

# Minute of the 15th Meeting of the National Technical Implementation Group for WFD



20 May 2020



**Location:** Virtual

**Date:** 20 May 2020 **Time:** 10:30-13:00

**Chairperson:** Mary Gurrrie, EPA

*Presentations from this meeting are available in [WFD NTIG OneDrive](#) – if you do not have access to this please email [p.morris@epa.ie](mailto:p.morris@epa.ie)*

**Email updates:** *The EPA issue updates on the WFD (Catchments Newsletter, public consultations etc) via email – you can sign up for these updates on the front page of [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie) We also do a (very brief!) weekly summary of new stories on catchments.ie which you can sign up for here: <https://www.catchments.ie/would-you-like-a-weekly-summary-of-new-stories-added-to-catchments-ie/>*

**Catchments Newsletter by post:** *you can also opt-in to receiving a hard copy of the Catchments Newsletter by post – please use [this form](#) or email [catchments@epa.ie](mailto:catchments@epa.ie)*

**Attendance:** see Appendix 2.

## AGENDA ITEMS

1. Welcome, introductions and minutes of previous meeting
2. Updates:
  - i. DHPLG (10 minutes)
  - ii. LA Waters Programme and ASSAP: Issues arising (10 minutes)
  - iii. EPA characterisation update (10 mins)
  - iv. Catchments.ie and the new [Water Maps](#) (5 minutes)
3. Focus on hydromorphology (60 mins)
  - (a) Restoring the Camac River (Dublin City Council – 25 mins)
  - (b) The review of heavily modified waterbodies (EPA - 20 mins)
  - (c) Discussion (all – 15 mins)
4. Issues brought forward for discussion – norovirus (BIM)
5. Clarifications on the round table updates
6. AOB

1.	<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes were agreed for the NTIG meeting held in February 2019.</li> </ul>
2.	<p><b>Updates: 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Implementation / 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle Planning</b></p> <p><b>i. DHPLG</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Abstractions Bill:</b> There was a delay in the abstractions bill due to the general election and timelines are now currently unclear.</li> <li><b>Waters of LIFE project:</b> It is planned to commence remote recruitment for the project manager position with the aim of having someone in place by the end of the summer. The advice from the EU is make an assessment of any time lost due to Covid and apply for an extension in due course if needed.</li> <li><b>Domestic waste water grant scheme:</b> The legislation has been delayed due to the general election.</li> <li><b>Fish pass project at Ardnacrusha:</b> The project is close to being finalised but there is some additional modelling work on the tailrace and the confluence at Old River Shannon ongoing. The next meeting of the steering group is planned for early to mid-June. A second public event is being planned.</li> <li><b>Water and Planning guidance:</b> A draft of the planning guidance has been received by DHPLG and is currently being reviewed. The first draft is expected to be finalised by the end of June.</li> <li><b>Bathing Water season:</b> The bathing water season will commence as normal on the 1st of June. The advice from the HSE is that risk of water borne transmission of Covid-19 is low but there are other public health issues arising with social distancing and crowds at beaches. The bathing water expert group has developed a series of recommendations which have been forwarded to the government Covid task group.</li> <li><b>Nitrates Action Programme:</b> A preliminary public consultation is planned in the coming months ahead of the fifth review of the nitrates action programme.</li> <li><b>Preparation for Third Cycle Plan:</b> The SWMII consultation was launched in December there are 5-6 weeks left before it closes (26th June). Approximately 100 responses have been received thus far with an even spread from the public and public agencies.</li> <li><b>Programme of Measures development group:</b> A small team of representatives from DHPLG, EPA and LAWPRO have come together as a programme of measures development group. The aim of the group is to discuss the SWMI issues with relevant stakeholders to inform the programme of measures. Discussions are ongoing.</li> <li><b>Expert group on DW Directive:</b> An expert group on drinking water is being convened to assist the Department in the development of appropriate legislation to underpin the recast Drinking Water Directive. The initial focus will be on drinking water source protection. The first meeting will be held towards the end of May.</li> <li><b>Current infringements:</b> The Department has received a reasoned opinion relating to the level of trihalomethanes in drinking water which is the escalation of a letter of formal notice received in 2018). The Department will work with EPA and Irish Water on the issue in the coming weeks.</li> </ul> <p><b>ii. LA Waters Programme and ASSAP: Issues arising</b></p>

**Progress to date:**

- LAWPRO are now 1.33 years into their work programme.
- Under the River Basin Management plan 2018-2021 there are 189 PAAs.
- LAWPRO have 137 desk studies completed, of which 90 summaries are uploaded to the WFD App.
- LAWPRO are currently active in 97 PAAs doing Local Catchment Assessments /fieldwork. Due to COVID 19 lockdown field work was suspended. A phased return has begun which will endeavour to end this suspension, starting with chemistry sampling.
- There have been 115 community meetings to date – these meetings are also now suspended due to COVID.
- LAWPRO have completed 60 reports and action plans for PAAs.
- LAWPRO are attending the ongoing series of bilateral meetings as part of the Programme of Measures Working Group.
- LAWPRO are working closely with the EPA for the Cycle 3 Characterisation process. The LAWPRO team are identifying potential PAAs that they would like to see included for Cycle 3 and submitting these suggestions to the EPA prioritisation process.
- LAWPRO are working with ASSAP on WBs with agriculture as a significant pressure. The current intent is to pick '*proof of concept WBs*'. There is an identified need to develop an evidence base that shows the approaches and measures currently being implemented in PAAS work when compared to previous and current regulatory approaches.
- LAWPRO are beginning the development of a clear exit strategy for PAAs and protocols for how to hand back to implementing agencies, especially local authorities.
- The 2020 Community Water Development Fund received 145 applications, all of which have been assessed. LAWPRO has issued offer letters to successful applicants. Due to initial delays caused by COVID and the possible difficulties foreseen with project implementation due to the ongoing pandemic, some of these projects may run into 2021.
- LAWPRO are running a story telling competition. This is called 'Stories from the waterside': LAWPRO are running in this competition in partnership with Waterways Ireland, Heritage Council, IFI, and local heritage officers.  
<https://www.catchments.ie/stories-from-the-waterside-a-unique-collection-of-short-stories-celebrating-irelands-waterbodies/> - the winning entries are expected to be published for Heritage Week, which runs from 15-23 August 2020.
- LAWPRO are developing an alternative strategy for public consultation on the Draft Third Cycle Plan. The team are identifying a Plan B to engage the public with social distancing rules in place.
- **LAWPRO - Issues arising in PAAs:**
  - Nanny PAA: Initial Local Characterisation Assessment has identified nutrient issues in the PAA, however these issues are coming from an upstream area that is not within this PAA. Therefore, ASSAP are not currently working in these areas. At present, LAWPRO do not expect improvement in this PAA by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle in 2021. Hence, the Nanny should be considered as a PAA for Cycle 3 with an enlarged catchment area that includes these upstream areas with nutrient issues.
  - HYMO issues: LAWPRO have identified PAAs where chemistry may be within the EQS, but there are issues with the ecology. An example of this is the Morrell\_020. Specific measures for these types of settings would need to be identified and implemented for these areas if there is to be an improvement in status.

- Colligan-Mahon catchment, Brickey River: Nitrate is an issue in the estuary. A wider implementation of additional specific measures for nitrogen would be needed in the catchment to address this. It is currently not envisaged there will be an improvement before 2021.
- Athy Stream: Widespread sediment issues have been identified. Ongoing work by ASSAP may help reduce the amount of new sediment entering the stream. However, this will not resolve issues with historic sediment and possible impacts from historical straightening of the channel. There may be need for additional restoration work on this river, however as yet there is no framework for river restoration measures in these scenarios. These works can be expensive.

**LAWPRO - Climate and Water co-benefits**

- Climate and Water: LAWPRO are considering combined benefits between climate and water and are working closely with the CAROs.
- The CCMA have set up a working group under their Environment Committee that is looking at the cooperation between climate, biodiversity and water. One of the elements of this committee's work is to look at the two shared services. Work is ongoing to help ensure messaging is consistent across the LAWPRO and CARO shared services and between relevant government departments.

**ASSAP:**

- COVID has meant farm visits are highly restricted. This has hampered progress.
- ASSAP cold calling to farms to establish initial contacts between advisors and farmers has had to cease due to public health restrictions.
- ASSAP are developing a plan and protocols to enable resumption of outdoor work/visits – these outdoor visits are expected to recommence early June.
- ASSAP are currently focusing on follow up visits to farms. Currently, these contacts are largely occurring by phone. ASSAP are focusing on establishing what has occurred since their initial visits, including the level of implementation of measures during these calls to famers.
- Signpost Series: This a series of webinars Teagasc are running on Friday mornings aimed at agricultural sector stakeholders. Talks in June will focus on water quality including a talk from LAWPRO. The seminars in June will cover the three main pressures on water quality. Biodiversity will also be a key focus further down the line. All seminars are available online: <https://www.teagasc.ie/corporate-events/sustainable-agriculture-webinars/>

**iii. EPA characterisation update**

- The 5 regional workshops that were planned between March and June to complete characterisation and select 3rd cycle areas for action had to be cancelled as a result of Covid-19. An alternative process has been developed and is working well. Suggestions for Areas for Action are being collated and will be discussed at a series of one day virtual meetings with the regional governance structures in Sept/Oct. The final draft list will be included in the draft river basin management plan for consultation.

**iv. EPA Catchments.ie and the new [Water Maps](#)**

- Catchments.ie has been upgraded and a tranche of significant changes have been made to the Mapping section, including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the addition of monitoring and modelled flow data</li> <li>• improvements to the display and accessibility of data, maps and assessments <a href="https://www.catchments.ie/data">https://www.catchments.ie/data</a>; and</li> <li>• functionality to download historical water chemistry data <a href="https://www.catchments.ie/catchments-ie-changes-chemistry-data-downloads/">https://www.catchments.ie/catchments-ie-changes-chemistry-data-downloads/</a></li> </ul>
3.	<p><b>Focus on hydromorphology (60 mins)</b></p> <p>i. River Restoration in Dublin City Council: Challenges and Opportunities on the Camac River in management, urban renewal and climate change (Dublin City Council – 25 mins)  <a href="#">This presentation is available on OneDrive</a>  <i>Note: DCC also gave a shortened version of this talk for the EPA Water Conference in June 2020 <a href="#">which can be viewed on YouTube</a></i></p> <p>ii. The review of heavily modified waterbodies (Emma Quinlan, EPA - 20 mins)  <a href="#">This presentation is available on OneDrive</a></p> <p>iii. HMWB Discussion (all – 15 mins)  The discussion topics included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process for final decisions on designation - this is the responsibility of the Minister.</li> <li>• The means of considering infrastructure leakage, where over-abstraction is a pressure, as part of good ecological potential with mitigation measures, and/or through general binding rules</li> <li>• The work that is in progress to define what GEP means.</li> <li>• The review of designations of heavily modified lakes, transitional and coastal waters which is also underway.</li> <li>• The scale of designations are at water body scale, rather than reach scale, but this should not impede implementation of reach scale measures.</li> <li>• Assessing the feasibility of mitigation measures as part of the designation tests</li> <li>• The legislation requiring OPW to maintain Arterial Drainage Schemes</li> </ul> </p>
4.	<p><b>Issues brought forward for discussion – Norovirus (BIM)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIM brought forward the issue of norovirus impacting on shellfish waters. Norovirus comes from human sources so urban waste water and stormwater overflows are the key significant pressure where there are impacts. A targeted approach is needed and will need to reflect future higher standards. There was discussion on the scale and type of technical characterisation work needed to identify the sources of norovirus in the catchments of the impacted waters. LAWPRO are proposing a detailed characterisation in the catchment of the Clarinbridge Shellfish area where there are issues.</li> <li>• <b>Actions:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BIM and DHPLG to discuss the repeal of the Shellfish Directive and the requirement to introduce new regulations to cover the monitoring programme for shellfish areas.</li> <li>2. EPA to link with BIM and other relevant bodies to discuss the technical assessment issues.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

5.	<b>Clarifications on the round table updates</b> N/A
6.	<b>AOB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The EPA National Water Conference will be online this year. This event will take place on 17-18 June from 9:30am till lunch. There will be two sessions each day, with 3 presentations per session. The Programme will be released shortly.</li><li>• EPA will send a survey to see how online NTIG meetings can be improved.</li><li>• The Catchments Newsletter will be published twice this year. Articles are welcome.</li><li>• The next meeting will go ahead as planned on the originally proposed date of 24 September 2020.</li></ul>

### Appendix 1: NTIG membership and attendance list – May 2020

Name	Organisation	Attended	Apologies	Name	Organisation	Attended	Apologies	Name	Organisation	Attended	Apologies
Deirdre MacGabhann	ABP			Stephen Fennell	EPA	X		Noreen Mc Cleery	NIEA / DAERA		
Anne Marie O'Connor	ABP			Jenny Deakin	EPA	X		Richard Gray	NIEA / DAERA		
Mike Murphy	BIM			Marie Archbold	EPA	X		Deirdre Quinn	NIEA / DAERA		
Joanne Gaffney	BIM	X		Patrick Morrissey	EPA			Oonagh McCann	NIEA / DAERA		
Catherine Butler	BIM			Andy Fanning	EPA	X		Joanne Livingstone	NIEA / DAERA		
Brian O Loan	BIM			Kevin Collins	Forest Service	X		Silke Hartmann	NIEA / DAERA	X	
Alan Dunney	CAROs	X		Ken Bucke	Forest Service			Mark Adamson	OPW	X	
Deborah Meghan	Coillte	X		Monica Lee	GSI	X		Conor Galvin	OPW	X	
Philip O' Dea	Coillte			Martin Cormican	HSE		X	Peter McGoary	SFPA	X	
Aoife Crowe	CER			Cathal Gallagher	IFI			Pat Murphy	Teagasc;	X	
Jack Nolan	DAFM			Serena Keane	Irish Water			Noel Meehan	Teagasc	X	
Bernard Harris	DAFM	X		Niall Horgan	Irish Water	X		Billy O Keeffe	TII	X	
Dymphna Kehoe	DAFM			Claire Colman	Irish Water	X		Paula Treacy	WI	X	
Clare Casey	DAFM			Ray Spain	LAWPRO	X					
Colin Byrne	DHPLG			Bernie O Flaherty	LAWPRO	X		<b>Guests</b>			
Donal Grant	DHPLG	X		Fran Igoe	LAWPRO	X		Emma Quinlan	EPA	X	
Graham McGovern	DHPLG	X		Carol McCarthy	LAWPRO	X		Mary-Liz Walshe	DCC	X	
Imelda Averill CCMA	DCC			Sean Keating	LAWPRO	X		Daireann McDonnell		X	
Mary Gurrie	EPA	X		Margaret Keegan	LAWPRO	X		Wayne Trodd	EPA	X	
Eva Mockler	EPA	X		Ruth Hennessy	LAWPRO						
Anthony Mannix	EPA	X		Maeve Ryan	LAWPRO	X					
Paddy Morris	EPA	X		Bernie White	LAWPRO	X					
Matt Craig	EPA	X		Martina Smith	LAWPRO	X					
Noel Byrne	EPA	X		Evin McGovern	MI						
Karen Creed	EPA	X		Ciaran O' Keeffe	NPWS						
Suzanne Wylde	EPA	X		Barry Deane	NFGWS						
Shane O' Boyle	EPA	X		Kerry Anderson	NIEA / DAERA						