

## Request for Research Tender on

*An assessment of policy coherence and conflicts for water  
and environmental management*

**Closing Date:  
6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Queries to be addressed to:**

**Dr Triona McGrath  
Research Lead  
An Fóram Uisce  
[triona@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:triona@nationalwaterforum.ie)  
087 9858738**

**[www.nationalwaterforum.ie](http://www.nationalwaterforum.ie)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION TO AN FORAM 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 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; Communications and Education Lead, Dr Gretta McCarron. Technical support, Post-doctoral researcher (DkIT), Dr Angelos Alamanos; Administrative support, Martina Ryan.

Further information on the work of An Fóram Uisce is available at [www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Policy coherence is essential to ensure one part of government does not undo what another is trying to do. Ireland, and the rest of the World, are facing a myriad of challenges over the coming decades to address climate change, biodiversity loss and deteriorating water quality. The UN Sustainability Goals (SDGs) for 2030, which are a policy driver for sustainable management of the Earth's resources, implicitly recognises the co-dependence of many policy areas.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have developed a toolkit<sup>1</sup> for policy coherence for sustainable development to enable policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders to review their institutional mechanisms, organisational structures and policy-making processes against internationally recognised good practices on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup>.

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>3</sup> is the cornerstone of European water policy. It has provided the structure for integrated water resource management across the European Union over the last 20 years. The OECD Water Governance Principles<sup>4</sup> highlight the importance of policy coherence to achieving water quality objectives, and the need to identify, assess and address the barriers to policy coherence from practices, policies and regulations within and beyond the water sector.

One of the roles of the Water Forum is reviewing and advising on the implementation of Ireland's River Basin Management Plan, which sets out Ireland's requirements and objectives to meet the EU Water Framework Directive. The current River Basin Management Plan (RBMP), 2018-2021<sup>5</sup> is coming to an end, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the RBMP 2022-2027 will be published later this year. The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) recently carried out research to review the implementation of the second RBMP for Ireland (2018–2021), with a view to ensuring that governance arrangements are enhanced in the third cycle RBMP for Ireland<sup>6,7</sup>. One of the recommendations of this research is to examine the broad policy framework within which the RBMP goals are set so that contradictory goals can be identified, and solutions found where possible.

The Water Forum proposes to commission a piece of research to identify and integrate the myriad of policies relating to the deteriorating water quality in our estuaries, rivers and lakes, along with the climate and biodiversity crises. The Water Forum has recently adopted a systems-based approach for catchment management called the Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management (FILLM)<sup>8</sup>, that takes account of water, biodiversity, climate and soil health in an integrated manner.

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<sup>1</sup> [Self Assessment - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(oecd.org\)](https://www.oecd.org/policy-coherence/)

<sup>2</sup> [OECD Legal Instruments](#)

<sup>3</sup> [River basin management - Water - Environment - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The OECD Principles on Water Governance - OECD](#)

<sup>5</sup> Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, "River Basin Management Plan 2018 - 2021," 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/429a79-river-basin-management-plan-2018-2021/>.

<sup>6</sup> O'Riordan, J., O'Boyle, R. O'Leary, F. and Shannon, L., (2021), Using the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework to Review the Implementation of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018–2021 [Water | Environmental Protection Agency \(epa.ie\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> Boyle, R., O'Riordan, J., O'Leary, F. and Shannon, L. (2021). Using an Experimental Governance Lens to Examine Governance of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018–2021 [EPA Research 2030 Reports | Environmental Protection Agency](#)

<sup>8</sup> The Water Forum, "A Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management," 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://thewaterforum.ie/app/uploads/2021/03/TWF-FILLM-Report-Feb21-v9WEB.pdf>.

FILLM recommends that disciplines and organisations responsible for water and environmental management work together to address Ireland's 21<sup>st</sup> Century environmental challenges in an integrated and co-ordinated manner to achieve synergies and co-benefits whilst maximising resource efficiencies. The FILLM encourages multi-disciplinary and multi-organisational approaches, as well as environmental policy coherence, policy integration and policy implementation. This proposed research should address the policy and governance implications which arise from FILLM.

### 3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed research should carry out policy mapping and analysis to identify synergies and conflicts between both national and EU policies and regulations which impact all components of the environment, namely water, climate, biodiversity and soil. The research should highlight the interdependencies between these policies and the complexity of their links with human activities, such as agriculture, land planning, industry, energy, etc. Emphasis should be placed on policies which will have an impact on achieving the water quality objectives set out in the Water Framework Directive. The research should include;

- A bibliographic review identifying the challenges in policy coherence which impact all components of the environment, summarising current knowledge and also knowledge-gaps.
- A summary of international best practices to address policy coherence.
- Policy mapping to develop the current landscape of policies which impact water, climate, biodiversity and soil in Ireland.
- Policy recommendations which identify key areas where synergies and co-benefits can be further developed, along with conflicts and where trade-offs may be required.

### 4. PROPOSED IMPACT OF RESEARCH

The proposed impact of this research is to inform thinking and initiate debate around environmental policy coherence in Ireland, which will support the development of mechanisms to facilitate cross-sectoral co-ordination and coherent policies in a whole-of-government approach.

A policy report from this research could support the Government to transition from siloed policy actions to fostering alignment across national and international actions. It is hoped that this research will encourage a multi-disciplinary, multi-objective and multi-stakeholder framework as a means of achieving the required water and environmental outcomes through effective and efficient policy implementation.

### 5. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables are required for **all** awarded tenders:

- Final report, encompassing all research highlighted in Section 3.
- A Policy Brief document identifying the key policy recommendations to improve policy coherence in Ireland using an integrated systems approach, such as FILLM.

## 6. BUDGET

The currency and invoices in which all prices and rates shall be quoted, and which payments under the contract will be paid, shall be Euros (€).

The **maximum budget is €24,950**, inclusive of VAT and overheads.

### 6.1 Payment Schedules

25% of the total agreed budget will be made upon the signing of the Funding Agreement, a further 25% of the total agreed budget will be made following research progress presented at a mid-project review with an An Fóram Uisce. A final payment of the remaining 50% of the total agreed budget will be made on project completion within the timeframes stated within Section 7, and following receipt of the final deliverables.

## 7. TIMELINES

It is a mandatory requirement that this a draft report is **completed on or before 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021** as per the timeframe outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Timeframe for project delivery*

Publication of tender	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2021
Deadline for tender submissions	6 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Award of tender and start of project	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Project initiation meeting	Week of 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
Draft report submitted	On or before 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2021

Following review of the draft report, a completed final report is to be submitted which takes into account proposed amendments to the draft report.

## 8. MARKING SCHEME

All submissions will be assessed by a panel of suitably qualified persons.

Marks will be awarded (maximum 100 marks) based solely on the information provided in the submission, as follows:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the subject matter of the brief and the requirements of the project (30 marks).
- Project management arrangements (10 marks).
- Details of budget, including compliance within the stated budget (10 marks)
- Timelines for the research (10 marks). A GANTT chart outlining the timeline for project actions and deliverables is mandatory.
- Demonstrated relevant research track record of team appropriate to the subject matter, including previous/ongoing projects delivered and scientific publications (40 marks).

## 9. SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

Applications must be submitted no later than **5pm on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021** via email to Dr Triona McGrath, Research Lead, An Fóram Uisce: [triona@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:triona@nationalwaterforum.ie).

Submissions must include:

- A completed application form.
- A CV (max 4 pages) of the lead person to whom the tender will be awarded.

An acknowledgement of receipt of applications will be issued within 48 hours of the submission deadline.

## 10. AWARD OF TENDERS

**One** award will be made through this request for tenders.

Applicants will be notified of the success of their submissions by the **10<sup>th</sup> September 2021**.

Bodies of work may be initiated immediately from the date of award, with an initial project meeting to take place during the week of the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

## 11. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- All applications must be made using the official application form.
- Applications may be received from any research institute (including Higher Education Institutes, public body or private research organisations), or appropriate consultancy in Ireland and Europe.
- Applications may be received from consortiums of individuals from different institutions. Such applications must identify the **lead person** to whom the tender may be awarded. All other members of the consortium will be sub-contracted by the lead person.
- The maximum total budget of €24,950 (inclusive of VAT and overheads) is applicable to single service provider applications and consortium applications respectively.
- The Water Forum will disqualify incomplete applications, applications not using the application form provided and any application received after closing time/date. Compliance with the word limitation contained on the Application Form is a requirement of the application process.
- It is a necessary requirement of the application process that the successful applicant must provide a copy of their Organisation/University/Institution's current Tax Clearance Certificate.
- Failure to address within the final report each of the items included under Section 3 and the relevant thematic area will result in the withholding of final payment until all requirements are met.
- The Water Forum will have copyright ownership of any material developed for use by The Water Forum under the terms of this tender. The service provider may have a non-exclusive licence to use such material but only for its own purposes (to be agreed with the successful service provider).
- The principles of Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019 will be applied where there is any potential for commercial exploitation of project outputs resulting from this tender.

- The Water Forum encourages an open access publication policy. Publications arising from tender awards funded by The Water Forum should, as a minimum, ensure open access via Green methods (depositing the peer-reviewed manuscript in an online repository before, at the same time, or after publication). All reports will be uploaded to, and publicly accessible via, The Water Forum's website: [www.nationalwaterforum.ie](http://www.nationalwaterforum.ie).
- Any publications arising from tender awards funded by The Water Forum must acknowledge An Fóram Uisce|The Water Forum as the source of funding.
- Projects funded by The Water Forum must uphold the highest standards of research integrity and The Water Forum expects all tender awardees to abide by the guidelines outlined in the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland; and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information – When an application is received by The Water Forum, a record is created in the name of the applicant. This information will be stored by the office of The Water Forum, where relevant, in paper/electronic form. Information that is collected by the Office, including information that you give us, is added to the record. You have the right, given by the Data Protection Act of 1988 and 2003, to a copy of your information at any time. The Office is also subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2014.

The information we record is used for the following purposes:

- Processing and assessing of applications;
- Payment arrangements;
- Auditing requirements;
- Informing and advising The Water Forum in relation to the Project and using same as a basis for further consideration by The Water Forum including research projects and policy analysis and recommendations;
- Publication of the Project Outcomes.

**End/**