

Minute of the 17th Meeting of the National Technical Implementation Group for WFD



31 March 2021



Location: Virtual

Date: 31 March 2021 **Time:** 14:00-16:30

Chairperson: Mary Gurrie, 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

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. 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*

Attendance:

See Appendix 1.

Agenda:

1. Welcome, introductions and minutes of previous meeting
2. Updates:
 - DPLGH
 - LA Waters Programme and ASSAP
 - EPA
3. Roundtable updates
 - NFGWS
 - DAFM
 - NPWS
4. Discussion/updates on issues arising
5. AOB

Actions:

1. NTIG to establish a working group to address the gaps in processes governing the protection of waters from the movement of animal manures.

1.	Minutes of previous meeting Minutes were agreed for the NTIG meeting held in November 2020.
2.	Updates: 2nd Cycle Implementation / Third Cycle Planning DPLGH - Engagement on Infringement cases (UWW, transposition) is ongoing with Commission. - Nitrates Action Programme – negotiations and public consultations ongoing though 2021. - Drinking Water: expert group established to look at new approach to source protection and legislation to underpin this; draft abstractions bill approved and has moved to pre-legislative scrutiny. - Waters of Life Project: recruitment is ongoing for project manager; other posts will follow later this summer. - Shannon Fish Pass Project: The draft final proposal will be presented to the stakeholder forum in late April/May. - Water and Planning Guidance: steering committee have met in February 2021 to review and provide comments. The final guidance will be presented to the steering group shortly and after it is agreed it will go for public consultation. - Draft Third RBMP: stakeholder consultation ongoing to discuss draft POMs in advance of plan publication later in 2021. - The CCMA is undertaking a review of wider LA environmental resources. LA Waters Programme - see presentation on OneDrive - Virtual meetings have seen an increase in the average numbers attending ROC meetings. - DHLGH LAWPRO review has been completed and was positive. Work is ongoing on extending contracts to the end of Cycle 3 in 2027. - An internal agriculture working group is examining the LAWPRO/ASSAP relationship and potential improvements, with EPA involved in reporting outcomes on WFD app. - Blue Dots: The Blue Dots working group is completing guidance on Local Catchment Assessment in Blue Dot waters. A list of Blue Dots sites for possible annual monitoring by the EPA has been compiled. Draft guidance on interpreting SSIS in Blue Dot rivers has been completed and will be reviewed by the EPA. A draft communications plan has been completed. A sectoral approach will be taken, with an initial focus on agriculture and forestry. - LAWPRO are looking at the possibility of using data loggers as spot samples may be missing spikes in loadings. This is especially relevant for Blue Dots. - LAWPRO have joined the UK River Restoration Centre. Currently looking at two pilot projects: bank restoration of the Rathmore Stream, Co. Kildare and channelisation of the Boycetown in Co. Meath. The RRC are looking at pressure-impact analysis and river restoration options prioritisation. Currently no funding for instream works. ASSAP - The ongoing Level 5 restrictions mean no farm visits can take place and this is a major problem for the programme currently.

	- Teagasc worked closely with LAWPRO on Water Quality Week was launched on World Water Day, 22 March and ran to March 26. All materials are now available on the Teagasc Website. - Work is ongoing to close out LAWPRO referrals and to develop and enhance the business processes around this. EPA The EPA are working with closely DHPLG on the draft RBMP. This includes: - Gap Analysis for the Cycle 3 Plan: this is a high-level analysis at waterbody scale and will help inform discussions about the level of ambition in the final draft plan. - Heavily modified waterbody designations review: the recent updates to the draft Abstractions bill have impacted this review. A public consultation on these designations will run alongside the Cycle 3 RBMP public consultation. <i>EPA State of the Environment Report 2020</i> - The EPA SOER is published every 4 years. The SOER 2020 was published in late 2020 and has strong messages, including on water and agriculture. - It calls for a sense of urgency when implementing existing plans and policies and an overarching national environmental policy position.
3.	Roundtable updates <i>NFGWS</i> - The NFGWS pilot projects on a source protection framework and handbook of mitigation actions for the agricultural sector were successful. - DAFM have awarded €500k in funding for the NFGWS for 2-year project to apply this approach in 7 drinking water catchments where agriculture is a significant pressure. - It is hoped that this project will help advance integrated source protection; while this funding is for 7 catchments initially, 15 have been identified in total by NFGWS – these have been submitted as AFAs for Cycle 3. <i>NPWS</i> - A Prioritised Action Framework for Ireland’s habitat and species protection in SPAs and SHAs has been approved. <i>2030 30x30 Target</i>: 30% of all land and sea area is to be protected by 2030, 10% should be strictly protected, with a focus on restoration using natural processes. Pledges need to be sent to the Commission by 2023 as to how to hit these 2030 targets. - New AA guidance for Local Authorities is being prepared. - The Programme for Government commits to Biodiversity Officers for every county. The ongoing LAWPRO and CCMA review of environmental capacity could help inform this.
4.	Discussion on movement of animal manures HSE - see presentation on OneDrive Recent intensive pig and poultry license applications have seen many farms doubling in size. The HSE is concerned about possible impacts of slurry and other animal manures on drinking water quality. Tracking and following up on the movement of manures between farms is very challenging. The EPA licensing process for intensive pig and poultry farms does not regulate the management of slurry that is moved offsite.

	Potential health implications • Microbial contamination of ground and surface water • Nutrient enrichment • There are 380k private well supplies in Ireland; 180k of these are not registered or tested. • As part of environmental health regulations, 1418 small private supplies are tested. These are generally associated with small food businesses so are subject to inspections by LAs. Annually, approximately 6% of these inspections show that the private supply is contaminated. • WHO documents are available on the implications of nitrate pollution of groundwater, which can be carcinogenic. Suggested control measures • Risk rating of any potential measures would be key to ensuring effective outcomes. LAWPRO: Role and experience of LAs, the EPA and others in the control system for manure, animal by products and digestates - see presentation on OneDrive • LAWPRO provided an overview of the LA experience, which has shown that there are potential gaps in control measures. Discussion • Tracking and transparency are key issues. • DAFM has moved to an online tracking system may assist with this. • Geographic concentration of intensive agriculture can lead to increased potential risk in those areas. • ACTION: NTIG to establish a working group to look at this issue.
5.	Shellfish Waters LAWPRO - see presentation on OneDrive • Marine issues have been raised at ROCs and AFA workshops. • Marine Working group established: this will progress issues locally where possible and escalate issues not solvable locally through WFD governance structures. • There can be a lack of alignment between WFD ecological status and other indicators (e.g WFD does not look at E.coli or source of pathogens) EPA –Protected Area Characterisation • The EPA is taking a risk-based approach to the characterisation of Protected Areas, including bathing waters, drinking waters and shellfish waters. The risks for these protected areas are related to impacts on public health rather than ecological health, and so different data sources, models and tools are required. BIM • There are gaps relating to shellfish water when compared to other protected areas and pressures on these shellfish areas is increasing.

	DHLGH - Roadmap for the replacement of the repealed shellfish regulations - see presentation on OneDrive • The shellfish regulations were repealed in 2013. • These regulations had designated 64 areas; new areas currently cannot be designated as there is no legislation to do so. • The Marine Institute is currently monitoring these designated areas. • A Statutory Instrument is being developed. • DHLGH is looking at specifying monitoring and assessment requirements (threshold levels, EQSs); this will be informed by current Marine Institute work and reviewed by the national aquatic environmental chemistry working group
6.	AOB n/a

Appendix 1: NTIG membership and attendance list – Mar 2021

Name	Organisation	Attended	Apologies	Name	Organisation	Attended	Apologies	Name	Organisation	Attended	Apologies
Deirdre MacGabhann	ABP			Stephen Fennell	EPA			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			Joanne Livingstone	NIEA / DAERA		
Brian O Loan	BIM			Kevin Collins	Forest Service			Silke Hartmann	NIEA / DAERA		
Alan Dunney	CAROs			Ken Bucke	Forest Service	X		Mark Adamson	OPW		
Deborah Meghan	Coillte	X		Monica Lee	GSI	X		Conor Galvin	OPW		
Philip O' Dea	Coillte	X		Martin Cormican	HSE			Peter McGoary	SFPA		
Aoife Crowe	CER	X		Cathal Gallagher	IFI			Pat Murphy	Teagasc	X	
Jack Nolan	DAFM			Serena Keane	Irish Water			Noel Meehan	Teagasc		
Bernard Harris	DAFM	X		Niall Horgan	Irish Water			Billy O Keeffe	TII	X	
Dymphna Kehoe	DAFM			Claire Colman	Irish Water	X		Paula Treacy	WI	X	
Clare Casey	DAFM			Ray Spain	LAWPRO	X		David Joyce	CCMA/Cork	X	
Colin Byrne	DHPLG			Bernie O Flaherty	LAWPRO	X		Daireann McDonnell	Waterways Ireland	X	
Donal Grant	DHPLG	X		Fran Igoe	LAWPRO	X					
Graham McGovern	DHPLG	X		Carol McCarthy	LAWPRO	X					
Imelda Averill CCMA	DCC	X		Karl Kashen	LAWPRO	X		Guests			
Mary Gurrie	EPA	X		Margaret Keegan	LAWPRO	X		Mairead Kenny		X	
Eva Mockler	EPA			Ruth Hennessy	LAWPRO	X		Sorcha Ni Longphuirt	DHLGH	X	
Anthony Mannix	EPA	X		Maeve Ryan	LAWPRO	X		Cian O'Mahony	EPA	X	
Paddy Morris	EPA	X		Bernie White	LAWPRO	X		Marie Ryan	HSE	X	
Matt Craig	EPA			Gary O'Connell	LAWPRO	X					
Noel Byrne	EPA			Evin McGovern	MI						
Karen Creed	EPA			Cliona O'Brien	NPWS	X					
Suzanne Wylde	EPA			Barry Deane	NFGWS	X					
Shane O' Boyle	EPA	X		Kerry Anderson	NIEA / DAERA						