

**National Flood Forecasting and Warning Service (NFFWS) - Steering Group Meeting –  
Action Points and Notes of Meeting**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>National Flood Forecasting and Warning Service</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>8 November 2023</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>2.00pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>OPW 1GQ Dublin Office</b>

**Attendees:**

Chairman - Robert Mooney (RM)	OPW	Sarah O'Reilly (SOR)	Met Éireann
Ciaran Conroy (CC)	OPW	Eoin Sherlock (ES)	Met Éireann
Oliver Nicholson (ON)	OPW	Ciaran Broderick (CB)	Met Éireann
Mark Adamson (MA)	OPW	Susan Fitzgerald (SF)	DHLGH
Bryan Sheehan (BS)	OPW	Dara McGowan (DMcG)	CCMA
Robert Leonard (RL) via Microsoft Teams	DAFM		

<b>Agenda Item:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	<b>Follow Up Action By:</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Action Points and Notes of Previous Meeting (10 October 2023)</b>	
	The Action Points from the previous meeting were agreed.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Stage I Implementation Plan - Update</b>	
<b>2.1.</b>	<b>Review of Progress update provided by MÉ and the OPW</b>	
<b>2.1.1.</b>	<b>Stage I overview of progress to date and key tasks outstanding</b>	
	<p>CB gave an update on this agenda item:</p> <p>Coastal Thresholds - MA advised that ICWWS thresholds may be used (on an ongoing, rather than interim basis), but that there may be updates as different projects advance. As and when they are available, they will be issued to MÉ. As such, this action should be noted as complete.</p> <p>Stage I and Stage II reports are being drafted.</p> <p>MÉ is currently running a competition for a new hydrometeorologist.</p>	
<b>2.1.2.</b>	<b>Progress on Flood Forecasting Centre and staffing/training (MÉ)</b>	
	<p>CB gave a brief update on this agenda item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One member of MÉ FFD staff is receiving meteorological training</li> <li>• Further python training is planned for the start of the new year</li> </ul>	

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2.1.3	<p><b>Progress on operationalising the national scale Tide and Storm Surge Forecasting Service within MÉ</b></p>	
	<p>CB gave a brief update on this agenda item:</p> <p>CB then briefly spoke about the steps taken to ensure business continuity measures for the OPW hydrometric network, noting that ON has sent a proposal to Met Éireann for a backup arrangement for receiving flow data, which is a work in progress.</p> <p>CB noted that at the last meeting it was discussed that the TSSF service was being transferred on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. All objectives have been met as set out in the operationalisation plan with the first high tide advisory issued on October 27<sup>th</sup>, which was an important milestone.</p> <p>MA commented that is important that while the HTA may go out, LA's always had access to the background information on the website. CB commented that they will make sure if anybody wants training or access to the IFICS that it is provided.</p>	
2.2	<p><b>Proposed actions towards finalising Stage I by MÉ and the OPW</b></p>	
	<p>CB gave an update on this agenda item:</p> <p>CB noted that he had been in contact with ON regarding the question of adding more gauges to the list in the SLA. The feedback was that there wouldn't be any more gauges added at this time, so it can now be considered for sign off by both parties to the SLA.</p> <p>SF asked if additional gauges would be added to in the near future, and ON responded that there are 57 OPW gauges that are identified in the SLA and being used for flood forecasting, and this was the core number of gauges that OPW hydrometric section could commit resources to. SF queried how the list of 57 gauges in the SLA was compiled. ON noted that OPW identified the high quality gauges in the country, and have come up with 57 which are top quality, as well as a second tier of gauges. SF queried on classification, in which ON advised it is their capability to measure high flows above QMED.</p> <p>CB commented that the flood in Middleton was a good example of where there was a LA gauge that was not reporting in real time.</p> <p>RM commented that as part of Stage II, additional gauge coverage is foreseen. CB responded that MÉ has been in discussion with the EPA, on how much a gauge costs, who takes on cost, and basic discussions on information on setting up a network. RM noted that there is a need to define additional gauge requirements in order to improve the models and SOR noted the vision for Stage II should be about further developing a national gauging capacity and delivering on that requirement.</p> <p>MA noted that MÉ is now on the National Hydrometric Group, and CB noted that it may be useful to bring its requirements into this</p>	

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	<p>group and discuss it with the experts, and that M<sup>É</sup> needs are recognised in terms of flood forecasting, as an increasingly higher demand is placed on the network by M<sup>É</sup>.</p> <p>RM concluded by noting that there would be a report on Stage I and it was agreed that the Stage I hydrometric gauging requirements had been met..</p> <p>CB spoke briefly on river flood advisories, and confirmed that they have not yet been issued, and would only be issued if a situation warranted it. SOR commented that we are still at trial stage and RM noted that the plan at the start of year was to try and complete Stage I in October and to go operational.</p>	
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Update on draft report on Stage I Implementation</b>	
	<p>MA spoke on this agenda item.</p> <p>MA advised that the subgroup met on 27<sup>th</sup> October and a revised draft was received yesterday, and this will be considered ahead of the next meeting which is scheduled for Friday November 10<sup>th</sup>. There will be another meeting scheduled for Friday 24 November, with the intention that a final draft will be ready to bring back to the SG ahead of the meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>MA confirmed that observations had been received on the first draft, which had been incorporated but there was still too much technical information included, and issues to address such as when Stage I recommendations stop, and where Stage II proposals begin. RM stated that more focus could be placed on what was achieved in Stage I as opposed to requirements for Stage II.</p>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Report from the Technical Subgroup</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Progress update (M<sup>É</sup>)</b>	
	<p>CB gave a brief update on this agenda item:</p> <p>The Technical Sub Group has not met since the last SG meeting, but there has been liaison between M<sup>É</sup> and the OPW via the Technical Sub Group on the business continuity measures and the SLA.</p> <p>RM asked ON what the position is on business continuity measures, and ON advised that he had been in touch with M<sup>É</sup> to see what is the best alternative way of receiving data from OPW gauges. There was a suggestion that a duplicate version of waterlevel.ie be set up, but it was noted that if there were to be difficulties with the main waterlevel.ie website, the same difficulties would be experienced with the duplicate. The idea now is to send the data directly to a M<sup>É</sup> server, and then to trial this on a small number of stations to see if it works and to discuss what</p>	

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	<p>infrastructure MÉ has in order to receive the data. ES commented that there is some software that MÉ may be able to get to do this.</p> <p>ES asked if it was the aim to sign off the SLA at the next meeting, and RM confirmed if everything has been resolved then yes this would be the position.</p>	
4.	<b>Communications</b>	
4.1	<b>Communications Working Group and Strategy (CWG)</b>	
	<p>RM noted that at the last meeting ES was to review and update the paper on the draft Communications Strategy.</p> <p>ES commented that he had taken on board the comments from the last SG meeting. It is now a reflection of what we will be delivering at the end of Stage I. Stakeholders have been identified and it looked at roles and responsibilities of everybody involved. It is now more of what we do at the moment, and the methodology around how we achieve it, and it is now a much briefer document, with the removal of digital elements.</p> <p>RM commented that he would not ask the SG to approve the Strategy at this point as it was only circulated, and there was a couple of things that may need to be tweaked. RM then asked if everybody could track any observations that they may have on it and then send back to ES, and that ahead of next meeting if ES could circulate it back to the SG with a view to sign off. The OPW agreed to consolidate their return. MA suggested a timeline of returns by November 24<sup>th</sup>.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>SG to track any obs to ES.</b></li> <li>2. <b>ES to then recirculate to group in advance of next meeting for sign off.</b></li> </ol>
5	[REDACTED]	
5.1	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
6.	<b>Governance</b>	
6.1	<b>Financial Arrangements 2023</b>	
	<p>CC gave an update on the current financial arrangements. The balance of the funding to MÉ through the OPW for the establishment of the Flood Forecasting Centre is currently at €41,362.28. MÉ was asked to provide an update on any requirement for these funds.</p> <p>MÉ indicated that their accounts officer should be sending something through today regarding this.</p>	<p><b>MÉ to provide an update on any requirement for these funds.</b></p>
6.2	<b>Reporting Requirements</b>	
	<p>CC gave an update on the reporting requirements.</p> <p>Earlier in the year, the OPW wrote to Secretaries General relevant to the work of the Interdepartmental Flood Policy Coordination Group requesting updates on their work and any recommendations that could be included in a report. The compiling of this report is at an advanced stage, and it is hoped to have a meeting of the Interdepartmental Group before the end of this month.</p> <p>SOR queried if this Group would need to provide info to the Interdepartmental Group, in which RM clarified that the OPW provides updates regarding the NFFWS to the IDFPCG, and previously ES attended a meeting to make a presentation. RM further noted that in the intervening time the NFFWS has taken on additional importance.</p>	

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7.	<b>Risk Register</b>	
7.1	<b>Review of risk register</b>	
	CC confirmed that a revised risk register was circulated for any amendments or comments.	
8.	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>RM spoke on a draft paper that was received from MÉ. RM commented that the paper was composed of a mixture of things, and asked what MÉ were proposing. SOR advised that the document was a description of what would be the operational service, and the services that would be provided at the end of Stage I, and hoped that the SG would endorse this. RM noted that we are due to complete Stage I by the end of Q4, and the intent is to go operational, and SOR advised that MÉ hoped to go operational as soon as possible.</p> <p>RM noted that we need to draw a line under Stage I, as we are bringing a memo for information to Government. It would be good to complete Stage I and bringing a memo to the effect that the service is now operational and to follow-up quickly with a Stage II proposal. SOR spoke about rostering for the services, as the current arrangement is an on-call arrangement, which needs to be firmed up to have staff in the office at the weekend. RM further commented that the system had been endorsed by the SG as it was being developed.</p> <p>RM further noted to the SG that we are on track for Stage I by year end, and MÉ will then be going operational with the service for Stage I products, and MÉ agreed with this.</p> <p>RM commented on how we manage communication to Government on the important Stage I milestone being achieved. The proposal was to bring a memo for information to Government with the Stage I report. MA noted that progress had been reported to the Interdepartmental Group. RM noted that we need to look at timings around the memo to Government having regard to the timing of the next SG meeting.</p> <p>A discussion then took place concerning recent flood events.</p>	<b>Paper by SG endorsing the service going operational.</b>
9.	<b>Further Meeting Dates in 2023</b>	
	Further meeting dates were not discussed as remaining dates for 2023 were previously agreed.	