



**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 – Q4, 2023

25 October, 22 November, and 15 December

**This is the report of the meetings of the s.18 Appointees which took place in quarter 4, 2023.
This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at this meeting.**

BOARD MEETING – 25 October 2023

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 – 13 September 2023

Motion: Approval of the meeting minutes and quarterly meetings report was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

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.

MOTION: In light of significantly increased budgeted costs, withdrawal from the development of an aquaculture facility at Roscrea was approved by the s.18 Appointees.

1.4 Letter to Board (S.18 Appointees) to Galway City Council (GCC)- this letter was taken as read. 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. The Head of Finance & Corporate Services reported on the staff roadshow where topics related to processes within finance, fleet, health & safety, compliance/data protection and human resources. She also reported on the work of the innovation group.

3. MATTERS FOR DECISION/CONSIDERATION

3.1 Aasleagh Property Business Case - This paper was considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day.

MOTION: Aasleagh Complex Option - to sell the two Aasleagh cottages, upgrade and re-purpose Aasleagh Lodge, consolidating the Aasleagh complex as an international research hub for Atlantic salmon and sea trout [Aasleagh will serve as a training and outreach centre for the organisation], was approved by the s.18 Appointees.

3.2 IFI Fixed Assets Policy (Incl. Disposal of Assets) - The s.18 Appointees expressed appreciation for the work completed on the policy and procedures.

MOTION: Approval of the updated Fixed Assets Policy subject to the application of feedback, was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.3 Proposal for Suite of Vehicles DHLGH Oct 2023 - This paper was taken as read and noted.

MOTION: Approval the transfer of 4 vehicles to the Office of Emergency Planning (DHLGH) was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.4 Property & Related Matters - These papers were raised at the Audit and Risk meeting.

MOTION: Approval of the completion of the rendering of Epworth House in Clonmel at a cost of €139, 590, was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.5 Recommendations to Reduce Cash Use within IFI - This paper was discussed at the Audit & Risk meeting

MOTION: Approval of the recommendations for the Reduction of cash use within IFI was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.6 IFI Grant Funding Policy - This draft policy, which was not included in the pack, will be deferred to the SMT for review and approval.

3.7 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) Application for Funding - This paper was taken as read. The Head of Research and Development responded to queries in relation to this paper.

MOTION: Approval to apply to the ORIS to help achieve HLO3 by maintaining angling infrastructure in the ShRBD in 2024 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

3.8 Research & Development Applications for Funding - These papers were taken as read. The Head of Research and Development outlined the critical need to access such funding to further research initiatives on migratory species. The s.18 Appointees noted the applications which had been approved previously by the CEO.

3.9 Matters for Decision of the Board V3.2_OCT 2023 DRAFT - This paper was taken as read. The Chair outlined the discussions which took place in relation to policy approval at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day.

MOTION: Approval of the amendments to Matters for Decision of the Board of IFI, were agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

3.10 Habitats & Conservation Projects – 2024 Funding Disbursement Outline - This paper was taken as read. The Head of Operations confirmed that the Habitats and Conservation Funding call disburses combined funds collected through the Midlands Fisheries Fund (MFF) and Salmon and Sea Trout Rehabilitation, Conservation and Protection Fund (SSTRCPF), totaling €1050k. The funding programme stages were outlined, incorporating stage-gates with oversight which includes independent representation.

MOTION: Approval of the progression to open the Habitats & Conservation Fund seeking expressions of interest, was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

3.11 IFI Codes of Business Conduct – Directors and Employees – updated - These papers were considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day. The s.18 Appointees agreed that these were important standards of behaviour and indicated their satisfaction with edits made.

3.12 IFI Protected Disclosures Policy & Procedure – updated - This paper was considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day. The s.18 Appointees expressed satisfaction with the level of detail of the procedure providing for the requirements of the Protected Disclosures Amendment Act 2022.

3.13 IFI ICT Policies - These papers were considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day. The s.18 Appointees stated that the policies were well written and that it was appropriate that they are approved by management. Confirmation of disaster recovery measures was provided.

3.14 IFI Compliance Policies - These papers were considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day. The meeting Chair expressed the satisfaction of the s.18 Appointees with these policy submissions.

3.15 National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF) Expense Policy - These papers were considered at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier in the day. The s.18 Appointees indicated that they were satisfied with the document pending the application of two amendments advised at the Audit & Risk meeting.

MOTION: Approval of the payment of retrospective travel expense claims in 2023 from qualifying NIFF members in for 2023 (see Terms of Reference), was agreed.

MOTION: Approval of the following policies/procedure/Terms of Reference updates was agreed by the s.18 Appointees:

IFI Code of Business Conduct for the Board of IFI_DRAFT OCT 2023

IFI Code of Business Conduct for Employees_DRAFT OCT 2023

IFI Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure V4_DRAFT OCT 2023

IFI IT Security Policy FINAL

IFI Data and Information Security Policy FINAL
IFI Acceptable Use Policy FINAL
IFI Change Management Use Cases
IFI Change Management Policy
IFI Mobile Phone Policy & Procedure FINAL
IFI Freedom of Information (FOI) Policy_FINAL DRAFT OCT 2023
IFI AIE Policy – FINAL DRAFT V1_OCT 2023
NIFF Expenses Policy Procedure_DRAFT OCT 2023 pending application of feedback
IFI Audit & Risk Committee ToR 4.5_DRAFT

MOTION: Approval of the extension of the contract for internal audit services with Evelyn Partners for a further 12 months was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 IFI Executive Risk Committee (ERC) - The Head of Finance & Corporate Services provided a verbal update on progressing the operation of the ERC. A discussion ensued on the consideration of the role of the Chief Risk Officer (CRO). The s.18 Appointees asserted that the committee's role is to review the value of risk registers as a means of escalating mitigations and also monitor how registers are managed. The s.18 Appointees envisaged the CRO would be the reporting officer into the Audit and Risk Committee, with the ERC reporting back to the SMT/SLT.

4.2 Review of Corporate Risk Register v11.2 - The Chair noted that the Corporate Risk Register and Finance & Governance Risk Register were reviewed and discussed at the Audit & Risk meeting. The s.18 Appointees provided feedback on incorporating arrow indicators in a new column.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.1 Health & Safety – Accident Reporting - This paper was taken as read and content noted. The s.18 Appointees were satisfied that feedback had been applied, and the report would continue to be a work in progress.

6. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE / PRESENTATIONS

6.1 IFI Business Plan 2023 – Q3 Update - This paper was taken as read.

6.2 Monthly Protection Report – July 2023 - This paper was taken as read. The Head of Operations responded to comments on the format of the report.

6.3 Financial Statements Q3, 2023 - The quarterly Financial Statements with executive summary were considered by the s.18 Appointees at the Audit & Risk meeting and it was agreed to note these with feedback on producing an alternative format next month.

6.4 Monthly Management Accounts – August 2023 - The management accounts with executive summary were considered by the S.18 Appointees at the Audit & Risk meeting and were noted.

6.5 Climate Mandate Report August & September 2023 and Quarter 3 Report - These papers were taken as read and the s.18 Appointees noted the progress reported in the Climate Action Roadmap Q3 Report. The executive stated that an assessment of EV running costs and electricity generation will be conducted.

6.6 Development Projects Progress Report Q3 - This paper was taken as read. Slippage significant due to weather patterns. Decent gap between annual budgeted resource days. During the time that they are re-deployed. There is a risk of underspending.

6.7 National Inland Fisheries Forum – Minutes 24th May 2023 - This paper was taken as read and noted.

From Audit & Risk Meeting – 25 October 2023

2.12 Mitigation of Impact of Special Leave Arrangements - The Head of Human Resources presented this item brought forward from the Audit and Risk meeting. She outlined the historical context of earning Time in Lieu (TIL), and the claiming and forfeiting of Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) due to the 80-hour annual rolling cap, also that there is no monetary compensation for outstanding TIL untaken. The s.18 Appointees asked whether this area had been reviewed by IFI's internal auditors and requested that this be considered.

10. AOB

Board Effectiveness - It was acknowledged that due to the nature of their appointment the output was limited. The Board Effectiveness Report was adopted by the s.18 appointees.

BOARD MEETING – 22 November 2023

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 – 25 October 2023 - Two amendments were advised in respect of the October meeting minutes.

MOTION: Approval of the 25 October meeting minutes was agreed by the s.18 Appointees pending the application of advised amendments.

1.3 Status on Actions Arising and Resolutions - October 2023

Actions arising from previous meetings were noted. The Head of Operations provided a verbal update on actions A03:09:23, A04:09:23, A05:09:23.

1.4 Correspondence - This correspondence was taken as read and noted. The executive confirmed that counselling services are available to staff.

2. CEO'S REPORT

2.1 CEO's Report November 2023 - The CEO's Report was taken as read. The CEO presented on the highlights of the report.

2.2 SEAI Energy Awards - The S18s acknowledged those who led the Climate Action initiatives of the organisation and those who supported them, in winning the SEAI Energy Award for 'Leadership in Public Sector & Energy Efficiency'. The CEO thanked the Board for their support.

3. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

3.1 IFI Governance Review (Ernst & Young) – update from s.18 Appointees - The Chair provided a brief update on the meeting with Ernst & Young on the IFI Governance Review noting that P. Poots, partner, would be presenting on the review at the December meeting of IFI and that the in-person attendance of all EMT members was requested.

3.2 Future of IFI Fish Farms - The Head of Research & Development provided a brief verbal report on the project status, communications with the Department and proposals to communicate the decision to staff in the first instance and then other key stakeholders. He added that a 'frequently asked questions' (FAQ) would be prepared and a new options paper presented to the Board in early 2024. He stated that this may

provide 2 or 3 options on viable activities, in the context of both fish farm sites and their respective stakeholders.

The s.18 Appointees outlined their previous consideration and feedback in relation to actions to be taken in light of capital budget costs, as initially reported at the April meeting of IFI. The Chair sought assurance that the organisation has a pathway for each of the staff members impacted and that the draft of communications should be in place to accompany the comprehensive paper to the Section 18 Appointees so that the matter could be finally and formally settled in the record.

3.3 Matters Considered in detail at the Audit & Risk Meeting 22 November 2023

3.3.1 Draft Audited Financial Statements 2022 - The Chair reported the attendance of representatives from the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (OCAG) at the Audit & Risk meeting earlier. Following discussions with the external auditor, he confirmed that the audit of the 2022 Financial Statements was being signed-off and that the Section 18 Appointees in their role in performing the functions of IFI were satisfied to formally sign-off the accounts for 2022.

MOTION: Approval of the Financial Statements 2022 and Letter of Representation for sign-off and submission to the OCAG, was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

3.3.2 Financial Oversight Reporting including Management Accounts & Financial Statements - The Chair reported a positive discussion on the refinement of financial reporting systems to the S18 Appointees. The new format and proposed schedule were presented, reviewed and accepted.

MOTION: Approval of the refined financial reporting was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.3.3 Striking of Rates 2024 - This paper was deferred to the December meeting for consideration.

3.3.4 State Fishery Permit Prices 2024 - This paper was taken as read. The s.18 Appointees emphasised to the executive the importance, as an enduring principle, of presenting clear, unambiguous recommendations and adequately supporting the rationale for decision making.

MOTION: Approval of the management recommendation in relation to permit prices for 2024 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.3.5 Sponsorship Programme 2024 – Proposal - This paper was taken as read. The s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the presentation provided by the executive at the Audit & Risk meeting.

MOTION: Approval of proposed Sponsorship Programme 2024 (€30k) (in the context of an intention by the Executive to include a small number of additional sponsorship headings that would need to be funded in the 2024 budget) was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.3.6 Capital Plan 2023 – Update and CapEx/Disposals - Papers were taken as read and following presentations by the executive at the Audit & Risk meeting, the s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the individual proposals as presented.

MOTION: Approval of the capital-related proposals was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

3.3.7 Transfer of Ownership of EV Chargers - This paper was discussed at the Audit & Risk meeting. The s.18 Appointees were satisfied with the presentation provided by the executive, where 5 chargers would be removed at the cost of decommissioning, and 2 would be retained in place and sold to the staff members at their net book value. The s.18 Appointees noted the organisation's BIK liability of approximately €17.5k.

MOTION: Approval of the decommissioning (5) and transfer (2) of home EV chargers at staff private dwellings was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.3.8 IFI Commercial Arrangements with Staff - This paper was considered and discussed at the Audit & Risk meeting with recommendations from the s.18 Appointees in respect of edits to the policy.

MOTION: Approval of the draft policy on Commercial Arrangements with Staff was agreed by the s.18 Appointees pending the application of feedback

3.3.9 IFI Vehicle Fleet Review – Internal Auditor - Draft Terms of Reference - This paper was considered at the Audit & Risk meeting. The s.18 Appointees discussed the scope of the review in detail and were satisfied with the extent of the review in providing the necessary assurance.

MOTION: Approval of the Terms of Reference for the IFI Vehicle Fleet Review was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.4 Sustainable Angling Marketing Strategy 2023-2027 - The CEO requested that this matter is deferred to the December meeting of IFI to permit further consideration and the inclusion of any associated outputs of the EY Governance Review.

3.5 Publication of Printed Book for 1902 Cork Flies Collection - The Head of Finance & Corporate Services outlined the background to the presentation of this paper.

3.6 Proposed Amendment to Byelaw - This paper was taken as read.

MOTION: Approval of the recommendation to amend Bye law 840-2008 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

3.7 Historical Leave - This paper was taken as read.

3.8 EPA Restore Project - This paper was taken as read. The executive outlined a query raised by the C&AG in relation to payment of redundancy for contacted staff working on externally funded projects and the risk of the organisation incurring this expense.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 Review of Corporate Risk Register v11.3 - This paper was taken as read and the s.18 Appointees provided feedback on tracking its review by the SMT.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.1 Health & Safety – Accident Reporting - This paper was taken as read and its content noted.

6. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE / PRESENTATIONS

6.1 Monthly Protection Report – October 2023 - This paper was taken as read and noted.

6.2 Climate Mandate Report October - This paper was taken as read and s.18 Appointees wished to pass on their congratulations to the team on their success and compliments to the staff member responsible for the graphic design which is very engaging.

AOB

The Head of Human Resources informed the s.18 Appointees that she had handed in her notice and would be leaving the organisation at the end of the year. The s.18 Appointees wished her every success in her future role.

BOARD MEETING – 15 December 2023

- 1. IFI Governance Review – Ernst & Young** - P. Poots and H. Smyth from Ernst & Young presented an overview of the findings of the governance review of Inland Fisheries Ireland as mandated by Minister Eamon Ryan

TD, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications. No papers, nor copies of the presentation, were distributed for this item, pending the submission of the final report. Ms. Poots presented the matters raised in the review, its findings with recommendations, and the envisaged next steps in relation the development of an action plan to implement these recommendations.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA / CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES / ACTIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

2.1 Agenda

The meeting agenda was adopted, with no conflicts in respect of matters on the agenda declared by meeting attendees. The confidential nature of matters to be raised was agreed.

2.2 s.18 Appointee Meeting Minutes – 22 November 2023

The Secretary confirmed that edits were made to the October Board meeting minutes as agreed.

MOTION: Approval of the Audit & Risk and Board meeting minutes of 22 November 2023 were agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

2.3 Status on Actions Arising and Resolutions – 22 November 2023

The executive responded to queries in relation to A01:10:23

3. CEO'S REPORT

3.1 CEO's Report December 2023 - The CEO's Report was taken as read.

4. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION / DECISION

4.1 Audited AFS 2022 and Audit Certificate - These papers were taken as read and noted.

4.2 Management Accounts – October 2023 - This paper was taken as read. The s.18 Appointees made recommendations on improvements to the report. A. Buckley left the meeting.

4.3 Future of Fish Farms - This paper was taken as read.

4.4 Draft Scheme of Delegation – Inland Fisheries Ireland - Papers were taken as read. T. Courtney and D. McMullin of Arthur Cox LLP joined the meeting remotely and introductions were made.

4.5 Striking of Rates 2024 - This paper was taken as read. The s.18 Appointees confirmed their satisfaction with the recommendation of the executive not to alter rates for 2024.

MOTION: Approval of the Striking of Rates for 2024 as per s.7(10) of the 2010 Act was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

4.6 injunction Approval Request - This paper was taken as read and noted.

4.7 Capital Plan 2023 – Update - This paper was taken as read.

4.8 Seasonal Officers Campaign – 2024 - This paper was taken as read.

MOTION: Approval of the budget supporting the 2024 Seasonal Officer Campaign was agreed by the s.18 Appointees.

4.9 National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF) proposed submission to DECC - This paper was taken as read. The CEO outlined the content of the paper. The matters raised in this paper were noted. It was agreed that the letter to accompany the paper at 4.9.1 would be circulated to the Section 18 Appointees prior to submission to DECC.

4.10 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) Grant 2023 - This paper was taken as read.

MOTION: Approval of the recommendation to accept the 2023 ORIS grant funding of €55.35k (with IFI match funding) for the purposes of developing angling infrastructure, was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

5. COMMITTEES / FORUM

5.1 DRAFT – Internal Audit Programme 2024 - This paper was taken as read.

MOTION: Approval of the Internal Audit Programme for 2024 was agreed by the s.18 Appointees

5.2 National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF) – Minutes of 28 September 2023 - The September meeting minutes of the National Inland Fisheries Forum were noted.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 IFI Corporate Risk Register v11.4 - The organisation's high level risk register was taken as read. The executive outlined edits applied as a result of the recent review undertaken.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1 Health & Safety – Accident Reporting - This paper was taken as read and amendments, as advised previously, noted.

8. MANAGEMENT ASSURANCE / PRESENTATIONS

8.1 Climate Mandate Report November - This paper was taken as read and commended. The s.18 Appointees proposed this item is elevated to an earlier position on future agendas.

9. AOB

It was agreed to meet on 11 January to consider a number of outstanding matters;

- Draft OCAG Management letter with management responses, and
- IFI's draft Scheme of Delegation with Delegation Orders