

Request for Research Tender on

A review of water and marine related commitments within Ireland's Programme for Government: progress, challenges for implementation and gaps in existing commitments.

**Closing Date:
8th September 2023**

Queries to be addressed to:

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<https://thewaterforum.ie/>

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE WATER FORUM

The Water Forum (An Fóram Uisce) was established on a statutory basis in June 2018 in accordance with the Water Services Act 2017 to facilitate stakeholder input to water policy development in Ireland. The Forum is the national statutory body representative of stakeholders with an interest in the quality of Ireland's water bodies, consisting of 25 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connection to issues relating to water quality and also public water consumers. The Forum has advisory roles in relation to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Uisce Éireann (Irish Water), the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and the Water Policy Advisory Committee.

The Water Forum 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 Uisce Éireann and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and Ireland's River Basin Management Plan. As an independent entity, the Forum has discretion to determine its own work programme and means of communicating its views and analysis. The vision of the Water Forum is for clean and healthy waters, supporting biodiversity, community wellbeing and economic sustainability.

Dr Matt Crowe is the Chairperson of the Water Forum, Mr Donal Purcell is the Senior Executive Officer, Dr Triona McGrath is the Research and Policy Lead, Dr Gretta McCarron is the Communications and Education Lead, Dr Aisling Corkery is the Research and Policy Executive and Martina Ryan is the Administrative support.

Further information on the work of the Water Forum is available at www.thewaterforum.ie

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Ireland's Programme for Government sets out all commitments the Government aims to achieve during the time it is in power. There are 297 environmental commitments within the current Programme for Government, where 31 are related to water quality or water services and an additional 26 are related to the marine environment.

For the last two years, Friends of the Earth has commissioned an annual independent expert assessment of the Government's delivery of its own Programme for Government commitments on climate and the environment. Both the 2021¹ and the 2022² Reports have indicated a poor performance by the Government to meeting their water-related commitments (55% in 2021, 45% in 2022). The 2022 Report states that insufficient progress is being made on the Government's own commitments in the water and marine areas. Commitments in the marine area were found to be progressing better than in areas of drinking and wastewater, but overall, water quality seems to be an area that is largely ignored by this Government.

The Water Forum would like to commission a piece of research to do a deeper analysis on progress of Programme for Government commitments in the water and marine area, to identify reasons for lack of progress, challenges for implementation, and gaps to consider for future governments.

3. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Through extensive stakeholder engagement including civil servants, policy advisors, representatives of NGOs and academic researchers, this research should determine the extent to which the current Government has fulfilled or progressed water-related commitments in the current Programme for Government, including those related to the freshwater and the marine environment, and the delivery of water and wastewater services.

Three key objectives of the research will be to:

- Provide an assessment of challenges and barriers for achieving water-related commitments within the Programme for Government.
- Identify and discuss emerging water-related issues which should be considered for future Government programmes.
- Present a series of policy recommendations to the Water Forum around overcoming barriers to meet water-related commitments, along with gaps in existing water-related commitments which should be included in future Programme for Governments.

¹ [Programme for Government Report Card 2021 \(friendsoftheearth.ie\)](https://www.friendsoftheearth.ie/programme-for-government-report-card-2021)

² [Annual Report Card 2022: Is the Government keeping its promises on Climate and Environment? | Friends of the Earth](https://www.friendsoftheearth.ie/annual-report-card-2022-is-the-government-keeping-its-promises-on-climate-and-environment/)

1. IMPACT OF RESEARCH

It is envisioned that research outputs will assist the Forum to formulate advice on the progress of water and marine related commitments in the current Programme for Government. Furthermore, through the identification of barriers for implementation and gaps in existing commitments, support the Forum to formulate advice on the development of future Programmes for Government.

Findings of the research may also contribute to future Forum policy positions and to the formulation of additional water-related advice to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Uisce Éireann or the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.

2. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables are required for this project:

- Final Report with an assessment of progress of water and marine related commitments within the Programme for Government, with a review of barriers to achieving those commitments, along with identification of emerging issues which should be included in future Government programmes.
- Policy brief outlining key findings from above and policy recommendations on emerging issues which should be included in future Government programmes.
- Presentation of key findings and policy recommendations to the Water Forum.

3. 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 where applicable.

6.1 Payment Schedules

An upfront payment of 50% of the total agreed budget will be made upon receipt of invoice from the contracted service provider or institution following the initiation of the project.

A final payment of the remaining 50% of the total agreed budget will be made on project completion within the timeframes stated within Section 6 and following receipt of the final report.

4. TIMELINES

It is a requirement that this draft report is **completed on or before Thursday 30th November 2023** as per the timeframe outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: *Timeframe for project delivery*

Publication of tender	17 th July 2023
Deadline for tender submissions	8 th September 2023
Award of tender and start of project	To be confirmed with awardee
Project initiation meeting	To be confirmed with awardee
Draft report and policy brief submitted for review by the Water Forum	On or before 30 th November 2023
Final report and policy brief	To be confirmed with awardee

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

5. 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 outline the approach to delivering this project (30 marks)
- Project management arrangements (10 marks)
- Details of budget, including compliance within the stated budget (10 marks)
- Timeline including mandatory GANTT chart outlining the timeline for project actions and deliverables (10 marks)
- Demonstrate relevant research track record of team appropriate to the subject matter, including previous/ongoing projects delivered and scientific publications (40 marks)

6. SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

Applications must be submitted no later than **5pm Friday 8th September** via email to Dr Triona McGrath, Research Lead, the Water Forum: 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.
- A CV of any supporting researchers who will have a role in the project.

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

7. AWARD OF TENDERS

One award will be made through this request for tenders.

Bodies of work may be initiated immediately from the date of award; however suitable timelines can be discussed between the awardee and the Forum's Research Lead after the award has been granted. The project will commence with an initial project meeting between the awardee and the Forum's Research Lead.

8. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- All applications must be made using the official application form.
- 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, after the grant has been offered.
- 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.
- 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/