

Minute of the 25th Meeting of the National Technical Implementation Group for WFD



10 April 2025



	<p>Location: Online</p> <p>Date: 10 April 2025 Time: 10:30-12:50</p> <p>Chairperson: Jenny Deakin, EPA</p>
	<p>Attendance:</p> <p>Anne Marie Ryan, Anthony Coleman, Barry Deane, Bernadette White, Billy O’Keeffe, Claire Doyle, Vanessa Cooling, Cormac McConigley, Eimear O’Keeffe, Emma Oliviera, Emma Quinlan, Emmet Smyth, Eva Mockler, Evin McGovern, Finbarr Quigley, Fiona Kelly, James Petrie, Jean Rosney, Jenny Deakin, Katie Smart, Katie Tedd, Dymphna Kehoe, Kenneth Bucke, Kevin Macken, Joanne Livingstone, Margaret Keegan, Marie Archbold, Mark Farrelly, Mathew Craig, Niamh Rogan, Noel Byrne, Noel Meehan, Noleen McDonald, Oonagh Duffy, Niall O’Rahelly, Paula Treacy, Philip O’Dea, Ray Cullinane, Richard O’Callaghan, Roland Gowran, Ruth Hennessy, Sinead Barrett, Tony Kent, Vera O’Donovan</p> <p>Welcome new members: James Petrie (EPA Catchments Unit)</p> <p>Apologies: <i>Martin Cormican, Monica Lee, Conor Galvin, Ted Massey, Andy Fanning, Aoife Crowe, Catriona Davis, Silke Hartmann, Deirdre French, Riain McLaughlin</i></p>
	<p>Agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome, introductions and minutes of previous meeting 2. Sub-group recommendations for improving the transfer of organic fertilisers 3. Standing updates: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. DHLGH II. LA Waters Programme III. ASSAP IV. EPA 4. Issues for discussion from the Regional Operational Committees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Drinking water treatment plant discharges II. Misconnections impacting bathing waters 5. Discussion and Q&A

1.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes were agreed for the NTIG meeting held in December 2024. • Update given by EPA Catchments Unit on the Waterline project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requests for more information can be directed to EPA catchments Unit ○ Members invited to submit interest in joining working subgroup
2.	<p>Sub-group recommendations for improving the transfer of organic fertilisers (EPA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Cullinane (EPA) presented on the sub-group recommendations for improving the transfer of organic fertilisers. • This presentation is in Appendix 1 • Members were given opportunity to comment and raise questions • Actions: once completed - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report to be disseminated to NTIG members and added to next NTIG meeting for discussion on next steps
3.	<p>Updates</p> <p>DHLGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written summary of update is in Appendix 1. • Two further links shared to public consultations taking place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public consultation on Heavily Modified Water bodies: gov.ie - Public Consultation on the Designation of Heavily Modified Water Bodies for Ireland's third cycle River Basin Management Plan ○ First public consultation on the Fourth cycle Water Action Plan 2028-2033: gov.ie - Public Consultation on the timetable and work programme for Ireland's fourth-cycle Water Action Plan 2028 – 2033 • Members were given opportunity to comment and raise questions <p>LA Waters Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written summary of this update is in Appendix 1. • Members were given opportunity to comment and raise questions <p>ASSAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written summary of this update is in Appendix 1. • Members were given opportunity to comment and raise questions <p>EPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written summary of this update is in Appendix 1. • Members were given opportunity to comment and raise questions
4.	<p>Issues for discussion from the Regional Operational Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Deane (LAWPRO) presented on issues for discussion from the Regional Operational Committees • This presentation is in Appendix 1. Two key issues discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Drinking water treatment plant discharges Appendix 1. b) Misconnections impacting bathing waters Appendix 1. • Members were given opportunity to comment and raise questions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Discussion points <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. There has been considerable work completed to date by UE to address operational gaps in the management of drinking water treatment plants, including risk assessments carried out as part of the drinking water safety plans. UE will update the ROCs and the NTIG in the Autumn on the outcomes. II. A regulatory gap in the management of supernatant from the treatment process has been identified and will be raised by the EPA with the relevant Department. III. There is expertise nationally in on addressing misconnections, for example in Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council in the management of their bathing waters, and Waterways Ireland in addressing misconnections to their canals. The Dublin Urban Rivers LIFE project includes dissemination as part of the project which will be a useful resource. There may be further opportunities to share experiences through the NIECE network. IV. Some issues such as these may be best addressed through alternative channels, such as the NIECE working group, and the relevant Departmental expert groups for specific subject matters, for example. The review of the ToR for NTIG should include an overview of the types of issues NTIG can address and the different alternative channels available for raising other issues that fall outside the NTIG remit. The review of the ToR also needs to consider how best to close the loop to bring issues back from the NTIG to the ROCs.
5.	<p>AOB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair acknowledge and thanked P. Morris (EPA) for his contribution to the Group over the years. • Suggestions for next meeting agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of proposed ToR updates. (To be worked on by the subgroup and shared in advance)

Sludges, Biosolids and Other Organic Fertilisers Working Group



NTIG Update
10 April 2025

Introduction



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

An Overview of Ireland's Fifth Nitrates Action Programme

5.3.5 Sewage/Industrial Sludges

The use of sewage sludge is managed by Irish Water through its National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan. The application of sewage sludge to agricultural land is controlled by local authorities through the maintenance of sludge registers and inspection/enforcement programmes.

The EPA regulates industries (including dairy processing and animal slaughtering) that generate industrial sludges through IED licences. The application of industrial sludges as an organic fertiliser to agricultural land is controlled under the Good Agricultural Practice regulations.

However currently there is not an integrated approach or data system available that identifies the loads and spreadlands where sludges are applied. A comprehensive understanding of the movement of sludges and the application of sludges to agricultural land is required to ensure the existing controls are fit for purpose.

A review of the management and oversight of sludges being applied to land will be carried out by a working group established under the National Technical Implementation Group (NTIG), which is part of the River Basin Management Planning and Water Framework Directive governance structures. Recommendations arising will be brought back to the WFD governance structures for consideration.

Overall Purpose of the Working Group

To identify:

- the existing controls and legislation applicable to the landspreading of sludges, biosolids and other organic fertilisers and any gaps in knowledge and chains of custody
- make recommendations to WFD Governance Structures to improve the control and recording of sludges and organic fertilisers to achieve better environmental outcomes

Members included: EPA, DAFM, DHLGH, DECC, Uisce Éireann, LAWPRO, FSAI, DAERA NI, KCC, MCC, MNCC, RCC, LCC

Considerations/Findings

- Application of sludges to agricultural land is controlled by local authorities through the maintenance of sludge registers and inspection programmes (GAP Regulations.)
- Multiple pieces of legislation but no integrated approach for timely sharing of data
- Lack of a centralised data system for tracking and verifying loads and spreadlands
- The two Codes of Practice for the Use of Biosolids in Agriculture are out of date (developed in 2008)
 - Guidelines for Farmers
 - Guidelines for Local Authorities and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operatives
- Initial focus on sludges but included a wide range of organic fertilisers that are applied to land

Considerations/Findings contd.

- Although the nutrient load being applied to land nationally from sludges is low (approximately 5% of the national nitrogen load), land spreading may be concentrated on a small number of farms and therefore may pose a more significant risk to individual waterbodies.
- Uisce Éireann is currently solely reliant on land spreading of biosolids. With volumes being produced projected to increase and the small number of registered farms available, there is increasing pressure on the land bank, storage facilities and receiving catchments.
- Sludges can be considered valuable fertilisers and soil improvers when spread on agricultural land, subject to crop requirements and appropriate environmental controls. The recycling of these materials to land can offer an economically favourable means of contributing to the circularity of the waste streams. However, they may also contain contaminants such as metals, pathogens, chemicals including pesticides, microplastics and medicinal residues.

Recommendations

1. Develop a national register and database for sludges, biosolids and other organic fertilisers that are being spread on agricultural land
 - a) DAFM best placed based on expansion of Organic Nutrient Movement System
 - b) Data must be timely, verifiable and accessible to all relevant authorities
 - c) Should include all steps in the chain – primary producers, contractors and importing farms
 - d) Would ensure coordination and transparency across all sources being land spread
 - e) In time the register could identify land spreading locations at field level
2. Amend GAP Regulations (and any other relevant legislation) to include an obligation on producers, contractors and farmers to record the movements once the register is created
3. Update the Codes of Practice for the Use of Biosolids in Agriculture (commenced)

Recommendations continued

4. Uisce Éireann should explore options to diversify the handling of biosolids
5. Conduct a national assessment of the use of sewage sludge on agricultural land in the context of pathogens, chemicals and other hazardous substances such as POPs, PFAS, and microplastics.
6. Training for local authority inspectors, particularly on reviewing/approving NMPs
7. Greater education and awareness on benefits and risks of the use of sludges and other organic fertilisers in agriculture (Teagasc Better Farming for Water Campaign, ASSAP etc.)

Thank you!

DHLGH - Water Division Update – NTIG Meeting 10th April 2024 (FINAL)

Nitrates Action Programme:

- The Fifth Nitrates Action Programme has been completed with the Minister signing amendments to the GAP Regulations at the end of February (S.I. 42 of 2025).
- The Sixth NAP is currently being developed and must be in place for the 1st January 2026
- The judicial review of the Fifth NAP is still ongoing with nine questions referred by the High Court to the European Court of Justice. A preliminary ruling from the ECJ is anticipated at the earliest in Q4 2025.
- A Cabinet Committee on water quality has been established and has met once. The main focus is on Ireland renewing the derogation under the Sixth NAP.
- Ireland presented the first of three presentations as part of the process to renew the derogation at the Commission's Nitrates Committee. The presentation was on water quality and delivered by the EPA. It was well received by Member States.

Programme Delivery Office:

- Programme Delivery Office is now up and running. A presentation was made to WPAC on the 3rd April 2025 to provide an overview of its functions and planned work over the upcoming months.
- Currently reviewing Sectoral Action Work Plans for seven sectors (agriculture, pressures impacting hydromorphology, forestry, urban wastewater, peat, invasive alien species and drinking water source protection) with LAWPRO and EPA. Once finalised, these will be hosted on the campaign website, www.gov.ie/RBMP.
- The office will carry out quarterly tracking of the actions as appropriate, from the Water Action Plan, and produce annual progress reports. The office plans to liaise with action leads regarding progress on actions in Q3 2025.

Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWBs) – public consultation:

- Following from Action 3.10 in the Water Action Plan which undertakes to complete a public consultation on HMWBs.
- Builds on previous public consultation undertaken by EPA in 2022.
- Further information was requested from specified use owners where required. Information used to inform the 'designation tests' (steps 7-9) as outlined in CIS guidance Document no 4 (Identification and Designation of Heavily Modified and Artificial Water Bodies).
- Recommendation is to designate all 466 water bodies (433 rivers, 20 lakes, 13 estuarine and coastal waters) that were originally outlined in the previous EPA consultation.
- Public consultation can be found at <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/670a7-public-consultation-on-the-designation-of-heavily-modified-water-bodies-for-irelands-third-cycle-river-basin-management-plan/> . Submissions can be emailed to wau@housing.gov.ie.
- Closing date is **23rd May 2025**.

Hydromorphology Expert Group:

- Third meeting held online on 2nd April 2025.
- Feedback requested from members to finalise TOR.
- Discussed sub-groups and how they might work. Members to provide feedback.
- Proposing to hold an initial sub-group meeting on drainage with relevant parties, date TBC.

River Basin Management Planning:

- The first of three public consultations for the development of the fourth cycle Water Action Plan 2028-2033 opened in January 2025.

- It focuses on the timetable and work programme which sets out the main steps and milestones in the development of the plan.
- Closing date is **25th July 2025**.
- For more information, see gov.ie - Public Consultation on the timetable and work programme for Ireland's fourth-cycle Water Action Plan 2028 – 2033.

Significant Water Management Issues in Ireland (SWMII):

- Second of three public consultations for the fourth cycle river basin management planning.
- SWMII objective to identify the challenges / pressures on our water environment.
- Important step as provides framework for resource / policy decisions for development of fourth Water Action Plan.
- SWMII workshop to be held in October 2025 to identify issues to be highlighted in the SWMII overview document which will be published as part of the public consultation process.
- Public consultation to run from December 2025 to June 2026.
- Programme Delivery Office will conduct pre-consultation engagement with relevant stakeholders over the summer to capture relevant data / information and lay groundwork for the SWMI workshop. Contact rbmp@housing.gov.ie if you wish to engage in the pre-consultation process.

UWWTD & timelines:

- The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) entered into force on the 1st January 2025.
- All member states will have 30 months to Transpose, which is July 2027.
- National and EU UWWTD expert groups are established.
- In February this year, the EPA completed a review of Nutrient Sensitive Areas (NSA) (freshwater and marine) as required by the UWWTD. To give legal effect to these NSAs, new legislation needs to be enacted. The new legislation has been drafted and it is expected to be in place in the coming weeks.

Urban Nature-Based Solutions:

- National Nature-based solutions conference to be held in Dundalk IT on the 4th and 5th June – save the date, details to follow

Climate:

- Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructural Sectoral Adaptation Plan to be published in September 2025

Proposed Priority Substances in Water Directive:

- The proposed Directive amends the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, and the Environmental Quality Standards Directive – updating the lists of pollutants affecting GW and SW.
- This is currently at Trilogue stage, with the next round of Trilogues, which was originally scheduled for 7 April has been changed to 20 May, with another envisaged to occur in June.

Bathing Water:

- EPA have drafted an advice note to help Local Authorities to define the bathing season annually, as is now required by the Bathing Water Quality (Amendment) Regs 2024.

- The evaluation of the Bathing Water Directive has been published – [link to press release](#). The support study for the evaluation can be found on the Commission’s publication office webpage - [here](#). There has been no indication if/when a recast of the Directive will be proposed.

LAWPRO National Update for NTIG Meeting

10th April 2025

Water Action Plan 2024 – Action Updates

1. Sectoral Action Work Plans and Catchment Management Work Plans

<p>Action 1.1 Integrated catchment management approaches will be used to identify and decide on further specific measures for each water body, where they are required in addition to those set in this plan. These will be included in the 46 Catchment Management Work Plans, which will be used to locate measures within each catchment. The co-benefits of water-focused measures on climate and biodiversity will also be identified. <i>LEAD – LAWPRO</i></p>
<p>Action 1.2 The Catchment Management Work Plans will include the list of water bodies, their associated status, significant pressures/issues and targeted measures, along with outcomes-based targets for the third-cycle and key performance indicators to monitor progress and outcomes. Justification for water bodies not meeting their WFD objective by 2027 should also be included in catchment management plans, in line with Article 4 of the WFD. <i>LEAD – LAWPRO</i></p>
<p>Action 1.3 Sectoral Action Work Plans will be developed. They will set out the actions to be taken by the relevant authorities in line with their legally binding general duties under Article 3(1) of the 2003 Water Policy Regulations (SI 722 of 2003). <i>LEAD – DHLGH.</i></p>
<p>Action 3.3: LAWPRO will co-ordinate a simplified climate change sensitivity analysis or “climate check” which will be undertaken in line with EU Guidance during the third RBMP cycle at the level of Catchment Management Work Plans. The check will also inform the setting of RBMP environmental objectives for the following fourth-cycle. (Timeline: 2025). <i>LEAD – LAWPRO</i></p>
<p>Action 6.1: LAWPRO will oversee the development of the template for the 46 Catchment Management Work Plans by Q2 2024. <i>LEAD – LAWPRO</i></p>
<p>Action 6.2: Implementing Bodies to engage with LAWPRO with the data required for their work in compiling the 46 Catchment Work Plans and also trialling the CMWP template in the 5 pilot catchments. <i>LEAD – LAWPRO</i></p>

LAWPRO are assisting the DHLGH’s Water Advisory Unit to roll out the delivery of the Sectoral Action Work Plans and the Catchment Management Work Plans. This assistance is in the form of the development of a template with the EPA and holding numerous stakeholder meetings and presenting to each of the sectors. LAWPRO have also presented the proposed approach for the Sectoral Action Work Plans and the Catchment Management Work Plans to the Sustainable Water Network (SWAN), NTIG, and An Forám Uisce.

The template was agreed with the DHLGH and the EPA. A reminder of the deadline for completion of the plans (31st March) along with the template and data from the EPA was issued by the Programme Delivery Office of the DHLGH’s Water Advisory Unit, to all sectoral organisations in mid-March.

LAWPRO continue to work on the template and content collation for the Catchment Management Work Plans. A proposed approach for visual presentation of the plans is also in development and will be discussed with the EPA in Q2 (May).

LAWPRO will work with Local Authorities and the EPA to prepare a template for the Local Authority Action Plan. This work will commence after the submission of RMCEI plans for 2025, and through engagements as part of the 5 regional Local Authority – LAWPRO Liaison Groups.

2. Catchment Assessment – National Update

Action 4.1: The EPA and LAWPRO, with the support of the implementing bodies and other stakeholders, will continue to assess the impacts of pressures on waters to inform the measures that are needed. (Timeline: Ongoing). LEAD – EPA / LAWPRO
Action 5.3: LAWPRO will confirm significant pressures and work with implementing bodies and stakeholders to promote the implementation of appropriate restoration measures in each Area for Action (restoration) where environmental objectives are not being met. (Timescale: Ongoing). LEAD - LAWPRO
Action 5.4: LAWPRO will confirm significant pressures and work with implementing bodies and stakeholders to progress the implementation of appropriate protection measures in areas that are meeting their environmental objectives but require protection to ensure that water quality does not deteriorate. (Timescale: Ongoing). LEAD - LAWPRO
Unknown 1: The Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) will conduct assessments of water bodies in Priority Areas for Action where the pressures are unknown to identify the specific issues and actions that are required to protect or restore water quality as necessary. LEAD – LAWPRO
HazChem 3: Teagasc, ASSAP and DAFM, with support from LAWPRO, will implement specific actions in high-risk catchments to protect water quality from toxic impacts arising from the handling, use and disposal of sheep dip. LEAD – DAFM / LAWPRO

- Progress achieved in the 2nd Cycle Priority Areas for Action was calculated in Q1 2025. Across the 189 PAAs the average completeness is 75% with 74 PAAs fully complete and a further 33 complete in terms of local catchment assessment, with some final reporting remaining. The remaining incomplete PAAs are on average 45% complete and will now be carried into the 3rd Cycle work programmes.
- Desk studies for 3rd Cycle PAAs are underway across the regions with 27 started so far.
- Community information meetings related to 3rd Cycle PAAs are being held at municipal district level, with multiple PAAs covered in a single meeting. This change in approach is in recognition of the increased numbers of PAAs, and resources required to hold the meetings in a timely manner. Across the regions, 23 municipal district meetings are planned for 2025.
- 707 referrals have been made to ASSAP to date, with a further 85 to other agencies including Local Authorities and the EPA.
- Under the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2021 – 2027, DECC and DAFM were tasked with establishing a national cross-agency forum to focus on the appropriate management of spent sheep dip to prevent environmental pollution. Given the prevalence of these issues in Donegal, LAWPRO representatives from the Border Region were invited to sit on this forum. The forum has met four times since April 2024, and most recently in January 2025. Chaired by DAFM Veterinary Medicines Division, discussions to date have focused on the requirement for updated best practice guidance (for both usage and disposal), better tracking and registration of

usage, an assessment of the various dipping services available, and early considerations for a potential collection scheme for spent dip.

- The catchments team continue to support the Farming for Water EIP team and ASSAP in the targeted application of agricultural measures in 2nd Cycle referral areas.
- The catchments team continues their engagement with the ACRES Cooperation Projects teams, providing advice and inputs on water quality considerations specific to high status objective water bodies, in the development of their Local Area Plans.
- Regular meetings with Local Authorities, implementing bodies and other collaborators are continuing e.g. Uisce Eireann, EPA Catchments Unit, An Foram Uisce, Local Authority Liaison Groups, and individual Local Authority meetings, etc.
- National biological assessment (SSIS, invasive species and biosecurity) staff training rolled out to the catchments team in March, to support their work in identification of significant pressures.

3. Communities Team Updates

Action 6.9: Ensure further activation, development, and support of local level initiatives (rivers trusts, catchment partnerships) in support of the delivery of the RBMP. LEAD – LAWPRO
Action 6.12: LAWPRO to evaluate the outcome of the Resilience Project for Rivers Trusts to inform future community engagement initiatives, including on citizen science. LEAD LAWPRO. <u>Complete</u>
Action 6.13: LAWPRO to examine ways in which further support can be provided for the formation and capacity building of local forums to help identify and implement measures. LEAD – LAWPRO
Action 6.14: LAWPRO and DHLGH to review the operation of the Community Water Development Fund with a view to strengthening it. [CABL 99.] The State must increase support for community groups and NGOs that are working on key projects to improve freshwater systems – e.g. support for Irish Rivers Trusts, group water schemes, angling and community groups.] LEAD – DHLGH (WAU). <u>Complete</u>
Action 6.15: LAWPRO will facilitate public participation in the development of the Catchment Management Work Plans through workshops for the 5 pilot catchments. This will inform the development and implementation of a national approach to public participation to deliver outcomes for water, climate and nature. As part of this initiative LAWPRO will work with public bodies with responsibility for water related environmental enforcement to improve public awareness of public body responsibilities and reporting procedures for pollution incidents.
Action 6.16: The public participation pilots will provide learnings (which will then be implemented) on how agencies, local authorities, communities and landowners can work together to support action planning and project co-creation for a combined top-down bottom-up approach to the development and implementation of the 46 Catchment Management Work Plans.

Community Team Activity 2024

- A national snapshot summary of Community Team Engagements (meetings, events, workshops, project planning etc.) for 2024 will be included in the 2024 Annual Report – these include 1047 national Community Water Officer engagements – including: 254 community engagements; 179 community meetings; 117 engagements with State agencies; 67 Local Authority engagements; and 68 Heritage Week engagements.

Catchment Community Fora

- An overall Catchment Community Fora Workshop summary findings report is in draft and due to issue in Q2 2025. These findings will formulate future work on development of CCFs in the 5 pilot catchments; and allow for future development of appropriate public participation frameworks at a catchment level.

LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund 2025

- This funding scheme aims to build the capacity of non-governmental organisations working in the area of water quality.
- Under the fund eligible organisations were invited to apply for financial assistance to support Stream 1 organisational costs such as statutory and/or legal fees, insurance costs associated with catchment management, accountancy fees, website annual support costs, organisation promotional materials and group development activities. In cases where an organisation has company limited by guaranteed status and a proven track record with LAWPRO, organisations were also invited to apply for Stream 2 capacity costs included funding towards staff costs, rent and rates.
- The budget under the Catchment Support Fund is €856,260 for 2025.
- A total of 40 grants are being awarded in 2025 with Letters of Offer issued this week. (20 grants for Stream 2 Core Activities and 21 for Operational Costs)
- A list of successful grantees is available on www.lawaters.ie.

Community Water Development Fund – Open Call 2025

- This funding call grant aids community driven projects and initiatives to help improve water quality.
- Invited projects included river restoration, nature-based solutions, protected areas projects, pathway interception measures, surveys, fish barrier mitigation, fish habitat enhancement, reports, permissions & consents, landscape management actions, Blue Dot Catchment Projects, biodiversity, water conservation measures, climate action, educational programmes and bespoke projects in support of water quality.
- Grants range from €5,000 euro to € 50,000 (or higher, subject to procurement).
- The budget under the open call is €1,047,265 for 2025.
- A total of 54 grants were awarded nationally.
- A list of successful grantees is available on www.lawaters.ie. 2025 CWDF map [here](#).

LAWPRO Small Grants and Events Scheme 2025

- This is a new rolling call for smaller scale community water quality actions and awareness initiatives with grants available from €50 to €5,000.
- This scheme involves a less onerous application and assessment process than the Community Water Development Fund.

4. Local Authority Support and Coordination Team update

Unknown 3: The Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG) will provide appropriate training programmes including on Catchment assessment, Integrated Catchment Management, and farm inspections for the staff of local authorities and all implementing bodies. LEAD - LAWPRO
Agri 11: To support the goal of targeting the right measure in the right place all farm advisers involved in the 'Farming for Water' Agri-EIP, will be provided with ongoing professional development, including an appropriate level of catchment science training to ensure that measures are sufficiently targeted.
Action 6.8: Specific capacity building programmes of work to be put in place to encourage the transfer of learning and knowledge. LEAD - LAWPRO
Agri 2: Local Authorities will strengthen the inspection and enforcement relating to agricultural diffuse pollution. LEAD - EPA/NIECE

National Agricultural Inspection Programme (NAIP)

- LAWPRO have supported the development of certified training via the LASNTG. It consists of 2 classroom days (running 25-26 March and 21-22 May for 30 persons at each sitting) and one day on site at Gurteen Agricultural College (18 June for all 60 persons). We have supported the prioritisation of attendees as the course was over-subscribed.
- A webinar dealing with cross reporting of farms to DAFM for non-compliance will be held on 9th April with trainers from DAFM and a local authority on why, when and how to issue cross reports to DAFM.

Co-ordination of data sharing

- The LA Support & Coordination team are working with DAFM to share 2023 LPIS data with all Local Authorities. The window for reporting export of organic manures is now 4 days and the LA Support & Coordination team are investigating options for sharing this data with Local Authorities. LAWPRO staff have raised these items for discussion at the LA Liaison meetings and have scheduled a workshop to look at the process for organic manure exports with a number of Local Authorities, DAFM and the EPA on 3rd April.

Local Authority Liaison

- LA Liaison meetings were carried out in all regions in Q3-Q4 2024 and again in 4 out of 5 regions in Q1 2025 to discuss issues relating to the RBMP/WAP implementation by Local Authorities (Border Region Q1 meeting postponed).
- The meetings include updates and open discussion as well as an agreed key topic for each meeting. The key topic for the Q1 meetings was an update on Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 Priority Areas for Action including LAWPRO progress and plans and where ASSAP will work in 2025.
- The key topic for the Q2 meetings will be the Local Authority Water Action Plans. LAWPRO will support LAs through the development of templates for these plans and will seek LA representation from all regions for a working group.
- These meetings will continue in 2025 on a quarterly basis in conjunction with the regional operational committee meetings.

Training

- A project to prepare a training needs analysis in the water area for Local Authorities began in January 2025 to run for 6 months. The steering group is co-chaired by LAWPRO and LASNTG and includes members from Local Authorities, Departments, and subject experts. To date, we have supported the completion of a survey of all 31 LAs. Relevant courses have been reviewed and all organisations on the steering group have participated in interviews.
- Catchment Science and Management Training:
 - There has been strong interest in the 8-day course which will be run twice in 2025 with LASNTG. Participants will be notified shortly if they have secured a place following prioritisation due to over-subscription. Module 1 is online and will be made available to all applicants.
 - 2-day agriculture focused classroom/field training course has been run in March for 40 participants including ASSAP advisors (Teagasc & Co-op), River/Catchment Trusts, Water EIP.
 - 1-day course to be developed for later in 2025 for middle to senior management in Local Authorities.
 - ACRES Cooperation Project teams training will consist of the online Module 1 and a 2-day classroom/field training element.
- LAs were surveyed on behalf of the EPA on interest in workshops on the implementation of guidelines for the risk assessment and risk management of catchments to drinking water sources to be run this summer.

5. Blue Dot Catchments Programme (BDCP) & Waters of LIFE IP

Action 5.5: LAWPRO in cooperation with the EU LIFE IP Waters of LIFE project team will publish a new Blue Dot Programme work plan for waters with a High Status Objective.

- The Blue Dot Catchments Programme Steering Committee last met on 22nd October 2024. The committee was hosted by the Waters of LIFE Integrated Project Team at Teagasc Offices in Castlereagh, Co. Roscommon. The meeting focused on progress of the IP and included a fieldtrip for members to the Islands demonstration catchment which focused on agricultural and hydromorphological pressures. Draft scorecards were outlined and tested in the field.
- Through the 2025 Community Water Development Fund a significant number of projects have been proposed in Blue Dot Catchments with a value of €172,879k.
- The Catchment Support fund 2025 closing date was the 15th of January. Key groups focusing on Blue Dot catchments who were successful in receiving funding include StreamScapes and Climate Action Louisburgh Locality (CALL). Streamscapes are hiring a Blue Dots community animator /coordinator part time and CALL will continue to employ their coordinator to oversee the group's activities in particular their study on the hydromorphology of the catchment and how it affects the estuary as well as implementing actions recommended from the study.
- The Blue Dot Team have reviewed the Sectoral Action Work Plan template and inputted to its structure to include Blue Dot requirements.
- The LAWPRO Communities Team has supported schools' engagements in 5 demonstration catchments for Waters of LIFE in September and October 2024. An additional output of this work will be an "off the shelf" engagement package for schools' engagements in Blue Dot

Catchments to be produced by the WOL Team with support from the LAWPRO Blue Dot Team. Further schools' engagements are planned for 2025.

- The Blue Dot Team, Catchments Team and EIP Team reviewed WOL scorecards and provided comments. These have since been finalised and advisor training conducted by the WOL Team.
- Following successful Blue Dot engagement campaigns in Connemara and Mayo, a similar initiative will be rolled out in the Southwest region in 2025. The details are currently under development but will likely include engagement materials such as a video and booklet, school visits and signage/art installation.

6. Nature-based Solutions to Surface Water Management

Urban Runoff 2: DHLGH to provide interim guidance documentation to the Local and Planning Authorities on measures to be implemented to support the delivery of a greater focus on nature

based solutions in advance of a national implementation strategy. LEAD – DHLGH (WAU)

Urban runoff 3: DHLGH to establish a pilot project to investigate solutions to urban runoff using Nature based Solutions. LEAD - Dublin City Council & Cork County Council

NbS Demonstrators 2025

- LAWPRO has secured a €250,000 capital fund to support local authorities to deliver nature-based solution projects. The NbS team now propose to engage with LAs who responded to the call for demonstrator projects as issued in June 2024 and reported on to the Department.

Town Centre First Training

- NbS awareness training for all Town Regeneration Officers is scheduled for 9th April in Carlow. This training will consist of classroom-based presentations together with a field trip to completed NbS projects which were part funded by LAWPRO.
- Further training for all Town Centre First Project teams is expected to take place in Q2/Q3 2025 where focus will be on specific TCF projects and NbS case studies.

NbS Training for Local Authority Staff and Elected Members

- A Nature-based Solutions Thematic Training Group (TTG) has been established to explore training content to be delivered to local authority staff. The group is engaging with the CAROs to deliver training to local government staff and elected members in 2025, specifically on nature-based solutions, focussing on urban rainwater and urban surface water discharges. Training expected to be delivered in Q3/Q4 2025. Training delivered to Climate Action Teams national Climate Conference and fieldtrip organised by the CAROs in Wexford on April 2nd and URBAN WATER - Nature based solutions (NBS) module to the Local Authority Climate Action WEBINAR SERIES 2025 on April 4th.

Promotion of NbS Guidance Documents & Good Practice

- The NbS team are proposing to engage with local authorities' planning sections to promote the uptake and use of the DHLGH's *Rainwater Management Plans – Guidance for Local Authorities*.

- The NbS team will also continue to promote the use of LAWPRO's *Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions - Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents*. Following publication in November 2024, the NbS team engaged extensively with several professional bodies and garnered their support. An updated version of the Guidance Document will be published this year.
- Following last year's inaugural NbS conference held in Dundalk IT, the second annual NbS national conference will be held this year - date is June 4th (conference) and 5th NbS (Master classes in urban, rural and coastal NbS techniques) 2025,.
- The NbS team are engaging with the professional bodies (Engineers Ireland, RIAI, CIEEM, ILI, IPI) to develop NbS training programmes for the private sector to support the delivery and mainstreaming of NbS nationally.

7. Business Cases

Agri 9: Extend and expand the local authorities' water protection office. LAWPRO will be extended for the full duration of Cycle 3 up to 2027. The CCMA will identify the appropriate level of resources and involvement of LAWPRO to meet WFD objectives up to 2027 and beyond in future RBMPs. LEAD – LAWPRO

Action 6.17: A review of the wider local authority structures will be progressed to inform future needs in the water area and to identify the appropriate level of resources and involvement required from the sector to meet WFD objectives. LEAD – CCMA

Action 6.19: Review to be undertaken of the Local Authority Waters Programme to identify necessary resources for the third-cycle and beyond to deliver the commitments under the WFD and future RBMPs. LEAD - LAWPRO

- **Local Authority Natural Waters Functions & Resources Business Case**
- **LAWPRO Business Case**

The Local Authority Natural Waters Functions & Resources Business Case and LAWPRO Business Case were endorsed by the CCMA WEEP committee on the 11th September 2024 and subsequently both business cases were presented to PSROG on the 1st October 2024, with a recommendation to proceed to the peer review process with recommendations to be received before year end.

The business cases were circulated to all Chief Executives for review and comment on the 16th October 2024. These comments were collated and put to the project team then for consideration and feedback. The Project Team met with the Peer Review Board on the 20th Nov 2024 on the LA Business Case and on the 28th Nov 2024 on the LAWPRO Business Case. The Peer Review Board reports on those meetings were received on the 12th December 2024. The Project Team are preparing responses to outstanding queries and will report to a new Project Board to be established by the CCMA's ECCE Committee.

Local Authority Strategic Workforce Planning

On the 11th February 2025, the CCMA issued correspondence to all Local Authorities (DOS) providing an update on the status of the Local Authority Natural Waters Functions and Resources Business Case. Each Local Authority is advised to consider the information provided including areas which are not included in the Business Case when developing their strategic workforce plan.

8. Farming for Water EIP Project

Agri 5: The Water EIP project led by LAWPRO, in partnership with Teagasc and Dairy Industries Ireland will focus on reducing losses of phosphorus, nitrogen, sediment and, where relevant, pesticides to water from agricultural lands by promoting the adoption of innovative best practice in nutrient management, the application of Nature based Solutions and other suitable measures. The project will aim to support up to 15,000 farmers in implementing on farm water protection and mitigation measures. LEAD – LAWPRO

Agri 11: To support the goal of targeting the right measure in the right place all farm advisers involved in the 'Farming for Water' Agri EIP, will be provided with ongoing professional development, including an appropriate level of catchment science training to ensure that measures are sufficiently targeted. LEAD – LAWPRO / Teagasc

- The Farming for Water EIP Project Team have received 1,613 applications from farmers to date, of which 1089 were submitted in 2024. These applications contain over 11,000 measures including Rainwater Management Plans. The total average application value over these applications was in the order of €11,241.
- Following discussions with the EIP Strategic Oversight Committee it has been decided to introduce an application cap of €40,000 per farmer. It was also decided to increase the catch/cover crop limit from 20Ha per annum per applicant to 40Ha per annum per applicant.
- While the application target of 70 per advisor per annum applies to 2025, ensuring that the measures approved are installed and funding drawn down as soon as possible is a key priority for the project. Based on the composition of the applications received in 2024 and the targets set for 2025 there is the potential for €12,000,000 of payments to farmers in 2025. To date €420,000 has been paid. Support for farmers to install and claim payments represents a significant workload for the ASSAP team.
- Mandatory EIP training was carried out with the ASSAP advisory team on January 22nd to ensure that all advisors are fully up to date with the EIP application process, project changes and plans for 2025. A 2-day Catchment Science and Management training course for advisors was carried out on March 13th and 14th and was attended by Teagasc, Dairy and Meat ASSAP advisors, Community Animators and non-ASSAP dairy personnel.
- Work is continuing outside of the ASSAP team to identify collaboration opportunities to increase EIP applications.
 - Discussions with Meat Industry Ireland and individual meat processors are ongoing and Kepak have committed an advisory resource. This advisor is working in the Moynalty area and has started to submit EIP applications.
 - A number of non-ASSAP Dairy Co-ops have also identified suitable farmers for EIP applications and are currently training up internal resources to submit applications. These groups include Centenary Co-op, Lee Strand and Strathroy Dairies.
 - National Federation of Group Water Schemes – training has been carried out with Source Protection Officers and some Group Water Scheme managers on the EIP process. We are also currently looking at a pilot with Stranooden Group Water scheme which builds on their existing work.
 - Following the success of the tillage pilot in the South East in 2024 and the increasing demand for the Catch/Cover Crops measure, a tillage pilot has been proposed which will leverage the

Teagasc Tillage Advisory Team to assist the ASSAP resource in nitrate risky areas. This will allow cover crops to be fast tracked and ensure that the available window for submitting applications and planting is maximised.

- The tender for the procurement of the IT application for processing funding applications and mapping measures has progressed and following an assessment process a preferred tenderer has been identified. 5 tenders were received, and the preferred tenderer was selected taking consideration of the price, previous experience, programme and relevant resources proposed for the project. This project now requires a business case to secure the required funding of €373,428.
- There are still a number of vacancies still to be filled on the team and recruitment is underway to fill any remaining posts. The five Community Animators have now been employed by the successful catchment organisations and commenced liaising with farmers.

Teagasc ASSAP Update to NTIG

Thursday April 10th 2025

- Teagasc has established a new Water Quality Knowledge Transfer department.
- This has part replaced the Environment KT department. Climate change and Biodiversity KT department has been established also.
- The Water Quality KT department has responsibility for the implementation of the Teagasc Better Farming for Water Campaign, with the head of the department being the campaign lead. The ASSAP, advisory part of the ACP, BFFW Catchment Coordinators, NMP Online and water quality specialist are all part of the water quality KT team.
- The Teagasc Better Farming for Water Campaign:
 - The 6 catchment coordinators have been appointed and will work in 8 catchments; Boyne, Lee, Bandon, Blackwater, Suir, Nore, Barrow, Slaney.
 - Each catchment will have a stakeholder group and will have a catchment specific plan to improve water quality
 - The plans will be similar to the existing Slaney and Blackwater plans already launched
- ASSAP:
 - Advisors working on delivery of EIP plans
 - Varying levels of uptake across regions and sectors
 - Catch crop pilot is currently being implemented to increase the uptake of the measure on tillage farms in nitrate risky catchments
 - Farmer interest in the pilot is strong
 - Meat industry Ireland through the meat processing companies have put forward 8 advisors to work on ASSAP and prepare EIP applications
 - The 5 EIP catchment animators have also been identified
 - All new ASSAP advisors across all participants in ASSAP and the EIP received catchment science and management training at the end of March. 40 advisors received the training.

EPA Update to NTIG

Thursday April 10, 2025

- The subgroup for the ToR is currently reviewing and proposing updates. Subgroup to propose draft for NTIG review by next NTIG meeting.
- Registration for the EPA Water Conference 2025 is now open. The conference will take place on the 11-12 July, 2025 in Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill Galway. The EPA will share an invitation and ask that members disseminate information within their relevant teams. More information: [EPA Water Conference 2025 - Registration Open! - Catchments.ie - Catchments.ie](https://catchments.ie/catchments/e-water-conference-2025)
- The EPA gave a verbal update on the new abstraction legislation that came into effect in Aug 2024, with licences to be submitted by the end of Feb 2025 for abstractions $\geq 2,000\text{m}^3/\text{day}$. The licensing process has commenced, with a number of applications submitted and being processed. Information on the status of licenses can be tracked and viewed on the EPA LEAP portal.
- The EPA has completed a public consultation on the significant abstractions guidance, which will be used to identify significant abstractions between 25-1,999 m^3/day . The guidance will be published after Easter and the EPA will use the guidance to identify significant abstractions over the coming months. Any abstraction identified as being a significant abstraction will also be required to apply for an EPA licence.
- A stakeholder workshop for registered abstractors is planned for April 30
- Members were given opportunity to comment and raise question



Issues Papers developed by SWROC

*Barry Deane – LAWPRO SW Regional
Coordinator*

*NTIG Meeting
10th April 2024*

Papers submitted to NTIG

- Issues raised by ROC Members
- Debated and discussed locally
- NTIG Template for Issue escalation developed
- 2 issues papers:
 - Managing risk from Drinking Water Treatment Plants and distribution networks
 - Managing risk to Bathing Water Quality associated with Misconnections from Domestic Plumbing and from combined sewer networks

Issue	Date raised	Proposer
Managing risk from Drinking Water Treatment Plants and distribution networks	20/06/24 at SWROC 31/07/24 at the SWRWEMC	Implementing bodies at SWROC. Proposed by the ROC and approved by the Regional Management Committee.

Issue	Date raised	Proposer
Managing risk to Bathing Water Quality associated with Misconnections from Domestic Plumbing and from combined-sewer networks	20/06/24 at SWROC 31/07/24 at the SWRWEMC	Implementing bodies at SWROC. Proposed by the ROC and approved by the Regional Management Committee.

Summary of the issue and its implications for achieving WFD objectives

Risk to achieving the required Protected-Area Status for Designated Bathing Waters from Misconnections to surface waters and urban drainage networks in the vicinity of designated bathing areas. Bacteriological contamination associated with such mis-connections is potentially a direct risk to bathing water quality at a number of designated bathing water areas nationally.

Extent of the issue in the national context

Knowledge gap	Implementation gap	Policy gap
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of knowledge of the extent to which Misconnections are impacting on bathing water quality nationally. Many small waterbodies (freshwater rivers and streams) within bathing water catchments currently have unassigned water quality status. Lack of knowledge of the potential impact of climate change on drainage management in bathing water catchments. 	Lack of investigation and remediation work in this area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmented management of the <u>issue</u>: UE responsible for management of the foul-sewer network, Local Authorities are responsible for management of the surface water drainage network and for bathing water quality management. Water quality monitoring of freshwaters is primarily focused on nutrient and chemical parameters.

Suggested solution(s)

Establishment of pilot projects (n=3 – recommendation from SWRWEMC) specifically aimed at identifying the extent of the issue. Funding for the project would be used to undertake site-specific investigations in a small number of representative bathing water catchments.

The proposed project would include the following:

- On-site investigation work, including:
 - detailed surveys (topographical and CCTV) of the existing drainage network (incl. surface water and foul) within the contributing catchments of the selected bathing waters.,
 - water quality monitoring (bacteriological assessments, speciation, caffeine analysis etc.).

Suggested actors

DHLG, LAS, UE

Context and Background



Investigation after up to 2,000 fish killed in Co Clare

According to locals, "hundreds of dead fish" have been seen along a stretch of the Ballymacraven and Inagh Rivers near Ennistymon



An Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) inspector spent the day at the scene on Monday. Picture: Inland Fisheries Ireland

MON. 08 MAY. 2023 - 22:55

May 2023

'The river was effectively sterilised': At least 5,000 fish dead in Co Cork fish kill

Inland Fisheries Ireland is investigating the cause of the the fish kill on the River Allow near Freemount

Expand



A fish kill has left at least 5,000 fish dead in a tributary of the Blackwater in north Cork

Barry Roche

Tue Jun 11 2024 - 09:40

June 2024

LATEST STORIES >

Minister committed to enacting legislation to ban sex for rent

Champions League round-up: PSG hit back to take control of Champions League tie against Villa

Trump tariffs: 90-day 'pause' on non-retaliating countries as China is hit with 125% rate

Trump's U-turn on tariffs fails to reassure markets and trading partners

Mothers Against Genocide plan to lodge complaint over treatment by gardai

ADVERTISEMENT



Ecological Impact

- Impact observed > 5km of river length
- > 5000 fish killed
- Annex II species (Atlantic salmon, lampreys) – Special Area of Conservation
- Brown trout and range of other fish species killed
- Freshwater Pearl Mussel unknown
- Wider impact on ecology unknown (e.g., on Annex II species such as European otter and Kingfisher)





IRD Duhallow
LIFE Samok



IRD Duhallow
Raptor LIFE

- Economic impact unquantified
- > €7million invested by community led initiatives alone
- Angling tourism and recreation impacted (competitions cancelled)
- 500 Local Authority and state agency trained in catchment science on farms in the area
- Potentially undermining of WFD buy in within other sectors including the Agricultural community not just in this catchment





Ladies' Beach, Ballybunion. Photo by Moss Joe Browne.

Sinead Kelleher

Kerryman

Wed 28 Jun 2023 at 12:09



Kerry County Council have announced a bathing ban at Ballybunion beaches.

Following sampling of water quality which shows elevated levels of bacteria in the water, and further to consultation with the HSE, a prohibition has been placed on bathing and swimming at Ballybunion North and South beaches, also known as the Ladies and Men's beach, with immediate effect.

This is likely to be linked to the heavy rainfall in recent days.

Signage advising of the prohibition is being placed at the beaches.

Further sampling will be carried out and the prohibition will only be lifted on receipt of improved water quality results.

Bathing Water

- June 2023
- Particularly Sensitive Catchment
- Ecological Impact
- Societal Impact
- Economic Impact



Discussions at Regional Committees

Good engagement from SWROC Members

- Incidents were the catalyst for discussion
- More concerning:
 - Reoccurring pattern of incidents
 - Scale of the impact from one off incidents
 - Something more fundamental here, beyond the normal regular statutory functions
- Broader issues here that need to be considered at National level
 - Knowledge Gap, regulatory responsibilities, available resources, Policy and legislation

Papers developed and sent to SWRWEMC

- Discussed and agreement that escalation needed

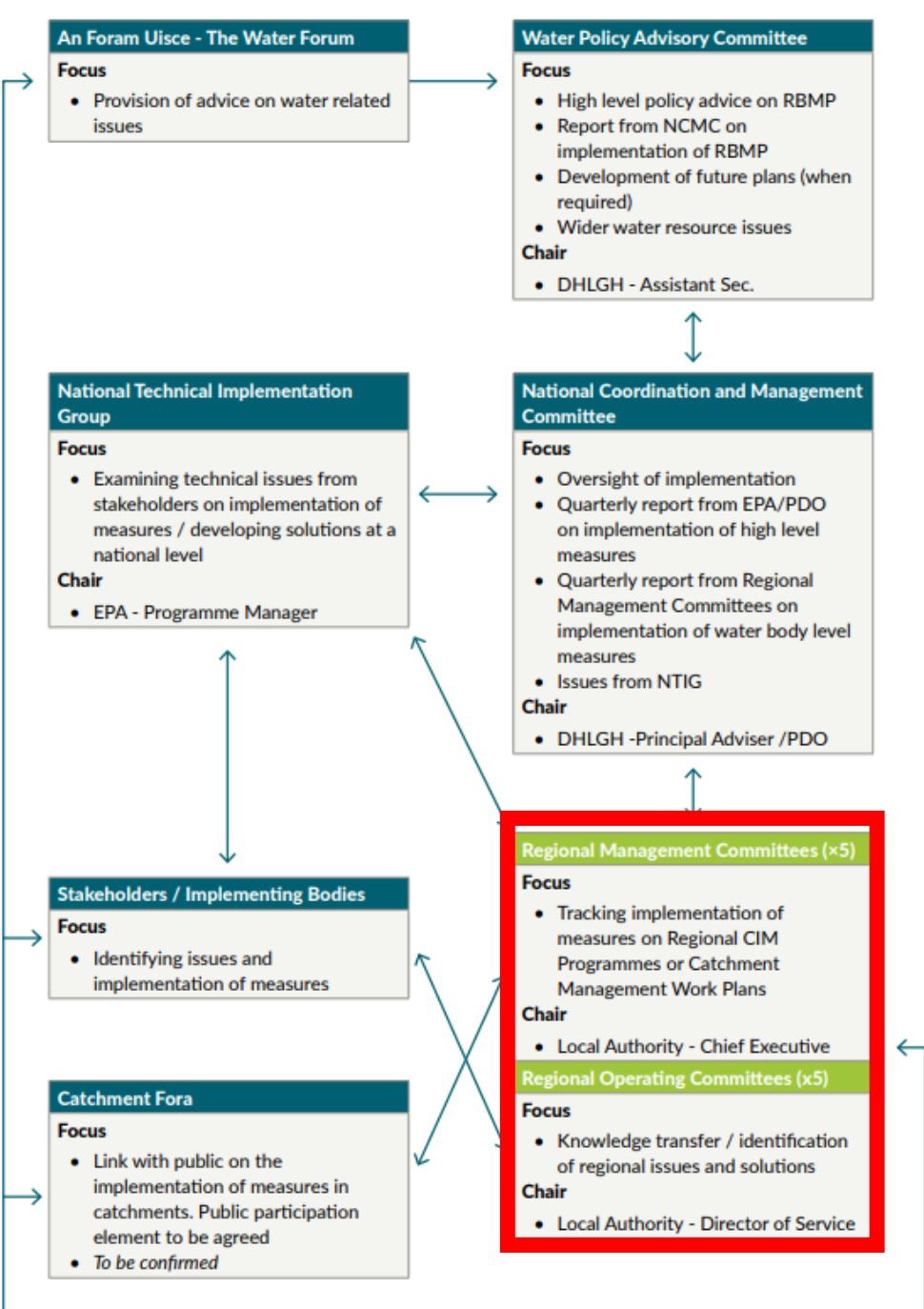
Issues Papers submitted to NTIG

- Submitted in September 2024
- NTIG initial feedback
 - Drinking water treatment plants issues
 - Compliance matter for relevant enforcement agencies
 - Misconnections at bathing waters
 - Management issue for the Local Authorities,
 - Planning and Water Pollution Act tools available
 - Potential to use NIECE network to provide additional support.
- Discussed at SWRWEMC – agreement to re submit
- Discussed in other regions – general agreement that these are relevant issues. Contributions made to papers



Broader Discussion - WAP Governance Structure

- What avenues are open to RMCs and ROCs to resolving significant issues
- LAWPRO – tracking issues raised at Regional level
 - Help identify issues of National significance
- Opportunity now with review of TOR of committees within the structure
- Two-way communication between Tier 1, 2 & 3 important



Managing risk from Drinking Water Treatment Plants and distribution networks



Managing risk to Bathing Water Quality associated with Misconnections from Domestic Plumbing and from combined sewer networks



Discussion



Issue	Date raised	Proposer
Managing risk to Bathing Water Quality associated with Misconnections from Domestic Plumbing and from combined-sewer networks	20/06/24 at SWROC 31/07/24 at the SWRWEMC	Implementing bodies at SWROC. Proposed by the ROC and approved by the Regional Management Committee.
Summary of the issue and its implications for achieving WFD objectives		
Risk to achieving the required Protected-Area Status for Designated Bathing Waters from Misconnections to surface waters and urban drainage networks in the vicinity of designated bathing areas. Bacteriological contamination associated with such mis-connections is potentially a direct risk to bathing water quality at a number of designated bathing water areas nationally.		
Extent of the issue in the national context		
Knowledge gap	Implementation gap	Policy gap
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of knowledge of the extent to which Misconnections are impacting on bathing water quality nationally. 2. Many small waterbodies (freshwater rivers and streams) within bathing water catchments currently have unassigned water quality status. 3. Lack of knowledge of the potential impact of climate change on drainage management in bathing water catchments. 	Lack of investigation and remediation work in this area.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fragmented management of the issue : UE responsible for management of the foul-sewer network, Local Authorities are responsible for management of the surface water drainage network and for bathing water quality management. 2. Water quality monitoring of freshwaters is primarily focused on nutrient and chemical parameters.
Suggested solution(s)		Suggested actors
<p>Establishment of pilot projects (n=3 – recommendation from SWRWEMC) specifically aimed at identifying the extent of the issue. Funding for the project would be used to undertake site-specific investigations in a small number of representative bathing water catchments.</p> <p>The proposed project would include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-site investigation work, including: detailed surveys (topographical and CCTV) of the existing drainage network (incl. surface water and foul) within the contributing catchments of the selected bathing waters., water quality monitoring (bacteriological assessments, speciation, caffeine analysis etc.). 		DHLG, LAs, UE

<div>2. Analysis and identification of the risk areas and properties within the contributing catchments – making use of the GIS decision support tools and methodologies developed by the Dublin Urban Rivers LIFE (DURL) project.</div> <div>3. Door-to-door surveys of high-risk properties within the contributing catchments – making use of the methodologies developed by the DURL LIFE Project.</div> <div>The findings of the project could be used to develop guidance on the preparation and implementation of Integrated Drainage Management Plans specifically for Bathing Water Catchments.</div>		
Suggested champion	Dependencies	Priority
LAWPRO	<div>1. Provision of funding.</div> <div>2. Technical support from UE and LAs.</div>	
Additional comments		
<div>1. The protection and management of bathing water quality is a major priority from the public health perspective. It is also of economic and reputational importance to communities in these catchments, given its significance to tourism.</div> <div>2. The proposed project would build on the outcomes of the mis-connections project recently undertaken by South Dublin County Council in the DURL LIFE Project, but would focus specifically on the issue of bathing water quality management. Consideration could also be given to the potential for the use of Nature-Based Solutions for surface water management within the catchments in question.</div>		
Agreed at the NTIG meeting		
Next steps		
Champion	Date discussed	Expected completion date
Progress review - tbd		

Issue	Date raised	Proposer
Managing risk from Drinking Water Treatment Plants and distribution networks	20/06/24 at SWROC 31/07/24 at the SWRWEMC	Implementing bodies at SWROC. Proposed by the ROC and approved by the Regional Management Committee.
Summary of the issue and its implications for achieving WFD objectives		
<p>1. Risk from general operations and lack of regulatory oversight & management of Drinking Water Treatment Plants (DWTPs) and Distribution Networks (DN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemicals - Risk from chemical spills/storage/poor management practices in relation to treatment process and network management (flushing of mains) which impact the aquatic environment • Sludge management – Risk from sludge, centrate or supernatant from storage/movement/poor management practices which impact the aquatic environment • Coordination and oversight of above risks in sensitive catchments (e.g., SACs) where multiple agencies have regulatory roles 		
Extent of the issue in the national context		
Knowledge gap	Implementation gap	Policy gap
Knowledge of impact from issues highlighted is extensively known. Knowledge of regulatory legislation scope less well known.	<p>Chemicals: Water supplier regulatory and operational responsibilities at DWTP sites or DNs not being implemented in accordance with appropriate risk assessment and implement risk management practices under DW regulations/Water Safety Planning approaches. Evidence from reoccurring chemical spills, and network management issues highlighting implementation issues</p> <p>Sludge management: Consistency of operation management and oversight of sludge management from DWTPs at a national level</p> <p>Coordination and oversight of risk management practices in relation to chemical and sludge management on/near sensitive catchments (e.g., SACs). Currently regulated by multiple agencies. Reaction to acute or chronic events by regulators can be improved and often relies on</p>	<p>Chemicals: Do DW Regulations Water Safety Planning approach go far enough in terms of managing risks associated with chemicals?</p> <p>Sludge management: Potential discharges are currently not regulated. Full implementation of Risk based water safety planning approach detailed in DW Regulations not required to be implemented fully until 2029. Potential for considerable risk in intervening period to aquatic environment Current Regulations do not appear to be effective - does not provide protection to the receiving environment. If treated as a waste -then no liquid discharge should take place or receiving waterbodies.</p>

	personal rather than institutional relationships.	Coordination and oversight: An integrated approach to the regulation and oversight to support rapid and an effective response when acute or chronic events occur should be developed.
Suggested solution(s)		Suggested actors
Chemicals: Full implementation of procedure and practices outlined in current DW Regulations is needed bringing consistency of risk management approaches, operations and oversight. Water Supplier to establish and implement a priority plan of action outlining the resources needed. CRU & DHLGH informed of process with a view to support resourcing needs where identified.		EPA, Water suppliers, CRU
Sludge management: The regulation of discharges from DWTPs should be considered		DHLGH, EPA enforcement, LA representative
Sludge management: Is the risk-based approach to water safety planning under the DW Regulations sufficient to address the above aforementioned risk. If yes, the detail needs to be mapped out and demonstrated on how that would work including appropriate timelines. If not, is new legislation or amendments to existing required?		DHLGH, EPA enforcement, LA representative
Overall management: All DWTPs and DNs located in sensitive catchments should be listed and mapped to prioritise risk assessment and risk management measures to be implemented.		EPA, IFI, NPWS, LAWPRO
Suggested champions	Dependencies	Priority
UE (chemical and management) EPA (licensing) DHLGH/NPWS? (coordination and oversight)	Chemicals: Water suppliers receive sufficient resources to undertake and implement risk assessment and risk management processes and associated plant and network upgrades. Sludge: Clear understanding of the applicability of the DW regulations. Regulation: Regulatory controls are in place Coordination and oversight agreed process or oversight procedures developed and implemented with the relevant agencies	Chemicals: map out/list of sensitive catchments and plan for action Sludges: Get clarification on the legislative position Coordination and oversight –River Allow incidents highlight this risk posed by lack of regulatory coordination and oversight
Additional comments		
<p>Further information:</p> <p>National prosecution statistics from Inland Fisheries Ireland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2013, IFI has secured nineteen convictions against Irish Water / Uisce Éireann for offences under the Fisheries Acts and Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts. • Eleven of these convictions have related to Wastewater Treatment Plants • Eight to Drinking Water Treatment Plants. 		

- This does not include cases that may currently be underway and have yet to be decided by the courts.

Agreed at the NTIG meeting

Next steps

Champion	Date discussed	Expected completion date
----------	----------------	--------------------------

Progress review - tbd