



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

BOARD OF INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND

Meetings Report of January 26th, 2022

This is the report of the meetings of the Board of IFI which took place in January 2022.
This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at this meeting.

BOARD MEETING – January 26th, 2022

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. In response to the Chair's request for declarations of conflicts of interest with matters on the agenda, no conflicts declared. In his opening remarks the Chair noted the more positive environment in relation to Covid; the work on IFI's 2022 Business Plan aligned with the new Corporate Plan and the work of the external consultant in relation to organisational re-structuring and optimising IFI's resources.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1 Board Meeting – December 16th, 2021 – Draft Minutes and Meeting Report

The draft minutes and report of the December Board meeting, pending amendments advised, were approved.

Matters Arising

The CEO responded to queries in relation to progress on actions arising from previous meetings. The CEO outlined next steps in implementing both the legal advice and the output of an Internal Audit Report.

2.2 Board Meeting – December 16th, 2021 – Resolutions and Status on Actions Arising

The resolutions listing and status on actions arising from the December Board meeting were distributed with the meeting papers and noted.

2.3 Other Items of Note

The following correspondence was taken as read and noted by members.

2.3.1 Westmeath County Council – L. Ennell / Western Management Plan [20 December 2021]

2.3.2 Finance Division DECC – Letter of Allocation [20 December 2021]

2.3.3 Donegal County Council – Proposed Arctic char Byelaw [07 December 2021]

2.3.4 Donegal County Council – from CEO regarding Arctic char Byelaw [14 January 2022]

2.3.5 IFI Climate Action Mandate – December 2021 and Green Team Initiatives

The '*Climate Action Mandate for December*' and IFI Green Team Initiatives (Shannon International RBD) were distributed with the meeting papers and were taken as read.

3. CEO'S REPORT

3.1 CEO's Report - January 2022

The '*CEO's Briefing Note to the Board for January 2022*', was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. The CEO raised the following matters: meeting between IFI and DECC; staff retirements; and resourcing management of aquatic invasive species. Referring to the copy of an email to staff regarding the importance of reporting instances of bullying and harassment and a copy IFI's Dignity at Work Policy & Procedure, appended to the CEO's Report, a discussion ensued on the effectiveness of the policy. Members also discussed the 'Framework for the Purchase of Electric Vehicles' in the context that some operational activities required powerful towing capacity and fully electric vehicles did not yet provide this. Following a brief discussion on the matter and with reference to section 8 and Appendix 3 of the CEO's Report, the **management recommendation to increase fish prices by 10% for 2022**, was approved. **It was agreed to cease the ESRI Research Programme** (Angler Panel Data Collection / Research Paper development).

In a discussion on development projects in 2022, members supported the development of a 'living' document, providing the pragmatic systems, with resources and permissions required which is

accessible by the Board members in their oversight capacity. In line with the changing priorities of the strategy, the Chair outlined the requirement for a list of projects from each RBD, applying SMART principles, within existing staff resources, with the available (top of the range) equipment, which projects are to be delivered by contractor or the Office of Public Works etc. He stated that Cong Hatchery, and the Galway and Ballina weirs should not be included in this project listing. A discussion ensued on developing an organisation structure which supports the delivery of projects in terms of collaboration between the Projects Management Office and RBDs, with clarity on roles and functions.

4. FINANCIAL SUMMARY PRESENTATION

4.1 Management Accounts and Executive Summary – November 2021

The 'Management Accounts and Executive Summary for November 2021' were distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. P. Doherty joined the meeting and was invited to comment on IFI's funds held at bank. The Head of Finance provided information in relation to costs captured within 'Vehicle Maintenance', being reported as over budget by €295k in 2021. He stated that at year end there were 3 vehicles on hire (2 for external projects and 1 internal) and that he would confirm whether IFI absorbs the maintenance costs of long-term hire vehicles. P. Doherty also provided clarity on the General, Office and Operational expenditure headings.

Members discussed the anticipated significant legal costs of the Judicial Review which was not originally forecast in IFI's budget for 2021.

Members raised the rollout of Body Worn Cameras (BWC) to staff conducting fisheries patrols. Data protection implications were discussed, which included secure data management systems. It was agreed that supporting staff safety was critical.

P. Doherty briefed members on the draft Budget and Business Plan submitted to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) on January 19th to secure funding for 2022. He stated that the draft Budget and Business Plan for 2022 would be reviewed by the ARC at its February 9th meeting. The Head of Finance briefly reported on the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General's (OCAG) external audit of the Financial Statements 2020 Management Letter which would be reviewed in detail by the ARC on February 9th. P. Doherty left the meeting at this point.

5. VITAL FEW

5.1 Uninsured Vehicles

A paper titled 'Board Questions – Uninsured Vehicles' was distributed with the meeting papers. This paper responded to 18 questions raised by the Board in December in relation to the matter. The Board sought assurance that systems are in place to prevent a repeat of such an occurrence. The Chair requested that the Board is briefed on further actions to be taken in relation to the matter.

5.2 Update on Judicial Review

A paper titled 'Update on Judicial Review' was distributed with the meeting papers relating to the ALAB decision on Shot Head and the content noted. Members discussed the potential of limiting legal costs. The Board emphasised the importance of this case which is aligned with IFI's strategic HLO 1 – Habitats and ensuring the sustainability of fisheries.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT - UPDATE

6.1 Corporate Risk Register 10.21

The 'Corporate Risk Register 10.21' was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. The CEO stated the Senior Management Team was due to review risks within the register.

7. STRATEGIC UPDATE

The Board discussed the 2022 Business Plan and alignment of Budget to the development project work. It was proposed that a separate meeting of the Board be convened to provide sufficient focus and time to consider the 2022 Business Plan.

8. BOARD COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

8.1 Audit & Risk Committee Meeting Minutes (December 1st)

The minutes of the ARC meeting of December 1st were distributed with the meeting papers. B. Orbinski -Burke, Chair of the Committee, provided a verbal report of the meeting at the December Board meeting.

Ms. Orbinski Burke briefed members on the status of the Internal Auditors' contribution to the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) review. She stated that Mr Clerkin would be attending the forthcoming meeting of the ARC to discuss his conclusions. With reference to the review of Research & Development, Ms. Orbinski Burke discussed the outputs of the review. Also, outstanding is the provision by management of a Business Continuity Plan. She stated that the ARC Interviews with members of the Senior Leadership Team will continue. Ms. Orbinski Burke stated that since the last Board meeting, she had participated in the tender for Internal Audit services and confirmed that this process was complete and a contract awarded to Smith & Williamson, Dublin.

8.2 Strategic HR Sub Committee Meeting Minutes (December 13th)

The minutes of the Strategic HR Sub Committee meeting of December 13th were distributed with the meeting papers. S. Boland, Chair of the Committee, provided a verbal report of the meeting and made recommendations on behalf of the Committee at the December Board meeting. A discussion ensued on significant impending appointments. The CEO briefed members on the progress made in relation to addressing IFI's staff resourcing. The Board emphasised the importance of obtaining these resources in supporting delivery of the strategic goals and anticipated review of this document in advance of submission.

Property Sub-committee Report

The Chair of the Property Sub-committee, M. McGreal was invited to brief members on his recent visits to Aasleagh Lodge and cottages, Cong Hatchery and Ballynalty (the location of a development project). A discussion ensued on staff and operations in these locations.

9. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

9.1 Lough Ree Commercial Draff Net License Applications 2022

A document titled '*Lough Ree Commercial Draff Net License Applications 2022*', was distributed with the meeting papers. The Board discussed the recommendation to grant 11 licenses and the legal obligation to do so. The granting of the **Lough Ree Commercial Trout Draff Net Licenses 2022** was approved.

9.2 Habitats and Conservation Projects 2022

A document titled '*Habitats and Conservation Projects 2022*'; was distributed with the meeting papers. This submission discussed in detail under item 3 of the agenda and further information was requested.

9.3 Projects in Other Categories 2022

A document titled '*Projects in Other Categories 2022*', was distributed with the meeting papers. Members discussed the nature of the projects proposed and noted the variance in proposed work across River Basin Districts. The **proposed Projects in Other Categories for 2022** was approved.

9.4 Fisheries Icehouse Centre Proposal

The Board advised the CEO to acknowledge the correspondence from the representatives of Corrib Beo, informing them that the Icehouse is a priority project for IFI and that it is intended to progress plans for the potential development of the property.

9.5 Cong Canal Grating Upgrade

A document titled '*Cong Canal Grating Upgrade*', was distributed with the meeting papers. Tender documents submitted by the successful tenderer were distributed also. Members discussed engineering assessment and the necessity to mitigate this health and safety and environmental risk. The Board expressed satisfaction with the tender process to **procure the necessary engineering consultancy and environmental services required in order to replace the grate**. This expenditure was approved.

10. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE

The following documents were distributed to members to provide assurance on activities and noted:

10.1 Funding Outcomes 2016-2021

10.2 Conservation & Habitats Report December 2021

10.3 Other Categories Report December 2021

10.4 & 5 Monthly Protection Plan Review – November & December 2021

10.6 Upper Suck – Redd Counts and Electro Fishing

10.7 Trailer Maintenance Contract

11 AOB

The Board agreed that following the latest Government advice, In-person Board meetings would resume.

This concluded the business of the meeting.