

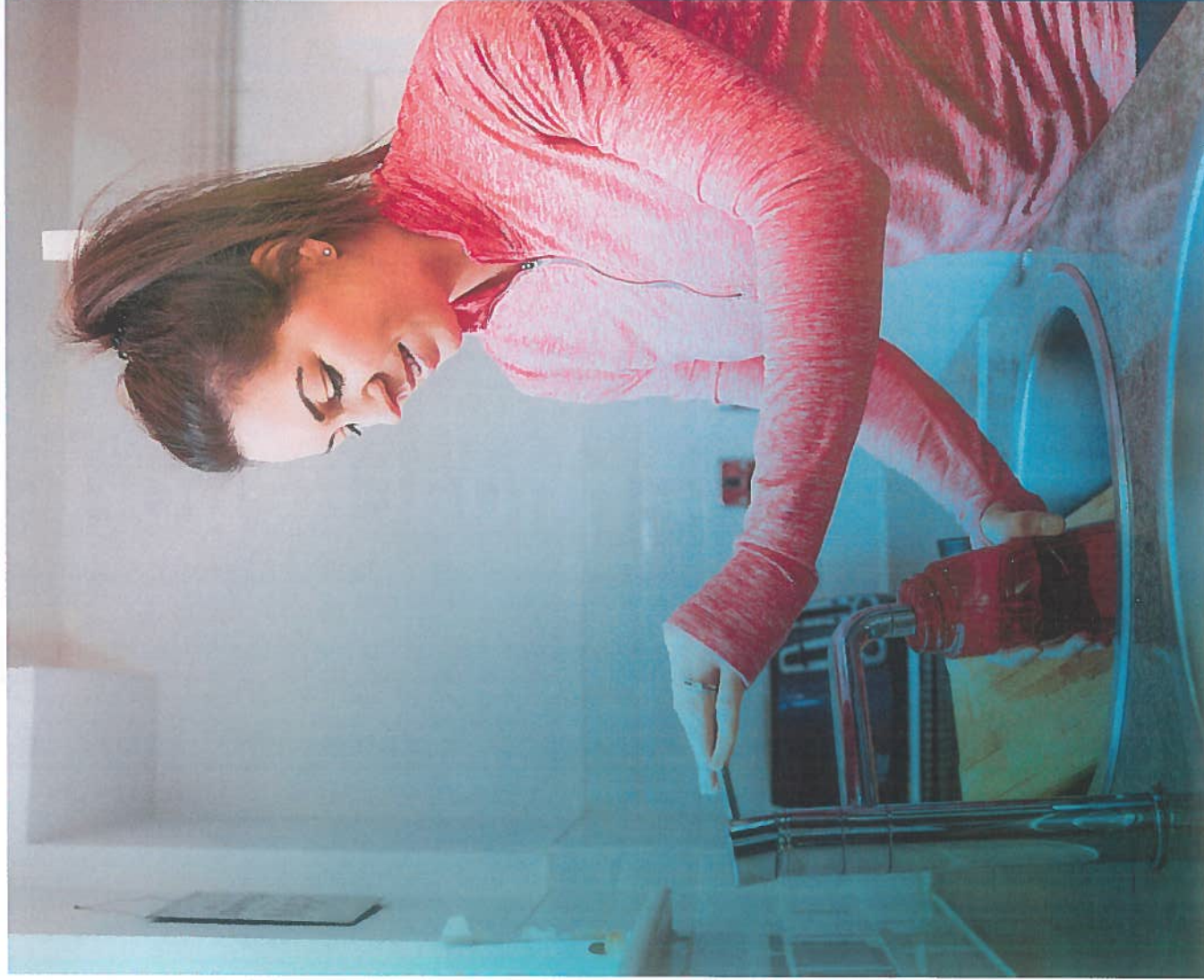
Looking after Ireland's
water resources

A large, vibrant blue image of the ocean with gentle waves. In the background, a soft rainbow is visible through a hazy sky, adding a serene and natural feel to the cover.

An Fóram Uisce
Annual Report
2018

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Welcome

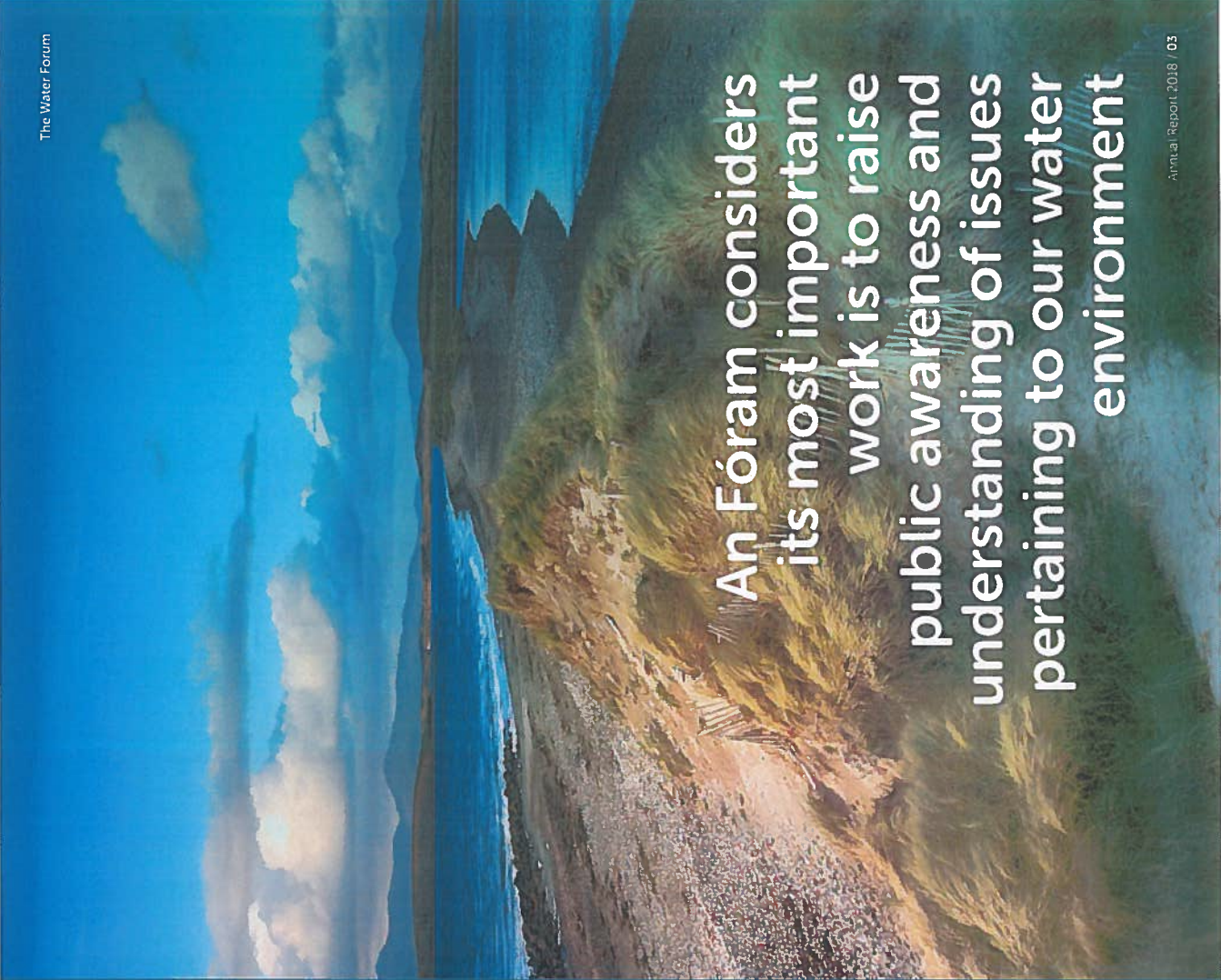
To An Fóram Uisce's second Annual Report

The Chairperson and Members of An Fóram Uisce wish to extend their welcome to their second Annual Report.

In June 2018, Mr. Eoghan Murphy, Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government established An Fóram as a statutory body, in accordance with the provisions of the Water Services Act 2017. Prior to this, An Fóram acted on an administrative basis, incorporating the former roles of the Public Water Forum and the National Rural Water Services Committee.

An Fóram has an important role in providing a platform for stakeholder engagement in, and influence on, national policies and programmes aimed at improving the quality of our waters and our water services, thus addressing the many challenges facing us in the context of environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects of our water environment.

An Fóram considers its most important work is to raise public awareness and understanding of issues pertaining to our water environment and to advise and assist the various agencies in this regard. Further, it is providing a platform on which stakeholders can engage, listen, consider and understand their respective and collective roles in protecting and restoring Ireland's water environment.



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Chairperson's statement

I am pleased to introduce the second Annual Report of An Fóram Uisce – the Water Forum. The past year has been a busy one not just for An Fóram but for the many agencies and stakeholders with whom An Fóram interacts.

As the implementation of the second River Basin Management Protection plan gathers pace there is evidence of a greatly increased momentum and energy on many fronts. The governance structure for the implementation has now been put in place and activated; the Local Authority Water Programme (LAWPRO) has been substantially enhanced in the appointment of more staff; the EPA testing regime has been further streamlined and a range of innovative programmes around mitigating the impact of agriculture on water have been enhanced.

The past year brought some particular challenges in water supply and in the management of water bodies. The Summer drought stretched public supply capacity to limits rarely experienced. Equally, rising water temperatures in depleted river beds presented challenges to fish stocks and other river based

life. Abstraction requirements from rivers for livestock and horticultural production through the dry spell exacerbated an already difficult situation and starkly crystallised the challenges of planning for climate change in the country.

An Fóram was an active participant in all of these developments through the year, having been established on a formal statutory basis in June, 2018. Indeed, it was against the background of these and other occurrences that it shaped its first strategic plan. This plan positions An Fóram in the wider landscape of agencies and players commonly resolved on the project of enhancing the quality of Ireland's water bodies and water services. In this regard An Fóram has identified seven strategic priorities which it aims to pursue up to 2021 and specifies the personnel and other resource requirements which are necessary for it to undertake this role successfully.

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This strategic plan will guide all aspects of the work and contribution of An Fóram in the coming three years

In conclusion, I would like to thank all members of An Fóram for their dedication, commitment and contribution to the work programme over the past year. An Fóram is the only statutory stakeholder body with a remit for water quality and its central role in public engagement and consultation is acknowledged both by the members and their nominating bodies but also by external agencies such as the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and Irish Water.

A particular word of thanks to the staff of LAWPRO who not only support the work of An Fóram on an administrative basis but are the necessary local intelligence and actors in supporting the thinking and the role of An Fóram nationally. Finally, on behalf of the members and on my own behalf, deepest thanks to Sharon Kennedy, the ever enthusiastic and effective Fóram manager.

Dr. Tom Collins
Chairperson

About An Fóram Uisce

An Fóram Uisce (the Water Forum) was established on a statutory basis by Mr. Eoghan Murphy, T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government in June 2018, in accordance with the Water Services Act 2017.

An Fóram is the only statutory body representative of all stakeholders with an interest in the quality of Ireland's water bodies. An Fóram consists of 28 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connection to issues relating to water quality and also public water consumers. Approximately 50 different nominations were involved in the nomination of members.

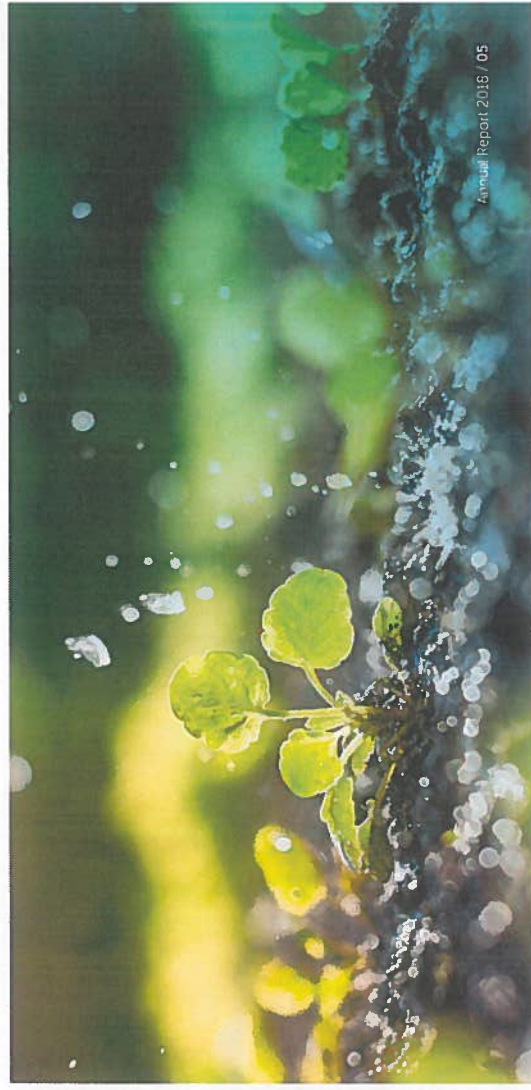
An Fóram provides an opportunity for stakeholders to debate and analyse a range of issues with regard to water quality, rural water concerns, issues affecting customers of Irish Water and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021.

The Water Services Act 2017 provided the statutory basis for An Fóram. The Act also provided for the dissolution of the Public Water Forum (whose remit was primarily concerned with issues pertaining to Irish Water and the Regulation) and the National Rural Water Services Committee (the committee for addressing issues regarding rural water), with their functions being incorporated into An Fóram.

An Fóram is an independent entity and has discretion to determine its own work programme and means of communicating its views and analysis.

Dr. Tom Collins, who had been the chair of the Public Water Forum and a former Chair of the National Rural Water Monitoring Committee, is the Chairperson and Ms Sharon Kennedy is Senior Executive Officer. An Fóram's office is in Nenagh, County Tipperary.

Further information with regard to An Fóram can be ascertained at www.nationalwaterforum.ie



Mission statement

The role of An Fóram is, in the first instance, to identify a **vision for our water bodies** – as clean and healthy waters, supporting biodiversity and providing the basis for positive economic and cultural life.

An Fóram is charged with ensuring that all **stakeholders are regularly reminded of this vision and their role** in achieving and supporting same.



Clean
Waters



Vibrant
Biodiversity



Healthy
Communities



Strong
Economy

An Fóram will provide a unifying platform for multiple and sometimes competing interests to work together in a collaborative manner, and drawing on each other's expertise and experience, address the many challenges to the vision.

An Fóram also has a role in inspiring, informing, educating and challenging all stakeholders in matters relevant to this vision.

All of our activities should seek to achieve at least one, if not more, of these outcomes.

An Fóram will support the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan and will actively monitor progress. If and when required, An Fóram will provide positive critical analysis of progress and issues which are of concern or which could compromise achieving our vision in relation to clean and healthy waters.

Based on its understanding of the vision and having regard to its interactions with stakeholders, An Fóram is responsible for drafting recommendations in relation to the on-going development of national policies and strategies in relation to all water issues and working with all stakeholders and state agencies in achieving the common and shared goal as contained in the River Basin Management Plan of restoring our waters to good status.

Formal launch of An Fóram at our symposium in Farmleigh

Mr. Eoghan Murphy, T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government attended An Fóram's Symposium in Farmleigh on the 11th June 2018 to formally launch An Fóram.

The symposium focused on **The role of the citizen as custodian of Ireland's waters** and was attended by members of An Fóram, former members of the Public Water Forum along with representatives from a range of Stakeholders, Government Departments and Agencies

The symposium focussed on the fact that there is a growing awareness, in Ireland and elsewhere, of the centrality of high quality water to social and economic wellbeing on the one hand, and to the protection and conservation of the wider ecosystem of the other hand. The symposium

explored the role which active and informed citizenry can play in the task of conserving, protecting and enhancing this vulnerable and critical resource

The symposium comprised of three sessions as follows:

Session 1

Deliberative democracy, Informed citizenship and active participation

Sharon Finegan, Secretary to the Citizens Assembly who advanced a case study of citizen participation in the context of the work of the Citizens Assembly

Paul Melia, Environment Editor with INM spoke on the role of the media in environmental awareness

Dr. Susan Walker, Customer Forum for Water in Scotland who outlined the experience and work of that Forum.

Session 2

Meeting the water needs of growing urban centre

Milo Purcell, Drinking Water Inspectorate for England and Wales who advised on the factors to be considered in the assessment of major water services projects

Dr. Tom Collins, Chairperson of An Fóram who outlined the role of An Fóram in relation to the Water Supply Project for the Eastern and Midlands Region.

Session 3

The role of An Fóram Uisce in facilitating citizen engagement

A number of members of An Fóram Uisce and the Public Water Forum discussed their understanding of citizen engagement and their experiences in participating in the work of the Forum

Membership of An Fóram

An Fóram has 28 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connections to issues relating to water quality and also public water consumers. Approximately 50 different organisations were involved in the nomination of members during early 2017.

28 members nominated by 50 organisations

Agriculture

Thomas Cooney (IFA)
Derrig Dillon (Macra)
Denis Drennan (ICMSA)
Michael Spellman (ICoS)

Education

Dr. Suzanne Linnane (DHE)

Environment

Bernadette Connolly (Coik Eir Forum)
Ollan Herr (ZWA)
Mindy O'Brien (Voice Ireland)
Sinead O'Brien (SWAH)
Charles Stanley-Smith (An Taisce)

Angling and water sports

Martin McEnroe (Angling)
Dr. Tim Butler (Water Sports)

Business

Neil Walker (Ibec)

Fisheries/aquaculture

Patrick Murphy (IS&WFPO)

Community and voluntary

Gerald O'Leary (Irish Rural Link)
David Wright (Voluntary sector)

Consumers

Jonathan Small (CCPC)
Connie Rochford (Irish Water consumer)
Keith Hyland (Irish Water consumer)
Laure Kearon (Irish Water consumer)

Rivers trusts

Dr. Thomas Harrington (Hague RT)

Rural water

Barry Deane (NFGWS)
Jean Rosney (NFGWS)

Scout housing

Kevin Ryan (ICSH)

Tourism

Tim Fenn (IH)

Trade unions

Liam Berney (ICTU)

An Fóram would like to record its appreciation to Patrick Rohan (ICMSA) and Francis O'Donnell (EPO) for their work during their time with An Fóram. Both Patrick and Francis resigned during the year and were replaced by Denis Drennan and Patrick Murphy. Laure Kearon joined as an additional consumer representative during 2018.

Meetings of An Fóram 2018

An Fóram held the following plenary meetings during 2018

9th January – Ashling Hotel, Dublin	Jonathan Small (22%)
20th February – Killeeshin Hotel, Portlaoise	Keith Hyland (56%)
9th March – Spencer Hotel, Dublin	Kevin Ryan (33%)
10th April – Ashling Hotel, Dublin	Laurie Kearon (33%)*
8th May – Midlands Hotel, Portlaoise	Liam Berney (56%)
17th July – Ashling Hotel, Dublin	Martin McEnroe (100%)
4th September – Midlands Hotel, Portlaoise	Michael Spellman (56%)
19th October – Spencer Hotel, Dublin	Mindy O'Brien (44%)
4th December – Midlands Hotel, Portlaoise	Neil Walker (56%)
	Ollan Herr (89%)
	Patrick Murphy (25%)*
	Patrick Rohan (11%)*
	Sinead O'Brien (78%)
	Thomas Cooney (89%)
	Tim Fern (67%)
	* Patrick Rohan was replaced by Denis Drennan in February 2018
	Francis O'Donnell was replaced by Patrick Murphy in September 2018
	Laurie Kearon joined in April 2018

Attendance at the meetings averaged at 65%, breakdown as follows:

Barry Deane (78%)	Jonathan Small (22%)
Bernadette Connolly (56%)	Keith Hyland (56%)
Brendan Fitzsimons (11%)	Kevin Ryan (33%)
Charles Stanley Smith (100%)	Laurie Kearon (33%)*
Connie Rochford (100%)	Liam Berney (56%)
David Wright (44%)	Martin McEnroe (100%)
Denis Drennan (89%)*	Michael Spellman (56%)
Derrie Dillon (44%)	Mindy O'Brien (44%)
Francis O'Donnell (22%)*	Neil Walker (56%)
Suzanne Linnane (78%)	Ollan Herr (89%)
Thomas Harrington (67%)	Patrick Murphy (25%)*
Tim Butter (67%)	Patrick Rohan (11%)*
Tom Collins (100%)	Sinead O'Brien (78%)
Gerald Quain (89%)	Thomas Cooney (89%)
Jean Rosney (56%)	Tim Fern (67%)

* Patrick Rohan was replaced by Denis Drennan in February 2018
Francis O'Donnell was replaced by Patrick Murphy in September 2018
Laurie Kearon joined in April 2018

Committees of An Fóram

Water Services Standing Committee

An Fóram Uisce, at its meeting held on the 10th April 2018, made a decision to establish a Water Services Standing Committee and in so doing, re-iterated its commitment to facilitating stakeholder engagement on all water services issues (including drinking water and waste water) at a national, strategic policy level with the common goal of improving the supply and quality of drinking water and protecting and restoring our waters

The Standing Committee commenced its work in July and met on four occasions (12th July, 23rd August, 25th September and 15th November)

The committee is required to debate and analyse issues related to drinking water and waste water, including, but not limited to

- Water conservation,
- Rural water issues and,
- The interests of the customers of Irish Water

The Committee submits its reports for consideration at the plenary meetings of An Fóram. It is chaired by Barry Deane and comprises of members including Jean Rosney, Keith Hyland, Connie Rochford, Laurie Kearon, Dr Suzanne Linnane, Denis Drennan, Kevin Ryan and Sinead O'Brien

Strategy Working Group

An Fóram established a working group at its meeting held on the 9th January to develop a strategy for the work of An Fóram. The group was chaired by Dr. Tom Collins and comprised of Sinead O'Brien, Connie Rochford, Martin McEnroe, Barry Deane, Thomas Cooney, Gerald Quain, Suzanne Linnane and Charles Stanley Smith.

The group met on eight occasions during the year (9th February; 16th March, 16th April, 22nd May, 22nd June, 25th July, 29th and 30th August and the 15th November) and was assisted/facilitated by Tom Barry and Michael Donnelly

The Group provided progress reports to the Plenary Meetings of An Fóram and presented its Draft Strategy at the meeting held in December 2018 which was approved



Strategic Plan 2018-2021

An Fóram adopted its Strategic Plan for the period 2018 to 2021 in December 2018. The strategy sets out a series of Strategic Priorities which were determined having regard to An Fóram's statutory role and also the role and functions of other organisations and agencies.

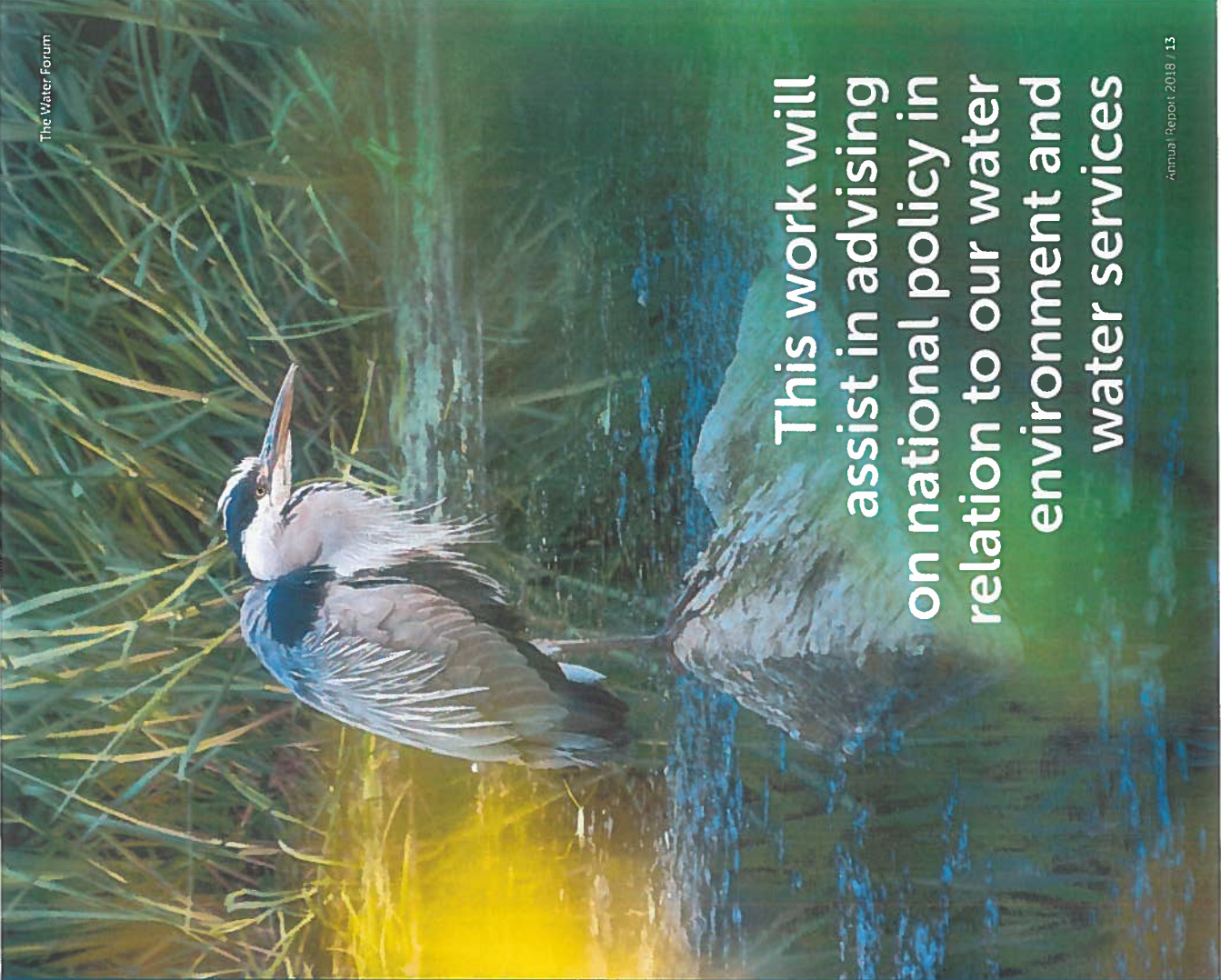
It was agreed that the focus of work will be on addressing gaps and adding value to water related policy and issues in facilitating a dynamic interplay between and within science, policy, programme delivery and stakeholders

It is intended that this work will assist in advising on national policy in relation to our water environment and water services, in promoting public awareness on the vulnerability of the water resource and thereby supporting behavioural and attitude change

The strategy identifies the goals and actions for each of these objectives and also the resources required in order to support same. Following discussions with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, approval was given to proceeding with the creation of a number of posts within An Fóram's secretariat during 2019.

The following are the strategic themes on which attention will be focussed during the next three years:

- 1 Advise the Minister and support the debate on the formulation of national policies relating to water
- 2 Promote water conservation and inform relevant national policy
- 3 Review and advise, on an on-going basis, on the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 and the Water Framework Directive
- 4 Provide recommendations on the performance of Irish Water with particular reference to the interests of the consumers of Irish Water
- 5 Support and review the provision and development of Rural Water Services and issues pertaining to private supplies
- 6 Lead a programme of public awareness and education on the value of water
- 7 Support and promote public consultation and engagement on all matters relevant to water



This work will assist in advising on national policy in relation to our water environment and water services

An Fóram has a responsibility to comment and submit in relation to national policies pertinent to water quality

Submissions made by An Fóram during 2018

An Fóram has a responsibility to comment and submit in relation to national policies pertinent to water quality. During the course of the year, An Fóram submitted responses to a number of consultation processes which are summarised as follows:

January 2018

- Letter to Irish Water in relation to their SEA Scoping Report and consultation process on their 'National Water Resource Plan' (NWRP)
- Submission to the EPA on the National Inspection Plan 2018-2021 For Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems

February 2018

- Submission to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the Draft Water Services Guidelines For Planning Authorities

March 2018

- Submission to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities on Irish Water's Proposed Connection Policy
- Letter to Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government regarding the Draft River Basin Management Plan

April 2018

- Submission to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Consultation Process in relation to the Water Services Policy Statement 2018-2025

June 2018

- Submission to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on the Review of the National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides 2018

July 2018

- Submission to Irish Water in relation to their Investment Plan 2020-2024

August 2018

- Submission to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities on Irish Water's Proposed Non-Domestic Tariff Framework Proposals

October 2018

- Letter to Irish Water regarding their proposed documentary
- Submission to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government Consultation process in relation to the Water Environment (Abstractions) Bill 2018 (General Scheme)

In late 2017, An Fóram commissioned a review by Dundalk Institute of Technology of the 'Effectiveness of engagement and facilitation of performance during the Sateen Water Treatment Plant Outage in 2017'. This report was presented early in 2018 and shared with Irish Water.

Financial and administrative arrangements

The expenses incurred by An Fóram are provided for by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. During 2018, a total of €174,479.70 was expended, broken down into the following categories

Expense	Amount
Secretariat salary and travel expenses	€88,216.78
Office overheads, communications, training and IT	€10,216.66
Chairperson's allowance	€8,977.50
Chairperson's project (assigned from 2017 allowance)	€6,000.00
Meeting expenses	€20,704.82
Travel for members	€24,459.09
Training and facilitation	€9,904.00
Symposium in Famineleigh	€6,000.85
Total	€174,479.70

Tipperary County Council provides administrative support in the context of payroll, payments and office space.

Acknowledgements

Mr. Tom Collins and Ms. Sharon Kennedy would like to thank the members of An Fóram for their support, enthusiasm, hard work, and commitment during the year.

An Fóram would also like to thank the following organisations for their support of the work of An Fóram and/or attendance at meetings of An Fóram during 2018.

- Commission for Regulation of Utilities
- Department of Agriculture, Forestry and the Marine
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Dundalk Institute of Technology
- Emma Kennedy
- EPA
- Irish Water
- Local Authority Water Programme Office (LAWPRO)
- Michael Donnelly
- National Co-Ordination and Management Committee
- Office of Public Works
- Tom Barry



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