisce at the Local Authority Waters Programme and Rivers Trust Conference.

Webinar discussion on 'Optimising water quality returns from the Reform of CAP'

The Common Agricultural Policy was initially designed to ensure a secure food supply across Europe but in recent years it has provided financial supports for farmers to farm and produce food more sustainable and to prevent negative environmental impacts.

Panellists at An Fóram Uisce webinar on 4th December 2020:

- Tom Collins, An Fóram Uisce Chair and event moderator
- Alan Matthews
- Charles Larkin
- John Fitzgerald
- Lee Ann Jackson
- Michele McCormack

A 2019, EU Evaluation of the impact of CAP measures for water quality showed the varying results achieved from the actions implemented by each member state. The EPA Water Quality Indicators Report 2013-2018 identified nutrients from agriculture and wastewater as the greatest pressure acting on Ireland's water environment.

An Fóram Uisce commissioned a body of research to investigate how water quality returns might be optimised from the reform of CAP in Ireland. Dr Charles Larkin's research report findings and recommendations were presented at An Fóram's webinar on 4th December. A fundamental conclusion from the Larkin Report is that CAP reform should be underlined by the principle of public money for public goods, that is, public money should primarily support the protection of natural ecosystems rather than stabilise food supply and farm revenues.

Current Pillar 1 hectare-based payments have a profound impact on land use choices that can be detrimental to biodiversity and water quality. Sheep and beef farmers rely on CAP support for 100% of their income whereas it makes up only 22% of the incomes of dairy farmers. This means that many farms are not economically robust and are therefore sensitive to changes in CAP policy and payment structures. Such farmers would need to be supported through CAP or other means to implement measures to protect, restore and improve water quality.

Professor Alan Matthews, an expert in agricultural economics noted the one-size-fits-all policy does not work when translated into guidance for different farmers in different parts of the Union. The EU Commission have identified a specific objective for water and Ireland has flexibility on how it uses CAP funding to achieve its water quality objectives. The new delivery model needs to move towards performance-based approaches such as results-based payments.

Widespread implementation of successful pilot results-based projects could be highly relevant to future agri-environment schemes. One approach to the next CAP might be to put greater emphasis or premium on collective actions by farmers, group activities and schemes. Instead of focusing on individual farms, there are greater environment benefits with landscape scale changes not just on a farm scale. Farmers can support each other and learn from each other. That way pilot schemes could be brought toward mainstreaming.

Professor John Fitzgerald, Chair of the Climate Advisory Committee, warned that redesigning CAP to

Widespread implementation of successful pilot results-based projects could be highly relevant to future agri-environment schemes.

achieve environment benefits is a complex task. Working and delivery mechanisms for farmers and for administrators needs to be simple and easy; environmental outcomes need to be verifiable and easy for farmers to achieve.

Lee Ann Jackson, a policy maker at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development acknowledged that agriculture provides environmental challenges yet it needs to be part of the solution. Food systems have the triple challenge of providing adequate food supplies, income for farmers and minimising environmental impacts. Policy needs to address these triple impacts, therefore policy integration is essential for positive outcomes.

Michele McCormack, a researcher at Teagasc has surveyed farmers on their willingness to implement measures for water quality and farmers are willing to implement measures if it does not incur additional costs. Michele noted that public goods provision through agri-environment channels can be difficult and a lot of care needs to be taken if using agri-environment schemes to address these complex issues.

Irish agriculture is highly export oriented; we need to defend its sustainability in a credible way. Sustainability as a contribution has not been given the proper recognition, however this could possibly be achieved through smart use of CAP to reward for flood protections, biodiversity and for less intensive farming.

Consumer force can be one of the drivers to bring about the changes that are needed. The new CAP will give greater flexibility to Irish stakeholders to influence these decisions. Basic income support for farmers should also be explored.

Different landscape types need to have measures tailored to individual areas and get buy-in from local farmers. Farmers need to be asked what farmers want to do. Development from the bottom up is important in this. Agri-environment actions needs co-production of solutions in sympathy with the farming community as well as the Irish society at large.

An Fóram Uisce's Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management recommends using the river catchment as the landscape management unit for environmental measures. Such an approach would provide the scope for bottom-up actions and local solutions not only for water but also for climate and biodiversity as well.

Key recommendations for CAP reform to optimise water quality from the webinar discussions:

- Hectare-based payments have not worked for water quality and a move towards performance and results-based payments system is required.
- Greater emphasis on collective actions by farmers, group activities and schemes for landscape environmental measures.
- Delivery mechanisms must be administratively easy for farmers and administrators with verifiable outcomes, farmers input from the outset and bottom-up approaches are essential.
- Policy integration is crucial for positive environmental outcomes.

Finance and Administration

THE EXPENSES INCURRED by An Fóram are provided for by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. During 2020, €551,783.74 was expended, broken down into the following categories.

Item	Expenditure to 31st December 2020 €
Meeting expenses	5,980.29
Members travel/expenses	11,484.30
Training and facilitation	3,137.59
Implementation of strategy	139,163.94
Symposium	299.25
Chairs allowance	12,029.84
Secretariat salary and travel	348,893.03
Office & IT expenses	30,795.50
Total	**551,783.74**

Tipperary County Council provides administrative support in the context of human resources, payroll, payments and office space.

Acknowledgements

Dr Tom Collins and Donal Purcell would like to thank the members and the staff of An Fóram for their support, enthusiasm, hard work and commitment during the year, particularly considering the limitations imposed by COVID-19.

An Fóram would also like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their support of the work of An Fóram and/or attendance at meetings of An Fóram during 2020.

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Donal Daly
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- EPA
- Irish Water
- Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
- Monaghan County Council
- National Co-Ordination and Management Committee
- Office of Public Works
- The Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- Tipperary County Council

The Water Forum
AN FÓRAM UISCE

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