

Title:	Blue Dot Catchments Programme Steering Group Meeting No. 16		
Document No.	2023_05_03_Mn0016_Blue_Dot_Steering_Group		
Location:	Online		
Date:	28 th September 2023	10.00am to 11:30am	
Prepared By:	Paul O'Callaghan, LAWPRO		
Attendees:	Chair: Anne Goggin, Waters of Life IP LAWPRO: Anthony Coleman, Director of LAWPRO; Bernie White, Regional Coordinator & Blue Dot Catchments Programme Manager; Paul O'Callaghan, Blue Dot Scientist; Cormac McConigley, Western Catchments Manager. Coillte: Philip O'Dea EPA: Emma Quinlan, Catherine Bradley Wicklow County Council: Thomas Griffin Uisce Éireann: Katie Smart NPWS: Áine O'Connor DAFM: Michelle Kearney, Patrick McCormack ASSAP: Noel Meehan OPW: Seán Langan, Conor Galvin DHLG: Lisa Egan IFI: Cathal Gallagher		
Apologies:			

Item No.	Agenda Item & Brief Summary of Item	Outcomes and Actions
1	Minutes & Actions from previous meeting Chair - Anne Goggin, Waters of LIFE Project Manager No comments or issues raised from previous meeting.	
2	DHLGH updates, Lisa Egan A query was raised in relation to heavily modified water bodies and current status of designations.	Note circulated on 28/09/2023
3	Waters of LIFE – Updates, Anne Goggin (taken ahead of DAFM updates) - Anne updated the committee on the publication of the Framework of Measures and Best Practice Report (available here). - The section covering Hydromorphology is currently still under production and a new working group has had it's first meeting to consider the measures which potentially could be incorporated. - Facilitated workshops to develop a high status Results Based Payments Scheme (RBPS) are now complete and a draft report by Quality Matters who facilitated the workshops, is drafted.	Presentation to be circulated

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	Updates on Project Actions: C1 Initial Catchment Walkover Investigations: • Desk Studies are complete and walkover investigations are near complete C2 Further Catchment Investigations: • Characterisation is ongoing as well as reporting. • Data Digitisation is under way and should be complete by end of year. • Paul Duffy (WOL) is working on survey 123 input forms so that future data can be input digitally in the field, this is being tested by LAWPRO catchment scientists. • CBEC consultancy carrying out a Hydromorphology assessment & development of a river restoration plan for the water bodies in the Islands demo catchment. • An RFT has been issued for land potential assessment mapping for nature based solutions for integrated catchment management. Actions D1 & D2 – The establishment of a monitoring programme and carryout out of monitoring will be undertaken by IFI and UCD. The project started at end of September. Action D3 – A Teagasc Walsh Fellowship will begin this month and will focus on the generation of community custodianship of high status sites. Several engagement and dissemination actions were outlined (see presentation). Project team recruitment continues. A communications lead will be recruited as this was deemed an essential role within the project. Q&A A query arose on the Land Potential Assessment mapping for NBS, and if it would be for urban areas only? Anne confirmed there would be more focus on rural areas for this contract.	
4	Blue Dot Engagements Updates, Paul O’Callaghan, Blue Dot Scientist, LAWPRO • Update focussed on actions being carried out under the Blue Dot Engagements fund	Presentation to be circulated

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	• Covers awareness activities as well as project work • An evolution of the previous Q5 engagement campaign trialled in 2022 • Aimed at: ○ generating awareness among key stakeholders who have the greatest impact on our water quality ○ turning awareness and engagement into action through capacity building • Awareness actions included ○ Expert guided walks and talks ○ Schools campaigns ○ Booklets ○ Attendance at key events ○ Signage ○ Videos • Some project work now advancing, which will be key as demonstration projects; ○ Invasive species assessment ○ Barrier removal feasibility study ○ Interception of nutrients in flow pathways ○ Fluvial geomorphology assessments and design of restoration options • The fund can be greater than its value would suggest if used well. Open to working with committee members as partners on project proposals. Q&A Katie Smart from Uisce Eireann updated the group on a joint fieldvisit to the Islands catchment to the Ballymoe Cert of Authorisation waste water treatment plant. The visit was a success, and further joint visits were proposed which LAWPRO are keen to work together with UE on. Ballymoe CoA will now be upgraded from a primary treatment to secondary treatment facility, with the possible move of the plant out of the waterbody, in recognition of the protection required for this high status water body. Completion will now be 2027 or possibly 2029, depending on planning timelines and potential delays. Noel Meehan, ASSAP, commented on the importance of demonstration projects, especially on farms as these are key for farmer meetings and events and to encourage uptake of measures. Michelle Kearney, DAFM, comments that a lot of the engagement work is highly complementary to the ACRES Cooperation Projects approaches, including the use of demonstration farms. She encouraged liaison with the CP teams. Anne queries if any of the community talks were recorded? They were in person talks, therefore no, but could be considered in the future.	

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	Anne also queried the role of subconsultants in the delivery of the schools engagements e.g. Streamscapes. This is primary due to expertise these groups hold and capacity in the Communities Team in LAWPRO at present to be able to deliver these engagements ourselves. Lessons can be learnt for the WoL schools engagements.	
5	ACRES Co-operation Projects updates, Michelle Kearney • The deadline for scorecard submission for ACRES was the 28/09/2023 • Scoring of commonage expected to take longer (1-2 months more) • A ministerial announcement on tranche 2 is expected soon • Announcement on non productive investments also coming • There are 3 training dates for advisors in October (in person training only) on tranche 2 and non-productive investments • Spoke about how this would be communicated to citizens including those not involved in agriculture • ACRES CP local action plans are still being worked on. The current versions are too long and cumbersome and need to be reduced to concise 10-15 page documents to enable communications with communities, especially on landscape actions. • Michelle encouraged the group to engage with the ACRES teams in particular in relation to the engagement activities this month.	
6	Local Authority Climate Action Plans, Bernie White, LAWPRO LAWPRO reviewed the Local Authority Climate Action Themes and Strategic Goals and have highlighted a number of opportunities and proposed actions for inclusion in each of the LA CAPs, in order to ensure alignment with the WFD Objectives and the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022 – 2027 and the Climate Action planning process. The Themes where actions were proposed were Governance and Leadership, Built environment and transport, natural environment and green infrastructure, and Communities: resilience and just transition. Key areas of consideration from a Local Authority perspective include: • Protection of water quality generally (understanding why waterbodies are currently not achieving their EU Water Framework Directive objectives and plan for climate change risk) • Pollution control (aligning environmental inspections, environmental planning policy, reviewing Section 4 licences, DWWTS, Drinking Water, Wells with climate change issues given due consideration)	Presentation to be circulated

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	• Planning (integration of water sensitive urban design concepts including development of Rainwater Management Plans as part of settlement plans / Local Area Plans) • Built infrastructure (integrate nature-based solutions into all projects to provide greater water quality protection and reduce flood risk) • Biodiversity (understand local biodiversity requirements and plan for climate change) • Education (local education and awareness raising of the general public, staff and elected representatives) Actions proposed are presented in tables which includes the action description, whether its Adaptation/Mitigation, how the measure will be tracked, the lead LA department, suggested partners, suggested timeframes and dependencies. Actions were developed in consultation with Tipperary County Council and the CARO, to be practical and implementable. LAWPRO are a suggested partner for a number of actions. Q&A OPW welcomed the engagement with the LAs on the CAPs and would be keen to learn more about the actions proposed on e.g. NBS etc. Bernie will link Conor in with Fran Igoe and Jimmy McVeigh who led on this work for LAWPRO.	
7	AOB No items raised	
8	Next Meeting Date <i>18th January 2024</i>	