

Looking after Ireland's  
water resources



# 2022

Annual Report





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# Chairperson's Foreword

An Fóram Uisce – the Water Forum has had another busy and productive year, my first year as Chair.



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Put simply, water is life. Without clean, healthy and well protected water resources, all life suffers. Yet, as a society and particularly in countries like Ireland with temperate climates, we take water for granted.

**I WOULD LIKE TO** pay tribute to Dr Tom Collins who has helped establish the Water Forum as an innovative stakeholder body contributing meaningfully on water policy matters in Ireland. I would like to thank Connie Rochford who, very ably, chaired the Forum in the interregnum between Tom stepping down and my appointment. I also want to pay tribute to the members of the Forum who give freely of their time and expertise in the greater public interest and to the Forum's astute and hard-working executive team, Donal Purcell, Triona McGrath, Gretta McCarron, Aisling Corkery and Martina Ryan.

During 2021, the Forum members developed a new Strategic Plan (outlined below) that will be implemented during the period 2022 to 2027. The Strategy was brought to life, in the comprehensive policy submission prepared on the draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for 2022- 2027. The submission was informed by expert input from a range of public bodies and agencies involved in water management. Follow-up advice was provided to the Water Policy Advisory Committee and the Ministers responsible for overseeing the plan and its implementation. The 103 policy recommendations covering all aspects of water governance and

management, was an agreed position of the 25 members of the Water Forum. This was a very significant achievement given the wide range of views and perspectives on the Forum and reflects the strategic objectives set out in the Strategy. These agreed positions are the 'common ground' on which there is broad consensus, therefore, they are more likely to get the support of a wide and diverse range of stakeholders during the implementation phase. At time of writing, the Forum anticipates that it's recommendations will form an integral part of the final RBMP and the implementation phase.

I would like though, as the new Chair, to reflect for a moment on why the work of the Forum is of such importance. Put simply, water is life. Without clean, healthy and well protected water resources, all life suffers. Yet, as a society and particularly in countries like Ireland with temperate climates, we take water for granted. Approximately 80% of our drinking water is sourced from rivers and lakes yet the most recent EPA report on water quality clearly showed that the water quality of our rivers, lakes and estuaries is deteriorating and many communities in Ireland continue to suffer from drinking water restrictions and boil water notices. Nearly 200,000 households in Ireland rely on private

wells for their drinking water yet we have one of the highest incidences of VTEC notifications per capita in Europe. In addition, the upkeep and maintenance of the nearly 400,000 domestic wastewater treatment systems (septic tanks and other systems) leave much room for improvement.

As a society, we seem to be unable to make the connection between the tap in the kitchen and the toilet in the bathroom or between our land use practice and the quality and value of our water. All of us, every day, either in our private lives or at work or play, seek out clean and healthy water from a tap or some other source for ourselves and our animals while discharging our waste and their waste back to the water environment on which we so much depend. This has serious economic, social and environmental consequences including:

- the high cost of cleaning dirty water to drinkable quality,
- serious illness caused by drinking contaminated water, and
- damage to water dependent eco-systems.

Add to this, the fact that Ireland's population, is expected to grow by one million people by 2040, and the known and yet to be understood consequences of climate change for both water quality and water

services. Our water resources are already under considerable pressure so there are many thorny issues to be dealt with if we are to chart a way to a better future where we manage our precious water resources in ways that will support a growing population, a thriving society, and a clean, healthy and well protected environment.

So, giving many stakeholders with an interest in water opportunities to have meaningful and evidence-based discussions about the best way to deal with the many complex issues involved in managing our water resources is critically important, if we are to arrive at policy positions that are designed to build a sustainable and healthy system for water protection and supply.

The Water Forum is in a unique position to facilitate these difficult discussions on an on-going basis and to provide considered advice on both the development and implementation of policy choices. I look forward to working collaboratively with the members, and with the support of the secretariat, to develop policy advice which can help unlock practical and implementable solutions to the many water challenges we collectively face.

**Dr Matt Crowe**  
Water Forum Chair

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All of us, every day, either in our private lives or at work or play, seek out clean and healthy water from a tap or some other source for ourselves and our animals while discharging our waste and their waste back to the water environment on which we so much depend.

# Introduction to An Fóram Uisce – the Water Forum

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

**THE WATER FORUM** is the national statutory body representative of all stakeholders with an interest in the quality of Ireland's water resources. It consists of 25 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations and sectors including the environmental sector, the agriculture sector, consumers including customers of Irish Water, the rural water sector, river trusts, angling, recreation, the business sector, trade unions, the community and voluntary sector, forestry, education, social housing and tourism. Approximately 50 different organisations were involved in the nomination of members.

The Water Services Act 2017 provided the statutory basis for the Water Forum. 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 those of the Water Forum.

The Forum provides an opportunity for stakeholders to debate and analyse a range of issues pertaining 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. As an independent entity, the Water Forum has discretion to determine its own work programme and means of communicating its views and analysis.

The Forum's work is supported by an executive team with: Donal Purcell, Senior Executive Officer; Triona McGrath, Research and Policy Lead; Gretta McCarron, Communications and Education Lead and Martina Ryan provides administration support. Aisling Corkery joined the team in November as Research and Policy Executive, we welcome and look forward to working with Aisling in the coming years.

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

25  members



# Vision and Mission Statement

The Water Forum's vision is:

Ireland's waters are clean, healthy and life enhancing, supporting biodiversity and providing a basis for community wellbeing and economic sustainability.



To achieve its vision:

## Forum members debate and analyse a range of issues

with regard to water quality, rural water services, issues of concern to Irish Water customers, the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland. To ensure the discussion is based on the most up-to-date data and information, we gather intelligence, science and best practice through engaging with agencies and organisations who provide external expert input and we commission research to fill specific knowledge gaps for policy development.

## The Forum aims to provide a strong independent voice

on national policy pertaining to water management, water conservation and future proofing through its policy submissions, interactions with Ministers, Government departments and the Water Policy Advisory Committee and through ongoing engagements with agencies to promote research outputs and policy positions. As our input reflects a diversity of voices, we provide a composite view on policies, governance and community solutions and we aspire to drive the transformational change required to restore our waters to good ecological status and to protect water resources through efficient use and future proofing.

## The Forum shares research and discusses policy positions

at webinars, conferences and workshops to socialise positions and encourage action. It provides education resources and awareness materials to highlight the value of and threats to our water resources, all with a view to achieving the Forum's shared goal of clean and healthy waters for humans and nature as required under the EU Water Framework Directive and the national River Basin Management Plan.

# Strategy 2022–2027

During 2021, the Water Forum members and executive team developed a new Strategic Plan for 2022-2027. The new plan builds on the Forum's work since its establishment, and it presents a new mission for this work:

**The Water Forum provides a platform for the stakeholders of water quality, where the members draw on their various perspectives and expertise to address the challenges and agree governance, societal and technical policies and solutions to achieve clean and healthy waters.**

Over the course of the next 5 years the Water Forum will work towards achieving **five strategic goals**.

## Goal 1

**Provide a unique and robust platform for stakeholder engagement and agreement on key issues concerning Ireland's waters.**

One of the key contributions the Water Forum makes is finding and building consensus between primary interests to achieve common ground on policy recommendations and ministerial advice. To do this, we

use a learning mindset to develop, change and integrate perspectives. We partner with key agencies to leverage expertise, insight and knowledge to inform the debate and agreed positions.

## Goal 2

**Be a proactive and authoritative national statutory body, leading on water policy, management and governance.**

Our input reflects a diversity of voices to form a composite view on policies, governance and community solutions and we aspire to drive transformational change to improve

water quality, water conservation and future proofing. We promote an integrated systems approach to water management and governance.

## Goal 3

**Bring scientific recommendations to policy through analysis, dialogue and sense making.**

We gather intelligence, science and best practice through external input and commissioned research. We look at international best practice, bring

science to policy and disseminate information through conferences, workshops and media.

## Goal 4

**Lead on innovation in experimental Governance and futures thinking.**

As a stakeholder body, we develop effective relationships with Government Departments, Irish Water, the Commission for the Regulation of Utilities, Rural Water

Services, member organisations and other relevant bodies to act as an integral governance component in the management of Ireland's water resources.

## Goal 5

**Advocate for the need for and benefit of meaningful public engagement and education in water resource management.**

We promote the need for effective public participation in integrated catchment management and provide resources for awareness and education on the value of and threats to water.

We advocate for a systems-based approach where agencies, stakeholders and the public consider water as an integral part of the environmental crises along with climate and nature.



# The Water Forum Membership

The 25 members of the Forum reflects the complexities of the interplay between environmental, social and economic objectives in water management. One of the key contributions the Water Forum makes is finding and building consensus between primary interests to achieve common ground on policy recommendations and ministerial advice.

## Membership

### Chairperson

Dr Matt Crowe

### Agriculture

Denis Drennan, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA)

Derrie Dillon, Macra

Dominic Cronin, Irish Co-Operative Society (ICOS)

Paul O'Brien, Irish Farmers Association (IFA)

### Angling & Water Sports

Martin McEnroe, Angling Council

Tim Butter, Diving Ireland

### Business

Neil Walker, Irish Business and Employers Confederation (Ibec)

### Community & Voluntary

Gerald Quain, Irish Rural Link  
Izzy Petrie, St. Vincent de Paul

### Consumers

Connie Rochford  
Keith Hyland

### Social Housing

David Wright, Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH)

### Education

Suzanne Linnane, Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)

### Environment

Bernadette Connolly, Cork Environment Forum

Charles Stanley Smith, Environment Pillar

Elaine McGoff, An Taisce

Ollan Herr, Zero Waste Alliance Ireland (ZWAI)

Sinead O'Brien, The Sustainable Water Network (SWAN)

### Forestry

Brendan Fitzsimons, Tree Council of Ireland

### Tourism

Tim Fenn, Irish Hotels Federation (IHF)

### Trade Unions

Liam Berney, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

### Rivers Trusts

Siobhan Ward, Moy Rivers Trust

### Rural Water

Barry Deane, National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS)

Jean Rosney, National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS)

While striving for gender balance in our membership, the current membership is 36% women and 64% men.

The Water Forum does its work through the Plenary, which includes all members, and two Standing Committees – Water Services and Catchment Management. Other sub-committees are formed as needed.

In 2022, to minimise our impact on climate change we finalised and adopted our Climate Action Mandate.

# The Water Forum Plenary

The Water Forum Plenary meets approximately 9 times per year. In early 2022, meetings were held online due to the Covid 19 restrictions and then moved to a hybrid format from July to allow for attendance flexibility. The Forum Chairperson chairs all plenary meetings.



Water Forum Plenary and staff at a meeting in July 2022, attended by former Chair Dr Tom Collins.

## Plenary Meetings of the Water Forum in 2022

25th January

1st March

15th March

26th April

27th May

12th July

13th September

25th October

6th December

## Presentations made to the Forum Plenary

### 25th January

**Presentation on research by Dr Sarah Cotterill, University College Dublin (UCD) & Dr Peter Melville-Shreeve, University of Exeter**  
A Framework for Improving Domestic Water Conservation in Ireland

### 27th May

**Presentation on research by Nelly Montblanc**  
An Assessment of Policy Coherence and Conflicts for Water and Environmental Management

### 13th September

**Presentation from the Water Advisory Body**  
The role and work programme of the Water Advisory Body

### 6th December

**Presentation from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH)**  
Recast Drinking Water Directive to be enacted in January 2023

# Committees of the Forum

## Catchment Management Standing Committee

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:

- Reviewing and advising on the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and the Water Framework Directive (WFD)

- Supporting and promoting public consultation and engagement on all matters relevant to water
- Promoting an integrated systems approach to water management and governance
- Contributing to public awareness and education on the value of water

The Committee has responsibility to report to the Forum plenary meetings in relation to these objectives.

The Standing Committee is chaired by Dr Matt Crowe and members include Brendan Fitzsimons, Charles Stanley Smith, Connie Rockford, Denis Drennan, Dominic Cronin, Elaine McGoff, Jean Rosney, Martin McEnroe, Paul O'Brien, Sinead O'Brien, Siobhan Ward and Suzanne Linnane.

In 2022, the CMSC met on 9 occasions.



## Presentations to the Catchment Management Standing Committee

### 18th January

Presentation from Irish Water, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) Urban Wastewater and Domestic Wastewater Treatment systems & the draft RBMP

### 10th February

Presentation from EPA, DHLGH, and LAWPRO Hydromorphology & the draft RBMP

### 8th March

Presentation from Forest Service, Blue Dot Catchment Programme & Waters of Life project High Status water bodies and Forestry & draft RBMP

### 29th June

Workshop with DHLGH & LAWPRO on the Water Forum's submission on the draft RBMP

### 19th October

Presentation from DHLGH Discussion on draft Programme of Measures for 3rd Cycle RBMP

### 13th December

Presentation on the EPA's Water Programme Manager Briefing on EPA Water Quality in Ireland Report 2016-2021



The Catchment Management Standing Committee led on the development of a number of significant policy submissions in 2022 with considerable effort put into meetings with agencies and experts in the development of the Forum's submission on the draft RBMP and follow up engagements on the final programme of measures for the 3rd cycle and the governance arrangements for the plan implementation. Throughout this process, the members worked diligently and with mutual respect to achieve common ground on all of the 103 recommendations submitted on the plan.

The Forum continues to appreciate the ongoing engagements with the Department officials, the Local Authority Waters Programme and the EPA and all of the other agencies who assisted our work in developing our submission to ensure that all

the significant issues impacting on water quality in Ireland will be addressed in the final plan.

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The Catchment Management Standing Committee led on the development of a number of significant policy submissions in 2022 with considerable effort put into meetings with agencies and experts in the development of the Forum's submission on the draft RBMP.

## Water Services Standing Committee

The Water Services Standing Committee (WSSC) facilitates stakeholder engagement on all water services issues (both drinking water supply and wastewater) at a national, strategic policy level. The common goal is to improve the security of supply and quality of drinking water and improve effectiveness and efficiency of wastewater treatment systems to protect water resources.

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

- Developing policy submissions and advice based on research, external expertise, agency input and dialogue;
- Promoting the need for and benefits of water conservation and the development of a National Framework for Domestic Water Conservation;
- Raising emerging concerns in relation to rural water issues;
- Developing effective working relationships with Irish Water and the Commission for Regulation of Utilities so that the interests of the customers of Irish Water are prioritised

The WSSC was chaired by Barry Deane until September 2022 with Keith Hyland taking over the chair from October and comprises the following members: Tim Butter, Barry Deane, Denis Drennan, Keith Hyland, Dr Suzanne Linnane, Sinead O'Brien, Connie Rochford, Neil Walker and David Wright.

The WSSC met on 8 occasions in 2022.

### Presentations to the Water Services Standing Committee

#### 20th January

##### Briefing from Irish Water

Presentation on the Eastern Midlands Regional Water Resources Plan

#### 6th June

##### Briefing from Irish Water

Presentation on the Southwest Regional Water Resources Plan

#### 22nd June

##### Water Conservation Workshop

A summary of the workshop is presented below.

#### 23rd November

##### Presentation from DHLGH

General Scheme for the Environment (Abstractions Bill) and the transformation of Irish Water to Uisce Éireann in January 2023.

The Water Services Standing Committee led on submissions on Irish Water Regional Water Resources Plans and 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 liaison Group met with Irish Water on two occasions throughout 2022 to get updates on the progress of their work programmes.



### Other Committees

A number of working groups were active during 2022 with members of the Forum contributing their expertise to support our strategic goals and the work of the Forum executive.

Active groups in 2022 included: the Education and Awareness Working Group; Public Participation Working Group; Staffing Sub-group; and the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Sub-group.

# Policy Submissions and Advice

The Forum has a responsibility to comment and provide advice in relation to national policies pertinent to water. It also makes submissions on a range of issues relating to water.

In 2022, the Forum made submissions to a number of consultation processes which are summarised as follows:

## March

**Irish Water Disconnection and Reconnection Policy**  
CRU

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**Regional Water Resources Plan – Eastern and Midlands**  
Irish Water

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**River Basin Management Plan**  
DHLGH

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**Decision Paper on Irish Water’s charging arrangements for publicly sourced Group Water Schemes**  
CRU

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## July

**Irish Water Revenue Control 3 – Interim Review**  
CRU

## August

**Regional Water Resources Plan – South West**  
Irish Water

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## September

**Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity loss**  
Citizens Assembly

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**Preliminary Review of the Water Services Policy Statement**  
DHLGH

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## November

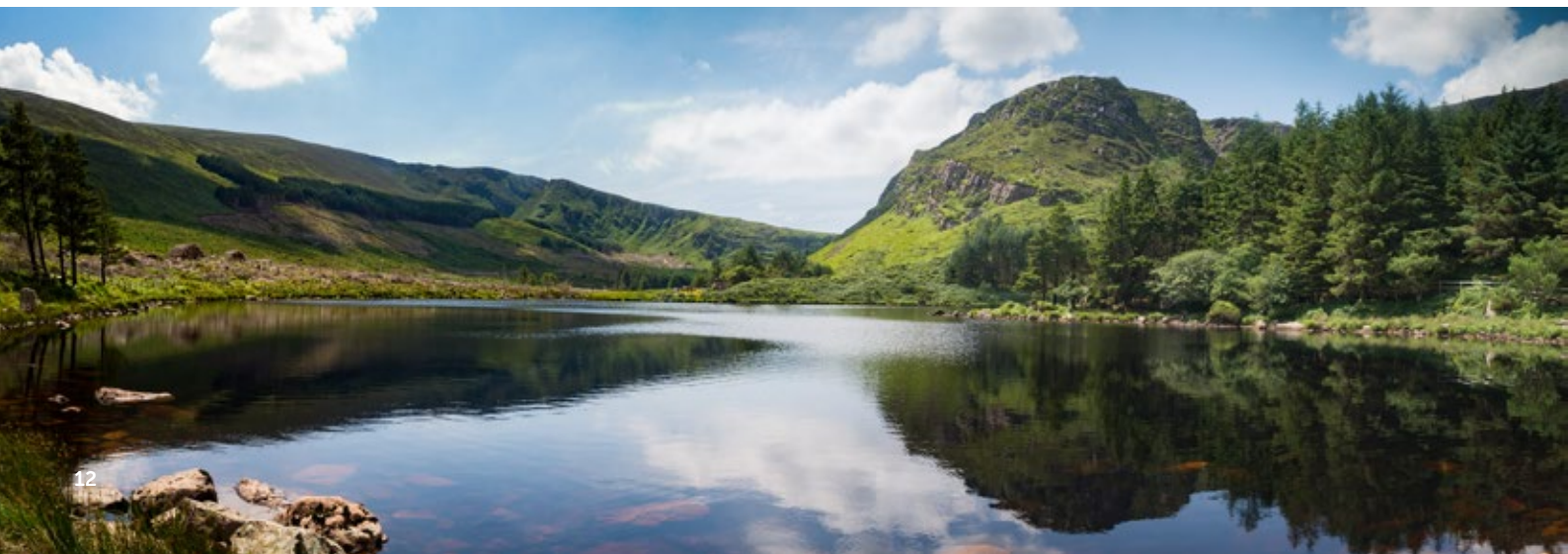
**Draft National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027**  
DHLGH

## December

**New National Parks and Wildlife Service Strategy Statement 2023-2025**  
NPWS

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In 2022, the Forum issued statutory advice in relation to the preparation of the RBMP to: Water Policy Advisory Committee on 17th August and 30th November; Darragh O’Brien, TD, Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage & Malcolm Noonan, TD, Minister of State with Responsibility for Heritage and Electoral Reform on 19th December.



# Submission Spotlight – River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027

## The plan needs to have an outcomes-based approach

Members of the Forum are of the view that an outcomes-based approach is essential, with targeted measures identified and implemented for every water body in Ireland. Under the WFD, each water body has an associated objective to achieve by 2027, therefore, details should be provided on targeted measures to protect water bodies from deterioration, or to restore water bodies to at least good status. Timelines for achieving these objectives, along with interim milestones will also be necessary to ensure progress of the third cycle can be tracked. An outcomes-based approach will ensure effective and efficient planning and implementation of the plan, along with transparent monitoring of progress by the department, agencies and key stakeholders. This approach can target and strengthen efforts to reduce each of the pressures outlined in the draft RBMP and will keep all implementation bodies focussed on the achievement of positive outcomes for water quality.

## Improved governance

A full-time RBMP secretariat is needed to ensure successful implementation and monitoring of the Plan and to support the required engagement and cooperation between the different tiers of governance. Managed engagement between government departments should be undertaken to ensure policy coherence and alignment with national and EU policies. The Forum calls for increased transparency and accountability of the RBMP implementation bodies and recommends ongoing structured engagement between all tiers. Urgent commitments to resource and to develop a comprehensive financing strategy for the plan will support the implementation of measures that can deliver on ambitious water, climate and biodiversity objectives.

## A new national approach to public participation

The overall level of meaningful public and stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the WFD needs to radically improve. A new national approach to public participation needs to be set-up to develop stakeholder visions and action plans in the 46 catchment areas. The Forum recommends that a phased approach is taken with pilots in catchments to test approaches to improve engagement. These pilots should take place early in the 3rd cycle so that more effective and meaningful public

engagement processes are in place for the remainder of the 3rd cycle. A framework will have to be developed to enable Local Authorities and agencies to work together to support public participation for water, biodiversity and climate. There needs to be consistent, ongoing, and informed discussion at local level that facilitates the co-creation of solutions and action by agencies, communities and individuals to protect our natural resources.

## Targeted actions to address pressures in every water body – the right measure in the right place

The Forum has made over 80 recommendations to address the pressures impacting on waterbodies. It is important that the policies and strategies from different sectors are in alignment with the objectives of WFD. Furthermore, the Forum recommends increased accountability of Government departments and state bodies for reducing their relevant pressures and highlights the need for WFD assessments for many sectoral activities impacting the aquatic environment. Training in the WFD and catchment management is essential for staff within Government departments, state bodies and agencies for better alignment with the WFD 'protect' and 'restore' objectives. Emphasis will also need to be placed on knowledge exchange and awareness to support ownership of actions to protect water, climate, and nature.

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The Forum has made over 80 recommendations to address the pressures impacting on waterbodies. It is important that the policies and strategies from different sectors are in alignment with the objectives of WFD.

# Research Outputs and Reports

The Forum's overarching research objective is to: To ensure all guidance concerning water policy and the management of water resources in Ireland, 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.

Research outputs included:

- **An Assessment of Policy Coherence and Conflicts for Water and Environmental Management**  
Nelly Montblanc, Société d'études techniques et économiques (SETEC hydatec) France
- **A Framework for Improving Domestic Water Conservation in Ireland**  
Dr Sarah Cotterill, UCD and  
Dr Peter Melville-Shreeve  
University of Exeter
- **Nutrient Recovery and Recycling from wastewater in Ireland, with associated policy gaps and recommendations**  
Dr Matteo Giberti and Dr Recep Kaan Dereli, School of Chemical and Bioprocesses Engineering, University College Dublin







*Dr Sarah Cotterill who received the UCD NOVA Award for research (commissioned by the Water Forum) is pictured with Dr Triona McGrath, Research and Policy Lead.*

The Joint Oireachtas Committee in 2017 recommended that water conservation should be embedded as a principle of water policy in Ireland, encouraged by incentivising savings and discouraging wastage. Population growth, increasing demand and the effects of climate change are putting Ireland's water resources under pressure. Irish Water have reported that more than half of their 539 water supply zones are in deficit in normal weather conditions and 66% are in deficit in summer drought.

### **A National Framework for Domestic Water Conservation**

Research commissioned by the Forum and completed by Dr Cotterill and Dr Melville Streeve

identified that a key challenge to water conservation is the perceived lack of need to save water as rainfall is ample and lakes and rivers are abundant. There is a lack of awareness of water supply scarcity and vulnerability; the amount of energy and resources required to produce drinking water; the amount of water an individual or household uses; the processes that underpin water treatment and supply and the potential impact of increasing demand on the natural environment.

Even with the current significant investment in water infrastructure upgrades, population projections for a 25% increase nationally by 2050 and climate change impacts could weaken water service resilience.

Water conservation measures have the potential to retain headroom and relieve resilience pressures. Saving water has societal, environmental and economic benefits, for example 19% of home energy use is to heat water and a 20% reduction in water use nationally would save hundreds of thousands of tonnes of GHG emissions annually. Policy recommendations from Dr Cotterill's work identified the need for a Government-led **National Framework for Domestic Water Conservation** to implement measures such as water efficiency labelling, revised building regulations and fitting standards for water efficiency, smart metering pilots, and water conservation awareness and education programmes.



# Education and Awareness

## Webinar discussion on public participation in catchment management

In preparation for the Water Forum's submission on the draft River Basin Management Plan the Forum held an online webinar to discuss approaches to public participation to inform policy advice. The webinar provided the opportunity to share research commissioned by the Forum and to discuss practical approaches being implemented for community engagement in water management.

Held on the 2nd February to mark World Water Day, the context for the webinar was set with an introduction to the Water Forum's Framework for Integrated Land and Landscape Management (FILLM) policy, which recommends the broadening of the integrated catchment management approach to include outcomes for biodiversity enhancement and climate mitigation. The FILLM approach recommends beginning with a stakeholder 'vision' for the catchment. To explore how this might be achieved, academic experts made presentations on public participation and practice for deliberative and participative democracy approaches in Session One. Session Two considered practical examples of public participations and the existing policy gaps to support such participation.

Over 400 people attended the event and there was excellent engagement in the Q&A with over 80 questions posted. The learnings from the presentations and webinar discussions indicate the following supports will be needed

by communities to deliver water quality outcomes in the 3rd cycle include:

- Catchment science needs to be discussed at local level, the issues need to be identified, solutions found and subsequent actions agreed and implemented
- Structures for scientists, experts and communities to work side by side to deliver outcomes for water quality need to be put in place
- Policy support needs to be provided in the form of a Governance model with roles and responsibilities agreed
- Support and funding have to be provided to active community groups to ensure continued engagement.

The discussions and many of the recommendations and learnings shared in this webinar have contributed to the Water Forum's submission on the draft River Basin Management Plan. The Forum would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the presenters for their time, informative and generous input to the debate.

The Forum's submission to the draft RBMP has recommended the development of a national approach to public participation. A framework needs to be developed to assist agencies and Local Authorities to support communities implement the right measure in the right place to improve outcomes not only for water but for nature and climate as well.

## Education and Awareness outputs

### ECO EYE Programme

To begin the discussion on the need for more consideration of water conservation measures the Water Forum sponsored an ECO EYE Programme titled, **'Water Pressure'** that was broadcast March 1st. 256,000 people watched the broadcast and it was shown again in August with an audience of 200,000 people.

### National Science Week

To further the discussion on the need for Water conservation, Dr Triona McGrath, the Forum's Research & Policy Lead hosted a panel discussion with academics on the **Potential impact of climate change on water quality and water quantity**. The video and podcast were launched during National Science Week with an introduction to the topic provided by Professor Conor Murphy of ICARUS, Maynooth University.

### Water Forum Factsheets and Infographics

Factsheets covering issues relating to water management in Ireland were produced and made available on the Water Forum website under Education and Awareness resources:

- An Introduction to the Water Framework Directive
- An Introduction to the River Basin Management Plan
- Water Management in Ireland

An infographic 'Water is worth saving' to promote water conservation in the home was also made available on the Water Forum's website and circulated with the summer newsletter.



Professor Conor Murphy of ICARUS, Maynooth University, contributing to the Water Forum's podcast for National Science week.



# Communications: Press Releases and Newsletters

The Forum communications hub is the website [www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie) where all of the Forum's publications are available. Research reports, policy submissions, meeting minutes, press releases, newsletters and weekly news updates and social media feeds are accessible.

## Key communications in 2022 include:

- Annual Report for 2021
- 4 quarterly newsletters
- Water conservation article in Farmers Journal, Living magazine
- Press releases
- Radio interviews

The Forum's quarterly newsletter is circulated to all members, their organisations and the Forum's stakeholder network, news media and it is made publicly available on the website.

Press releases are available on the Water Forum website: [www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

Twitter feeds are available on the Forum's website.

## Representation and presentations

### 31st March 2022

Presentation to Minister O'Brien and Minister Noonan on the Forum's submission on the 3rd RBMP

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### 7th April 2022

Dr Matt Crowe presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee (JOC) on the Forum's submission on the RBMP, Donal Purcell and Dr Triona McGrath also attended.

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### 8th September 2022

Chair Dr Matt Crowe, was panel chair at the Rural Water Conference

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### 6th November 2022

Presentation by Dr Matt Crowe to the Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) attended by Donal Purcell and Dr Triona McGrath.

# Finance and Administration

The Water Forum budget is provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. During 2022, the expenditure is broken down into the categories identified in the following table.

Item	Expenditure to 31st December 2022 €
Meeting expenses	12,669
Members travel/expenses	11,394
Training and facilitation	8,931
Implementation of Strategy	134,905
Chair's allowance	13,974
Secretariat salary and travel	372,998
Office and IT expenses	34,721
<b>Total</b>	<b>589,592</b>

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



### Acknowledgements

The Chair and Senior Executive Officer would like to thank the members for their support, enthusiasm, hard work and commitment during the year.


The Water Forum would also like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their support of the work of the Forum and/or attendance at meetings of the Forum during 2022.

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Donal Daly
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Environment Protection Agency
- Irish Water
- Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
- Office of Public Works
- The Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- The Agricultural Catchments Programme and ASSAP
- The Forest Service
- Tipperary County Council



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