



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Ministerial Appointee Meeting in performing the Functions of Inland Fisheries Ireland under s.18(5) of the Inland Fisheries Act 2010

Quarterly Meetings Report – Q2, 2023

19 April, 31 May, and 28 June

**This is the report of the meetings of the s.18 Appointees which took place in quarter 2, 2023.
This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at this meeting.**

BOARD MEETING – 19 April 2023

PRIVATE MEMBERS' SESSION

1. MEETING GOVERNANCE

The meeting agenda was adopted, and no conflicts were declared by meeting attendees in respect of matters on the agenda. Agreement regarding the confidential nature of matters raised was noted.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 s.18 Appointee Meeting – 29 March Minutes

MOTION: Approval of the 29 March meeting minutes was agreed.

No matters were raised.

2.2 s.18 Appointee Meeting 29 March 2023 – Resolutions and Status on Actions Arising

The executive provided verbal updates on actions arising from previous meetings.

3. VITAL FEW

3.1 DRAFT Annual Report 2022 – An extension for submission and review of the IFI Annual Report to 25 April in advance of the deadline of 30 April was agreed.

3.2 DRAFT Comprehensive Report to the Minister 2022 – the draft report was reviewed in detail by the s.18 Appointees. Queries raised were responded to by the executive and feedback was given on individual aspects of the report for amendments to be made.

MOTION: Approval of the 2022 Comprehensive Report to the Minister was agreed pending the application of amendments advised.

3.3 DRAFT Annual Report on Protected Disclosures received by IFI in 2022 (s.22 of 2014 Act) - the s.18 Appointees advised an amendment to the report to aid clarity in advance of publication on IFI's website.

4. CEO'S REPORT

4.1 CEO's Report – this report was taken as read. The CEO responded to a query on IFI's proposed Fish Farm and S. Campion responded to queries in relation to the replacement of grating at Cong and capital funds available.

5. FINANCIAL SUMMARY PRESENTATION

5.1 Comptroller & Auditor General – Audit Certificate – 2021 Financial Statements – processes on the submission of the C&AG audit certificate to the Department were outlined.

5.2 DRAFT Unaudited 2022 Financial Statements – for submission to DECC

Governance, Board Members & Internal Control Statements

A briefing was provided on the draft 2022 Financial Statements and response to queries in relation to Travel & Subsistence costs and international travel compared with 2021. S.18 Appointees reviewed the Governance, Board Members and Internal Control Statements in detail and feedback provided would be applied and the updated document resubmitted for final review for submission to IFI's parent department.

Unaudited 2022 Financial Statements

The meeting Chair noted that an Audit and Risk meeting had taken place earlier in the day where the Internal Audit reports on Systems of Internal Control and Disbursement of Dormant Account Funding were considered and findings accepted.

MOTION: Adoption of the Review of Systems of Internal Financial Control (2022) and Review of Dormant Accounts Funding was agreed.

Queries were responded to on transfer of capital and the application of depreciation. Clarity was sought from the executive in respect of cash and cash equivalents. S.18 Appointees reviewed the draft 2022 Financial Statements in detail and provided feedback. It was agreed to apply feedback and distribute the draft amended version for final review.

MOTION: Approval of the 2022 Governance, Board Members', and Internal Control Statement and unaudited 2022 Financial Statements were agreed pending the application of amendments advised and checks requested.

5.3 Management Accounts - Management Accounts for February were taken as read and a brief presentation was provided.

5.4 Procurement within IFI - background was provide in terms of a review of procurement and recommendations which included the appointment of a procurement officer and the appointment of a procurement expert on retainer to support the building of systems and the development of policies and procedures.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management Framework - The Corporate Risk Register was taken as read and noted. s.18 Appointees advised that when the register is being reviewed on 2 May, that consideration be given to reducing the number of risks at this level and transferring risks to operational registers.

7. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

7.1 Commercial Salmon Licence Applications 2023 - the paper was taken as read, a briefing on the background to the granting of commercial licenses was provided. Queries raised were responded to.

MOTION: Approval of the granting of Commercial Licences for 2023 was agreed.

7.2 Property Proposal – Clonmel - This paper was taken as read. A briefing was provided on the history of construction activities in Clonmel in improving the building's fabric/BER certification and the associated costs and the necessity to progress works.

MOTION: Approval of €55k capital expenditure on works to the Clonmel office was agreed.

7.3 Vehicle Purchase Proposal - This paper was taken as read. A discussion ensued on the necessity for the organisation to invest in replacing utility vehicles with diesel engine vehicles due to IFI's habitat development and restoration remit. It was noted that electric vehicle (EV) technical development has not progressed to the towing and terrain capacity required by the organisation. The executive responded to queries in relation to the method of procurement and was requested to update the capital plan for 2023.

MOTION: Approval of the expenditure of €352k on replacing 8 utility vehicles was agreed.

8. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

8.1 Climate Mandate Report March 2023 & Climate Action Roadmap IFI 2023 – a presentation was provided on IFI's Climate Action Roadmap for 2023, under the themes of: drivers, purpose, structure, and benchmarking success. Queries were raised in relation to IFI's building monitoring systems which provide 'live' data on energy consumption and which of IFI's carbon reduction initiatives are proving most successful. It is expected that IFI will move to an 80% electric and 20% Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicle mix by the end of the current Corporate Plan cycle. The challenges were outlined in the deployment of electric vehicles: early adoption; increased planning requirements; installation of sufficient/appropriate chargers to meet operational needs and range anxiety.

8.2 Sponsorship Funding Disbursement Report April 2023 - This paper was taken as read. A brief synopsis of the funding scheme was provided, which disburses circa €30k annually for allocation to tourism interests, angling organisations, community groups and those promoting fisheries awareness, novice angler initiatives and sustainable angling events in rural areas. Awards will be made to competitions and festivals (€13.66k), coaching and training (€7.5k), overseas angling events (€1.96k) and strategic and collaborative

initiatives (€6.9k). A list of grantees is published on IFI's website. The awards were noted by the S.18 Appointees.

9. Any Other Business

Resources Business Cases

A discussion arose on staffing requirements. S.18 Appointees referred to their mandated role in progressing a governance review of the organisation which, it is anticipated, will inform the structures necessary. A paper documenting the structure of the organisation at a point last year outlining the direction the executive wishes to take with supporting justification in line with HR principles paper will feed into the review. S.18 Appointees confirmed their agreement that the position of Financial Controller could be advertised, pending review of the business case and job description.

s18 Appointees (Board) Written Decision Between Meetings 26 April

A decision between meetings was facilitated by email on April 26th, to consider the outstanding matters from the April 19th meeting. Confirmation regarding these matters was received from S.18 Appointees on April 27th.

Resolution 1: Draft IFI Annual Report 2022 – for decision

MOTION: Approval of the draft unaudited 2022 IFI Annual Report and Financial Statements as amended were agreed.

Resolution 2: Draft IFI Climate Action Roadmap 2023 – for decision

MOTION: Approval of IFI's Climate Action Roadmap 2023 was agreed.

BOARD MEETING – 31 May 2023

1. MEETING GOVERNANCE

The meeting agenda was adopted, and no conflicts were declared by meeting attendees in respect of matters on the agenda. Agreement regarding the confidential nature of matters raised was noted.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 s.18 Appointee Meeting – 19 April Minutes and Meetings Report for Staff

MOTION: Approval of the 19 April meeting minutes and quarterly meetings report for staff.

No matters were raised.

2.2 s.18 Appointee Meeting 19 April 2023 – Resolutions and Status on Actions Arising

The executive provided verbal updates on actions arising from previous meetings.

3. VITAL FEW

3.1 Business Plan 2023 – Quarterly Update – Q1 - the updated Business Plan 2023 was taken as read and commended. The executive responded to queries on the content, noting that a proportion of projects would commence in Q2, some of which were dependent on external funding, which had recently been received.

3.2 Principles Supporting the HR Strategy - papers were taken as read. A brief presentation was provided on the HR strategy. Justification for the creation of the role of Financial Controller was outlined. Justification for the Strategic Projects and Property Manager positions were also provided. With reference to the forthcoming governance review, the s.18 Appointees cautioned that long term decisions in respect

of new roles/functional areas may be unwise prior to completion of the review. The executive confirmed that following the submission made in 2022, IFI's parent Department had very recently raised the organisation's Employment Control Framework (ECF) figure to 320 and would be increasing the pay budget by €450k.

Challenges faced in meeting the organisation's climate mandate obligations were provided, although the organisation had appointed an Energy Officer, the leadership role is being filled over and above full-time roles. Feedback was provided by s.18 Appointees.

4. CEO'S REPORT

4.1 CEO's Report – the CEO's Report was taken as read. A discussion ensued on the increasing volume of environmental assessments required, the organisation's status as a competent authority, its capacity in relation to conducting assessments and the arrangements in place for the procurement of such specialist services. The report and presentation were noted.

5. FINANCIAL SUMMARY PRESENTATION

5.1 Monthly Management Accounts – March 2023 - March Management Accounts were considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day and noted.

5.2 Quarterly Financial Statements/Accounts – Q1 2023 - Quarterly Financial Accounts were considered at the Audit & Risk meeting and noted. Queries were responded to in relation to the transfer of capital and the application of depreciation.

5.3 Updated Capital Budget 2023 - the updated Capital Plan 2023 was considered by the s.18 Appointees at the Audit & Risk meeting. The introduction of a property tracker document was commended.

MOTION: Approval of the updated Capital Plan 2023 was agreed.

5.4 Review of Fixed Travel Allowance - this paper at the ARC meeting and it was agreed that feedback provided by the s.18 Appointees would be applied to the document.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Risk Management Framework - the updated Corporate Risk Register was considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier. Edits applied were noted. Further work on the Board Risk Appetite is due to be completed.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) Audit of 2021 Financial Statements – Management Letter - the 2021 Financial Statements with CAG Audit Management Letter with responses to matters raised was taken as read. The management responses were noted and accepted.

8. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

8.1 Cong Grating (Screen) – Capital Appraisal > €50k - this paper was taken as read. It was noted that the previous Board had approved the project in principle pending detailed reporting of costs. It is anticipated that the project would run over three years, where €63,715 would be required in 2023 and that total expenditure up to €325k (subject to tender) was anticipated as a health and safety measure.

MOTION: Approval of the proposed capital expenditure of €63,715 in the current year and up to €325k in total for the replacement of the grating at Cong was agreed.

8.2 Business Case for Property Purchase - Dundalk District > €50k - this paper was taken as read. A briefing was provided on the historical challenges of identifying and purchasing suitable accommodation to support Dundalk District staff (up to 6 staff). The paper distributed outlined in detail the business case for the purchase of a suitable light industrial/commercial unit with motorway and RIB launch access at Annagassan, County Louth. Fitout costs were expected to be ~€233k which will be built into the capital programme.

MOTION: Approval of proposed expenditure to procure and fit out a property in Co. Louth (for the purposes of a field depot) of approximately €433k was agreed.

8.3 Business Case for Property Purchase - Sligo District > €50k - this paper was taken as read. A briefing was provided on the current unsuitable accommodation for the Bangor District staff and watercraft storage in Sligo. He presented the proposal to purchase a light industrial unit in County Sligo. Queries in respect of independent valuation were responded to.

MOTION: Approval of proposed expenditure to procure a property in Co. Sligo, subject to valuation was agreed.

8.4 Business Case for Property Purchase – Claregalway - this paper was taken as read. An outline of the issues which have arisen in relation to access at the IFI field base at Claregalway, County Galway. S.18 Appointees requested that further enquiries were required prior to approval being granted.

8.5 Legal Action Costs – this paper was taken as read. A briefing was provided on the prosecution case being prepared by IFI. It was agreed to brief s.18 Appointees as the matter progresses.

MOTION: Approval of legal costs with regular updates.

8.6 HR Business Cases

Strategic Projects and Property Manager - this paper was taken as read. s.18 Appointees advised that such a role may form part of a recommendation arising from the governance review. Also suggested was that if required, an appointment could be made at a lower level, and assigned elsewhere if the governance review recommends alternative structural changes.

Financial Controller - this paper was taken as read. Following the presentation under item 3.2 of the agenda, it was agreed that this position was justified.

MOTION: Approval of the Business Case for the creation of the position of Financial Controller was agreed.

New Sustainability Division [Director of Climate Action & Sustainability] - this paper was read as read. Further to the presentation and deliberations of the s.18 Appointees, it was agreed that there existed a requirement for the appointment of a position at the level of Assistant Principal higher to oversee IFI's significant commitment to sustainability.

MOTION: Approval of the Business Case for the creation of the position of Director of Climate Action and Sustainability was agreed.

9. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

9.1 Climate Mandate Report April 2023 - this paper was taken as read and noted. Queries regarding the installation of home base EV chargers supporting efficient charging/deployment of fleet vehicles were responded to. It was noted that a procedure was in place. Of the 9 chargers fitted there was a mix of smart and dumb home chargers. The organisation has 45 EVs in the fleet, forming 22% of the vehicular fleet. S.18 Appointees commended this penetration level.

9.2. Monthly Protections Reports – March, April 2023 - these papers were taken as read and noted. A presentation on the current protection effort was provided. Water temperatures of 20c+ were reported and the detrimental impact this has on fish stock discussed. Protocols are in place which necessitate closure of fisheries to exploitation are communicated through the media. A discussion ensued on addressing upland canopy cover to mitigate risks affecting juvenile stock. It was stated that there are currently 4 different climate models in Ireland, resulting in the necessity to develop different mitigation measures. It was asserted that 80% of IFI's development project work was directed toward habitat development. Reference was made to collaboration with Coillte and the forestry service.

9.3. Development Projects Progress Report – May 2023 - this paper was taken as read. An overview was provided of the status of projects, with planning and pre-work completed and indication that works would commence in July. 'Pipeline' projects are prepared for contingency purposes. It was confirmed that staff time is an additional cost. A discussion on graduate programmes ensued.

10. AOB

Approval of the Oversight Agreement (OA) and Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA)

S. Campion raised the return of the draft amended OA and PDA by IFI's parent Department (at the Audit and Risk meeting earlier) and it had been agreed that this would be considered by s.18 Appointees through the Written Decision (Between Meetings) Process¹.

Promotional Video

The Head of Human Resources arranged for a video on IFI's new seasonal fisheries officers to be played, and a discussion ensued on communications.

C. Gallagher provided insights into the suspected origin of salmon fluke and recounted the extreme mitigating actions undertaken by Norwegian authorities in 30 catchments. He stated that this parasite has not been reported in Irish rivers to date.

s18 Appointees (Board) Written Decision Between Meetings – 8 June

A decision between meetings was facilitated by email on June 8th to consider the outstanding matters from the May 31st meeting.

Written decision of the Board of IFI clarifying the reference to "Legal Proceedings" in the document reserving matters to the Board and expressly delegating authority to the Chief Executive to bring and prosecute summary proceedings.

Resolution 1: Legal Proceedings

MOTION: Approval of Resolution 1 (parts 3.1 and 3.2) was agreed by the s.18 Appointees in writing.

Resolution 2: Oversight Agreement (OA) and Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA)

Review and approval of the draft amended IFI Oversight Agreement and Performance Delivery Agreement 2023-2025.

MOTION: Approval of Resolution 2 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees in writing.

BOARD MEETING – 28 June 2023

1. MEETING GOVERNANCE

The meeting agenda was adopted, and no conflicts were declared by meeting attendees in respect of matters on the agenda. Agreement regarding the confidential nature of matters raised was noted.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 s.18 Appointee Meeting – 31 May Minutes

MOTION: Approval of the 31 May meeting minutes was agreed.

No matters were raised.

2.2 s.18 Appointee Meeting 31 May 2023 – Resolutions and Status on Actions Arising

The executive provided verbal updates on actions arising from previous meetings.

¹ Board Terms of Reference – Appendix III

3. VITAL FEW

3.1 IFI Legal Fees arising from case taken against ALAB - with reference to the detailed discussion which took place at the Audit and Risk meeting earlier in the day, the meeting Chair noted that the Head of Finance and Corporate Services shall work with legal advisors Byrne Wallace to establish the final cumulative cost of the case. It was noted that this cost was far in excess of the anticipated at the outset of the action.

3.2 Publication of Documentation - the increasing appetite for access to records by members of the public including Board papers was reported and IFI's proposal to be as transparent as possible, without compromising the deliberative process of the Board and executive. In July 2022, the Research and Development Division launched IFI's [Open Data Portal](#), a platform providing access to data including screening/appropriate assessments. The s.18 Appointees noted these initiatives.

4. CEO'S REPORT

4.1 CEO's Report - the CEO's Report was taken as read. The executive reported unanticipated costs of €18k associated with remediation works caused by a gas leak outside the Citywest building. s.18 Appointees requested a report on health and safety statistics. A discussion on the cost of insurance ensued. The report and presentation were noted by the s.18 Appointees.

5. FINANCIAL SUMMARY PRESENTATION

5.1 Monthly Management Accounts – April and May 2023 - the April and May Management Accounts were considered by the s.18 Appointees at the Audit and Risk meeting earlier in the day and noted. At that meeting the executive raised the risk associated with the organisation's current low cash reserves. The concern of the s.18 Appointees of related risks to the organisation was noted and the executive undertook to notify the Department and seek a review of payment arrangements to IFI.

In response to a query in relation to the special review by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG), the outputs of the meeting with representatives of the OCAG on 1 June were reported, it was indicated that review queries would be forwarded to IFI in mid to late July.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Risk Management Framework

The updated Corporate Risk Register was considered by the s.18 Appointees at the Audit & Risk meeting. The s.18 Appointees noted the edits applied and confirmed the scoring of risk appetite. S. Campion committed to reporting on setting up of a risk committee at a forthcoming meeting.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Draft Internal Audit Programme - a memo outlining the internal audits proposed for the Internal Audit Programme was presented at the Audit and Risk meeting earlier in the day. The s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the proposed reviews to be completed in 2023. Ms. Campion acknowledged that staff were responding to a significant number of queries from both the internal auditor (Evelyn Partners) and external auditor (OCAG).

MOTION: Approval of the draft Internal Audit Programme was agreed.

8. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

8.1 Property Updates supporting Decisions 31 May (Sligo, Claregalway) - This matter was raised under item 2.2 of the agenda.

8.2 Dormant Accounts Fund Application – 2024 - this paper was taken as read. A discussion ensued on the proposal to apply for Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) monies for the operation of a grant scheme. s.18 Appointees requested that an actionable submission be submitted for consideration through the 'Written Decision Between Meetings' facility in advance of the closing date for applications (July 7th).

9. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

9.1 Climate Mandate Report May 2023 - this paper was taken as read and noted. It was reported that Photo Voltaic panels continued to be installed at bases around the country.

9.2 Monthly Protection Report – May 2023 - this paper was taken as read and noted. An update was provided on current operational protection activity and collaboration with the Gardaí. The s.18 Appointees commended the report.

9.3 Report on National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) Completion - this paper was taken as read. An overview of the strategy launched in 2015 and rolled out in 2016 was provided. It was asserted that the NSAD was designed for angling access but was altered to accommodate instream maintenance. Governance structures created and benefits and learnings derived from the strategy were also outlined. Queries in relation to project award ceilings and economic impact analysis were responded to. A discussion ensued on the socio-economic research previously commissioned by the organisation and it was agreed to provide access to the s.18 Appointees.

9.3 National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF) Minutes 2 March 2023 – the minutes were noted. Following a discussion of the nature of matters considered payment of expenses incurred by members of the NIFF was raised. A paper on this issue will be submitted for consideration by the s.18 Appointees.

10. AOB

10.1 Board-Self-Assessment-Evaluation-Questionnaire – MODEL - agreement was reached at the Audit and Risk meeting to assess the efficiency of the Board (s.18 Appointees) using this evaluation tool.

The s.18 Appointees noted the advertisement of the positions on the Board by the PAS website.

The additional burden of environmental screening requirements being added to the work of the organisation in the absence of additional required resources was noted.