

DATE 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**The National Water Forum has called on the new Government to prioritise action on water infrastructure, water conservation and the protection of water resources.**

The National Water Forum has prepared a set of recommendations for the next Programme for Government. These recommendations are based on a review of the most recent Programme for Government and an assessment of priority needs for the next five years. Our recommendations are made under four headings:

Policy Coherence – to take account of the cross-departmental nature of water, climate and biodiversity and to encourage better alignment between the actions across all departments to deliver much better outcomes for water, climate and biodiversity. To support this:

- The Forum recommends that an inter-departmental policy group for water, climate and biodiversity should be established to facilitate policy coherence, integration across the sectors and to find resolutions to conflicting department interests and existing conflicts in national policies.
- The Forum recommends that there is a commitment in the next PfG for an interdepartmental financing strategy to meet the ambitious EU targets for water, climate and biodiversity, where the resourcing of actions is planned in a coordinated approach aimed at delivering multiple benefits for climate, biodiversity, water and economic and social development.

Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure – to improve drinking and wastewater infrastructure to meet the demands from a growing population and economic development in a world where climate change is creating new challenges for water availability and water quality. To support this:

- The Forum recommends that the new Government ensure sufficient resources to improve and build resilience in our water and wastewater infrastructure for both public and rural water services.

Water Conservation – to make sure that all new homes built in Ireland are both energy and water efficient and to help prepare us for a future with more people (population growth) and growing pressures on water availability due to climate change. To support this:

- The Forum recommends that the next Programme for Government should include a commitment for a new government strategy for water conservation incorporating a program of actions to implement water conservation nationally. This should be developed and supported by a newly established national water conservation team.

Civic Offices, Limerick Road  
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

e: [info@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:info@nationalwaterforum.ie)

w: [www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)



- There should be a commitment included in the next PfG to amend Ireland's Building Regulations to include mandatory water efficiency measures for new buildings, to specify total water use per building and maximum ratings for fittings.

Water Quality – to reverse recent declines in water quality and to put good water quality at the heart of economic, social and environmental development in Ireland. To support this:

- The next PfG should include a commitment to effectively implement the 3rd River Basin Management Plan – Water Action Plan (2024-2027), committing to the development and implementation of Sectoral Action Plans with a clear focus on removing significant pressures and putting measures in place to protect water quality.

Dr Matt Crowe, Chairperson of the National Water Forum stated *'This set of recommendations are designed to provide a framework for overall improvement in water services and water quality over the next five years. Where we can, we have suggested specific and targeted actions that if implemented over the lifetime of the next Government will help deliver better water services and better water quality for us all'*.

END

## [Water Forum submission on the Programme for Government](#)

### *Note to the Editor*

The Water Forum (An Fóram Uisce) was established in 2018 to provide a platform for stakeholder engagement on all matters relating to water management in Ireland and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. It consists of 27 members from a wide range of organisations and sectors with an interest in water issues, including agriculture, angling, business, community and voluntary sector, domestic water consumers, education, environment, fisheries, forestry, recreation, rivers trusts, rural water, social housing, tourism, trade unions and youth.

In accordance with the Water Services Act 2017, the Forum's statutory function is to advise the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), Uisce Éireann, (UÉ), the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) and the Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) in relation to water management and the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan and the Water Framework Directive.

The Forum is chaired by Dr Matt Crowe.

Contact: [gretta@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:gretta@nationalwaterforum.ie)

[www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

Twitter: [@anforamuisce](https://twitter.com/anforamuisce)

