

Minute of the 20th Meeting of the National Technical Implementation Group for WFD



23 February 2023



	<p>Location: Airfield Estate</p> <p>Date: 23 February 2023 Time: 10:00-13:00</p> <p>Chairperson: Mary Gurrie, EPA</p>
	<p>Attendance:</p> <p>DHLGH: Marie Archbold, Donal Cronin, Roland Gowran EPA: Patrick Byrne, Jenny Deakin, Mary Gurrie, Matthew Craig, Eva Mockler, Anthony Mannix, Keiron Philips, Sinéad Barrett LAWPRO: Anthony Coleman, Ruth Hennessy, Fran Igoe, Margaret Keegan, Niamh Rogan, Gary O’Connell, Bernie White, Cormac McConigley Ted Massey (DAFM), Monica Lee (GSI), Ken Bucke (Forest Service/DAFM), Billy O’Keefe (TII), Philip O’Dea (Coillte), Claire Coleman (UÉ), Mark Adamson (OPW), Conor Galvin (OPW), Joanne Gaffney (BIM), Aine O’Connor (NPWS), Karl McDonald (FSAI), Meabh O’Hagan (ASSAP), Richard O’Callaghan (NPWS), Roisin McManus and Sarah McLoughlin (NIEA)</p>
	<p>Agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Welcome, introductions and minutes of previous meeting2. Updates on progress, issue arising for NTIG to consider<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. DHLGHii. LA Waters Programmeiii. ASSAPiv. EPA3. New issue: Movement of organic manures and sludges – EPA4. Open discussion on future NTIG meetings

1.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes were agreed for the NTIG meeting held in March 2022.
2.	<p>Updates: 2nd Cycle Implementation / Third Cycle Planning</p> <p>DHLGH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrates Action Programme: Update provided. • ACRES General and ACRES Co-operation Project: Eight areas of high nature value within the Co-operation Project (CP). These include 75% of WFD high status objective waterbodies. This is a results-based payment scheme. LAWPRO is delivering a two-day Catchment Science and Management course to the CP teams. • Waters of Life Project: Extended to March 2028. Phase 1 is complete. Engagement with CP area teams is ongoing. Workshop being held on the 29th and 30th March in the UK by Natural Courses LIFE IP which is open to all Life Projects and interested stakeholders. • Drinking Water Regulations drafted and will be signed into law in the next few weeks. • UWW Directive: Commission published a draft last year. Expect text to be agreed in next 12-18 months, then there will be a two-year window for it to be transposed to national legislation. • Abstractions Bill: Signed into law in Dec 2022. Will require licensing for abstractions over a certain size. Regulations are being drafted. <p>LA Waters Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAWPRO held 93 consultation meetings for the draft RBMP last year and received over 400 submissions. • Nature-based Solutions: Supported the Department with webinars. • Training: Providing two-day Catchment Science and Management course and will roll out the eight-day course to local authorities and implementing bodies this year. • Community Water Development Fund has closed for applications. 152 applications were received and letters of offer are to be issued soon. • Communities Caring for Water conference was held at the end of last year. • Waters EIP: LAWPRO submitted a proposal with Teagasc and Dairy Industry Ireland for a new Water European Innovation Partnership project to work with farmers locally to deliver improvements in water quality with co-benefits for climate change and biodiversity. <p>ASSAP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022, advisors undertook 999 farm visits within PAAs, 429 follow-up visits, 27 visits outside PAAs and 44 within signpost farms. Reports are being prepared and it is planned to deliver updates to farmers, local authorities, regulatory groups etc. • There are challenges in implementing appropriate measures where nitrate is an identified significant issue. The possibility of including water use and conservation was also discussed. <p>EPA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest Water Quality in Ireland report for 2016-2021 was published last year. The key message is that almost half of our surface water bodies are in an unsatisfactory condition and water quality, particularly in our estuaries is continuing to decline. The supporting data are available online. • Characterisation is being updated based on the new water quality data. The process is being refined to make it more concise and timely.

- The EPA has an enhanced role regarding the oversight of agricultural inspections. A technical working group has been established to support the Agency in the development of a National Agricultural Inspections Plan.
- The EPA has been tasked with carrying out an interim review of water quality as a condition of Ireland's derogation under the Nitrates Directive. Specific water quality assessment criteria have been set by the Commission. In areas where water quality is unsatisfactory in accordance with those criteria, additional measures will be required under the Nitrates Action programme. The report is due to be sent to the Commission by 30th June.
- Training videos to support users in accessing EPA online resources have been developed
- Three live issues:
 - *Sheep dip*. Work ongoing with the National Hazardous Waste Strategy. There is a cross-agency group which has met and is progressing issues. Potential for the group to present at a future NTIG meeting.
 - *Norovirus issues*. There is a delay in the development of new shellfish regulations.
 - *Land drainage*. Discussed at the last NTIG meeting. This issue is best dealt with as part of the future proposed development of a control regime for activities impacting on the hydromorphological condition of waters. It was noted that South-west and South-east Regional Operational Committees together have created a land use drainage group to collate information and identifying gaps.

Round Table Updates

OPW

- Second Cycle review of the Flood Risk Management Plans completed on time.
- Working on an ongoing basis on nature-based solutions. OPW is liaising with LAWPRO on the Waters EIP and fitting nature-based solutions into it.
- Liaising with the Department on HMWB designation.
- Flagged that there is an inter-Departmental group on managing coastal change. The focus is on coastal erosion.

BIM

- Working on the development of the National Strategic Plan on Aquaculture up to 2030. Includes a roadmap for investment. Department to publish in March 2023.
- Road trip undertaken last year to aquaculture sites. Strong message coming back that there is a worry that "A" waters or high ecological status is now required for organic aquaculture. This is a key concern for coastal users. How can aquaculture industry improve linkages with groups working on water quality?

Uisce Éireann

- Drinking Water Source Protection projects for Cavan and Belturbet are being launched on 6th March which aims to support farmers to limit MCPA in waterbodies.
- UÉ brought the groups attention to the latest PEACEPLUS Programme which includes a potential funding stream for relevant catchment projects.
- The SWELL 1 and Acclimatize projects are coming to an end this year.

GSI

- Working on a groundwater resources assessment project with assistance from Uisce Éireann. Groundwater assessments have been completed for the Lough Cara LIFE project.
- Phase 2 of the groundwater climate project has commenced. Developing forecasting climate models with Met Éireann.
- Catchment Care is finishing this year. The WFD group within Catchment Care produced outcomes that link to sheep dip which could be presented at a future NTIG meeting.

	<p>TII</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peatland rehabilitation project ongoing with NPWS which looks at the methodology into how to re-wet peatlands in practical terms. There is another year left in the project. • Working with Climate Ireland on the Translate project which will finish this year. The objective is to standardise future climate projections for Ireland and develop climate services to aid climate risk decision making across multiple sectors (in this case roads). <p>NPWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring of the NPWS is ongoing. • The EU Nature Restoration Law is currently under development and could come into force at the end of 2023/start of 2024. <p>Forest Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Forestry Programme 2023-2027 was announced in November 2022 but is awaiting EU approval. There is an annual budget of 112 million. Expect to be finalised in the next few months. Road construction measures are to be included. <p>NIEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3rd river basin management plan has not yet been published. A water quality improvement fund was recently launched in a number of catchment areas.
<p>3.</p>	<p>Movement of organic manures and sludges</p> <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest from FSAI, NPWS, DAFM to be members of a working group to work through the issues. Prospective members should contact the Catchments Unit expressing their interest over the coming weeks. • FSAI have an interest in biosolids and sludge waste and have been reviewing the recommendations from a 2008 report which may be relevant. • DAFM: Noted that there is a new online process for the movement of manure/slurry. Exporter and importer have to verify the movement. • LAWPRO: Potential to have local authorities and research bodies on the working group. • DHLGH: It may be important to look at all sources together in order to investigate the nutrient balance.
<p>4.</p>	<p>Open discussion on future NTIG meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the communications between WPAC, NTIG and ROC would be beneficial. • Suggestion to develop an issues tracker for use throughout the governance structures. • Concerns raised by some stakeholders and through the public consultation process that it can be difficult to determine who to contact to discuss or report issues. • Difficulties with sharing data between public bodies were discussed. • Suggestion to hold NTIG meetings every four months, in person. The location could move to a more central location. • ASSAP enquired whether there should be more representatives from the agricultural sector at the NTIG meetings, as there are numerous agricultural issues being raised. • Topics of interest for future meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate • Marine issues • Land use review • LAWPRO paper on agriculture and land • Any work of interest from the group