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The Water Forum Highlights Need for Action on the management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Ireland

The Water Forum has emphasized the need for coordinated management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in Ireland.

IAS are non-native plants or animals that can harm the environment, economy, or human health. They can pose a serious threat to Ireland's biodiversity and water quality. IAS have received media attention recently following verified sightings of Asian hornets in Cork and Dublin. In aquatic systems, IAS can alter habitats, disrupt food chains, and generate significant ecological and economic impacts. The Water Forum commissioned research *on the Management of Invasive Alien Species in Ireland*, which highlighted the risks of inaction and sets out clear, actionable recommendations for managing them effectively.

This week, The Water Forum – the national body to facilitate stakeholder input to water policy - sent policy advice related to IAS to James Browne T.D., Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Christopher O'Sullivan T.D., Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Nature, Heritage, and Biodiversity. The Forum called for leadership and clear roles and responsibilities for the management of IAS in Ireland. This is essential as currently there is no authorised unit to develop, implement, enforce and monitor IAS Management Plans. A single lead division with responsibility for the management of IAS would ensure coherent engagement across various Government Departments, sectors and agencies. The Forum also recommended the development and implementation of a National Invasive Alien Species Biosecurity Strategy, incorporating national guidelines, biosecurity protocols, and comprehensive training for government agencies and stakeholders.

Dr. Matt Crowe, Chair of The Water Forum, said: *"Management of IAS is often a hidden problem, particularly in our waters, but the costs of inaction are clear. Our research shows that investing in preventative measures and coordinated management now will save significantly more than the costs of damage in the future."*

Reference: The Water Forum's commissioned research on the [management of Invasive Alien Species in Ireland with key policy recommendations](#)

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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.

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