



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 – Q3, 2023**

**26 July and 13 September**

**This is the report of the meetings of the s.18 Appointees which took place in quarter 3, 2023.  
This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at this meeting.**

## **S18 Appointees (Board) Written Decision Between Meetings - 6 July**

A written decision of the Board of IFI was facilitated to consider the application to the Dormant Accounts Fund 2024.

**RESOLUTION 1: Application for DAF 2024 funding in order to operate two schemes; Go Fishing Measure; and Targeted Anglers with a disability or reduced mobility measure.**

**MOTION:** Approval of Resolution 1 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees in writing.

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## **BOARD MEETING – 26 July 2023**

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### **1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA / CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES / ACTIONS / CORRESPONDENCE**

**1.1 Agenda** - the meeting agenda was adopted, and no conflicts were declared by meeting attendees in respect of matters on the agenda. The confidential nature of matters to be raised was agreed.

#### **1.2 s.18 Appointee Meeting Minutes – 28 June 2023 and Quarterly Meetings Report – Q2, 2023**

**MOTION:** Approval of the 28 June meeting minutes and quarterly meetings report Q2 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

No matters were raised.

**1.3 s.18 Appointee Meeting 28 June 2023 – Resolutions and Status on Actions Arising** - the executive provided verbal updates on actions arising from previous meetings.

**1.4 Letter to Board (S.18 Appointees) from Galway City Council (GCC)**- this letter was taken as read. The CEO provided a summary of interaction with the GCC executive. This correspondence was noted. [This matter is ongoing].

### **2. CEO'S REPORT**

**2.1 CEO's Report** - the CEO's Report was taken as read and noted. The CEO provided an update on meetings with Ministers Eamon Ryan TD and Malcolm Noonan TD in relation to project work on barriers to passage on the R. Dodder. The Head of Research & Development distributed a copy of the Irish Specimen Fish Atlas<sup>1</sup> to each of the s.18 Appointees. He indicated that the publication was a remarkable piece of work completed in partnership with the Specimen Fisheries Committee (NGO), with contribution from IFI Senior Research Officer Dr Willie Roche, and funding from the National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD).

### **3. MATTERS FOR DECISION/CONSIDERATION**

**3.1 IFI Aquaculture Facility (Fish Farm) Roscrea** -this paper was taken as read. The meeting Chair provided an update on the discussions which took place at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the morning in respect of the significant increase in the forecasted budget. He informed those present that the executive was tasked with reviewing the project with a view to presenting a position paper with options for consideration at a future meeting.

**3.2 Internal Audit Report 2022-2023 – Aasleagh** - the paper was taken as read. The meeting Chair provided an update on the discussions which took place at the Audit & Risk meeting, where it was

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<sup>1</sup> The Irish Specimen Fish Committee and Inland Fisheries Ireland developed the *Irish Specimen Fish Atlas*, locations of where specimen fish have been caught around Ireland over the past 60 years. Link [here](#).

acknowledged the leadership of change in terms of custom and practice. S.18 Appointees accepted the report's findings.

**MOTION:** Adoption of the recommendations of the Internal Audit Report on Aasleagh was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

**3.3 IFI Authorised Signatories – July 2023** - this paper was taken as read. The matter was raised for discussion in the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day and feedback was provided by the s.18 Appointees.

**MOTION:** Approval of the IFI Authorised Signatories as per s S.11(2)(b) and S.11(4) of the Inland Fisheries Act 2010 was agreed pending the application of feedback provided by the s.18 Appointees.

**3.4 IFI Protocol for Arm's Length Asset Disposal – June 2023** - this paper was taken as read. The recommendation coming forward from the Audit & Risk meeting was to re-title the document and to support increasing the transparency of disposals.

**MOTION:** Approval of the IFI Asset Disposal Policy & Procedure was agreed by the s.18 Appointees pending the application of feedback provided.

**3.5 IFI Cash Reserves Strategy** - this paper was taken as read. The Chair indicated that this matter had been reviewed at the Audit and Risk meeting, where he stated that the s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the presentation made by the executive, adding that it was important that IFI's parent Department were aware of the challenges faced by the organisation. The IFI Cash Reserves Strategy was noted.

#### **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

**4.1 Corporate Risk Register** - the updated Corporate Risk Register was considered by the s.18 Appointees at the Audit & Risk meeting.

#### **5. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**5.1 Field Services Manager Introduction** – the Field Services Manager joined the meeting.

A comprehensive presentation was provided on the organisation's use of telematics to manage IFI's vehicle fleet. He responded to questions in relation to the number of vehicles governed by the software, data retention period, the stated purpose for processing the data, hosting of the data, compliance with GDPR, and data on driver style being available to staff via the Transpoco Mobile App. He stated that drivers' data are pseudonymized with a very limited number of the field services team requiring unrestricted access. Safety features were also discussed.

**5.2 Health & Safety Incidences Reported** - the paper was taken as read. The Field Services Manager outlined the health and safety infrastructure and process for reporting risks and incidences through National Safety Committee, safety representatives from across the organisation, local safety teams (reporting into the National Safety Committee for escalation purposes), adding that minutes of National Safety Committee meetings are distributed to all staff. The Field Services Manager responded to queries on training and safety risk identification in relation to public liability. He stated that Development staff apply a safe system of work plan (SSWP) and line managers have completed 'IOSH Managing Safely' training. He then left the meeting.

#### **6. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE / PRESENTATIONS**

**6.1 IFI Governance Review (as mandated by Min. E. Ryan TD)** - S.18 Appointees had requested that this paper be distributed to inform the executive of the terms of reference for the Important review work to be completed by Ernst & Young for the organisation.

**6.2 Business Plan 2023 – Q2 Update** - this paper was taken as read, S.18 Appointees acknowledged the Q2 Business Plan and accepted the updates as outlined.

**6.3 Monthly Management Accounts – June 2023** - the management accounts with executive summaries were taken as read and noted by the s.18 Appointees.

**6.4 Communications Manager Introduction** – the Communications Manager joined the meeting. A document summarizing the recent REDC poll results comparing results from polls in 2019 and 2020 was distributed. He presented the results. He stated that there were significant opportunities for the organisation to inform the public of the excellent work of the organisation as the oldest environmental organisation in the State. The merits of engaging younger members of the public through education were discussed. The Communications Manager discussed the potential cost of a public information campaign which would include creating video content and testimonies among other things. He outlined the extent of work currently being delivered with a very limited communications team. He responded to a query on the balance of planned work versus reactive work.

**6.5 Climate Mandate Report – June 2023**- the Climate Action Mandate was commended by the s.18 Appointees.

**6.6 Monthly Protection Report – June 2023**- this paper was taken as read and noted. The Head of Operations reported an increase in operational activity at peak season.

**6.7 Development Projects Progress Report – June 2023** - this paper was taken as read and noted.

**6.8 Socio Economic Reporting** - this paper was taken as read and noted.

## 10. AOB

**Meeting Dates** - it was agreed to set provisional meeting dates for Board and Audit and Risk meetings.

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# BOARD MEETING – 13 September 2023

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The Chair welcomed the members of the Ernst & Young team conducting the governance review of IFI.

## 1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA / CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES / ACTIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

**1.1 Agenda** - the meeting agenda was adopted, and no conflicts were declared by meeting attendees in respect of matters on the agenda. The confidential nature of matters to be raised was agreed.

### 1.2 s.18 Appointee Meeting Minutes – 26 July 2023

**MOTION:** Approval of the 26 July meeting minutes was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

**Matters Arising** - The Head of Finance & Corporate Services notified the s.18 Appointees of the receipt of provisional approval regarding IFI's recent funding application to the Dormant Accounts Fund.

**1.3 s.18 Appointee Meeting 2023 – Resolutions and Status on Actions Arising** - the executive provided verbal updates on actions arising from previous meetings. A discussion ensued on correspondence received from the Interim Chief Executive of Galway City Council. The s.18 Appointees advised that progress between IFI and Galway City Council on the matter should proceed in a collaborative manner. [Matter ongoing]

As raised at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier, IFI is awaiting a formal response to a briefing note submitted to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) in relation to the significantly increased budget forecast to develop a new aquaculture facility at Roscrea Fish Farm. Progress on the matter shall be paused pending the response from representatives of the DECC. In relation to legal costs, the Head of Finance & Corporate Services indicated she would provide an update on the matter at the next Board meeting. The CEO provided an update on expenses for members of the National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF).

**1.4 Correspondence** - this correspondence was taken as read and noted. This matter was raised under 1.3 of the agenda.

## 7. CEO'S REPORT

**2.1 CEO's Report** - the CEO's Report was taken as read. The CEO provided a verbal update on the success of an application to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Grant Programme to the amount of €840k (over 5 years) to deliver a project titled: *Detecting Change and Assessing Effectiveness of Measures to Protect and Restore High-status Objective Rivers*. Other grant applications cited in the CEO's Report were raised by the CEO. The s.18 Appointees advised that a formal method of notification to the Board would be appropriate for opportunities /grant applications outside IFI's current programmes /budget. A discussion ensued on the mandated activities of the organisation and others in the riverine/ environmental sphere.

The Head of Finance & Corporate Services provided a verbal update on the work of the Innovation Strategy Group, emphasizing the importance of leadership in relation to innovation. The CEO suggested that a presentation on hydromorphology should be made to the new Board.

## 8. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

**3.1 Aasleagh Property Business Case** - these papers were considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day. The meeting Chair provided an update on the discussions which took and the consideration of the business case as submitted. The Chair stated there was alignment by the s.18 Appointees at the conclusion arrived at in the business case. The s.18 Appointees noted that there was some departure from the previous Board's approach and there existed a number of dependencies in the feasibility study presented. Feedback was provided at the Audit & Risk meeting and agreement to provide a more succinct report presenting the recommendation by the executive.

**3.2 Fixed Assets Policy (Incl. Disposal of Assets)** - these papers were taken as read and the executive agreed to complete some minor edits within the documents. Following discussion, the s18 Appointees sought to ensure a provision was made in the asset disposal policy such that IFI staff, Board members or related/connected parties were precluded from buying assets of the organization either directly or indirectly. The executive will re-submit a 2-page summary recommendation for consideration at the October meeting.

**3.3 Internal Audit Aasleagh & Cottages – Recommendation 2.15** - this paper was taken as read and noted. The s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the recommendation as presented i.e. updating Point 7 of the Matters Reserved to the Board: *'Approval of the Business Case for the purchase of goods / services which are not in the normal course of business and above the value of €5,000'*.

**MOTION:** Approval of the proposed edit to Pt. 7 of Matters Reserved to the Board was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

### **3.4 Capital Expenditure/Disposal Related** -

Papers distributed were taken as read. Following detailed discussion Capital Expenditure requests submitted were taken and actions agreed as follows:

### Capital Expenditure - Property

**SEBBD** - HQ Office at Anglesea House – Lime Plaster Re-rendering Project - to obtain a Quantity Surveyor's Bill of Costs in advance of re-submitting this capital expenditure request.

**SWRBD** - Property at Strand Street, Youghal, – following a discussion of valuations obtained and the governance rigour in terms of Board approval, S.18 Appointees noted that this property transaction has progressed to sale agreed.

**WRBD-B** - Operational Base, Collooney Area, Co. Sligo – agreed to submit an updated independent valuation, with offer value to the s.18 Appointees for decision through the Written Decision (Between Meetings)<sup>2</sup> facility.

**SWRBD** - Derelict Property, Fermoy, Co. Cork – following a discussion of the necessity for clearance of this site, the s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the presentation by the executive and advised to proceed to tender for demolition services on the basis of the €60k estimate quoted.

**SWRBD** - Tralee Store, Clash, Co. Kerry – Roof replacement - to obtain a Quantity Surveyor's Bill of Costs in advance of re-submitting this capital expenditure request.

**ShRBD** – Greenfield Site, Portun, Co. Roscommon - following a discussion of the opportunity to purchase this site from Roscommon County Council and the merits of its proximity to mooring and boat launch access infrastructure at Lough Ree, the s.18 Appointees were satisfied for the executive to proceed to make an offer for this property.

### Capital Expenditure - Equipment

S.18 Appointees were satisfied with the presentations, advising the executive to proceed with the procurement process for Audio Visual Equipment (~€60k), CCTV Systems (~€50k), and Passive Infrared (PIR) Sensor Lighting (~€60k).

### Capital Expenditure – Vehicle/Boat Fleet

Field Services National – 4 no. ICE Vehicles 4x4 Towing Capacity Purchase - €231k excl. VAT

Field Services National – 5 no. ICE Vehicles Crew cab Towing Capacity Purchase - €305k excl. VAT.

Field Services National – 6 no. Electric Vehicles Purchase - €271k excl. VAT.

WRBD-G, Lough Corrib, Co. Galway – Weed Cutting Boat Purchase €59k incl. VAT.

The s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the Capital Appraisal documentation submitted following the necessary tender processes and presentations made by the executive .

**MOTION:** Approval of the following items under Capital Expenditure/Disposal was agreed by the s.18 Appointees:

- Sale of IFI's property at Strand Street, Youghal, Co. Cork [not closed out]
- Purchase of a site at Portun, Co. Roscommon [not closed out]
- ICE & Electric Vehicles at a total cost of €807k
- Weed Cutting Boat at a cost of €59k

**3.5 Business Case for Barriers Mitigation Lead** - These papers were taken as read. The s.18 Appointees acknowledged the requests for modifications to the aspects of the role profile intended to lead the new Barriers Mitigation Division. The executive responded to queries raised by the s.18 Appointees in relation to the rationale for these alterations; whether sufficient expertise existed within the organisation; whether there would be a requirement to report inter-departmentally and the funding for the sufficient recruitment to the Division. A discussion ensued on where this work is positioned within the organisation structure and strategy. The Head of Human Resources confirmed that the final role profile and compensation package would be submitted to IFI's parent Department and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) for approval.

**MOTION:** Approval of the Barriers Mitigation Lead Business Case was agreed by the s.18 Appointees pending the application of feedback provided.

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<sup>2</sup> Utilising the 'Written Decision (Between Meetings) Process as per Appendix 3 of the 'Terms of Reference of the Board of IFI'

**3.6 DECC Performance Deliver Agreement (PDA) and Oversight Agreement (OA) 2023-2025** - the final signed-off PDA and OA with IFI's parent Department were taken as read. The s.18 Appointees noted the high governance requirements of these agreements and commented that it would be beneficial to cross check these with the early outputs of the governance review.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

**4.1 IFI Executive Risk Committee – Proposal** - this paper was considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day. The s.18 Appointees expressed gratitude for the progress made in supporting the work of the Audit and Risk Committee.

**MOTION:** Approval of the formation and Terms of Reference for the Executive Risk Committee was agreed by the s.18 Appointees pending the application of feedback provided at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day.

**4.2 Review of Corporate Risk Register v11.2** - The Chair noted that the Corporate Risk Register and Operational Risk Registers (Finance & Governance; and Environmental) were reviewed and discussed at the Audit & Risk meeting. The high residual risk in relation to fleet (Finance & Governance Risk Register) was queried. Also discussed was the consistency of risk register format and need for alignment and consideration of risk appetite. [Placed as actions on the Audit & Risk Action Listing]

## **10. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**5.1 Health & Safety - Incidences Reported** - this paper was taken as read and content noted. The s.18 Appointees provided feedback on reporting by the Health & Safety Executive. It was noted that in many instances there was a time gap between the incident occurring and it being reported. The Head of Human Resources responded to queries on processes in relation to long-term sick leave.

## **11. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE / PRESENTATIONS**

**6.1 Monthly Management Accounts – July 2023** - the management accounts with executive summary were considered by the S.18 Appointees at the Audit & Risk meeting. The Chair provided a brief synopsis of the matters raised: the organisation's deficit figure; budget variances; audit costs; legal costs and a specific bank account balance.

**6.3 Communication Strategy– July 2023** - this paper was taken as read and noted. The s.18 Appointees recounted the presentation provided by the IFI Communications Manager at the last Board meeting in terms of an overview of activities, plans for streamlining, and the output of periodic surveying. Also raised at that meeting were the opportunities to tell the very positive story of the work of the organisation. The Head of Finance & Corporate Services briefed the s.18 Appointees on the communications approach the organisation engages.

**6.3 Climate Mandate Report – July 2023** - this paper was taken as read and the s.18 Appointees noted the excellent work on this important initiative. The executive confirmed that this activity is under resourced and that steps are being taken to ensure its sustainability.

**6.4 Monthly Protection Report – July 2023** - this paper was taken as read. The Head of Operations outlined the excellent work of protection teams in July, in that there were significant protection outcomes in July. He stated although there are low returns of salmon, individuals are still targeting them for illegal exploitation.

**7. AOB** - there were no matters raised under AOB.

## **S18 Appointees (Board) Written Decision Between Meetings - 19 September**

At the 13 September Board meeting of the s.18 Appointees, the executive presented a paper (3.4.3 Property Acquisition – Collooney Valuation). The Head of Operations requested leave to submit an updated request for capital expenditure to the s.18 Appointees for approval. This was agreed by the S. 18 Appointees that a written decision between meetings would be facilitated.

**RESOLUTION 1: Approval to accept offer for Property at Collooney, Co. Sligo**

**MOTION:** Approval of Resolution 1 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees in writing.

Additionally, the Head of Research & Development submitted the following papers to the Secretary on September 19<sup>th</sup>, for formal notification of applications for grant funding made by the organisation recently:

**MATTERS FOR NOTE:** Applications for Funding (€250k and €50k) – Research & Development

These applications were noted by the s.18 Appointees in writing.

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