



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

BOARD OF INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND

Meeting Report - 31 January 2024

This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at this meeting.

BOARD MEETING – 31 January 2024

1. Meeting Administration

1.1 Agenda Adoption /Conflicts of Interest Declaration/ Adherence to Confidentiality

The agenda was adopted with no conflicts of interest declared. The confidential nature of matters to be raised was agreed.

1.2 Apologies

One Board member apology was received and noted.

1.3 Meeting Minutes – 16 January 2024

Paper(s) distributed: 1.3.1 DRAFT Meeting Minutes of the IFI Board 16 January 2024

RESOLUTION: Approval of draft minutes of the January 16th Board meeting.

1.4 Matters Arising

No matters arose.

1.5 Board Meeting Actions Arising & Resolutions – 16 January 2024

Paper(s) distributed: 1.5.1 Board Meeting Actions Arising – 16 January 2024; 1.5.2 Board Meeting Resolutions_2023 – 2024 @ 16 January 2024;

The actions arising and resolutions from previous meetings were taken as read and noted.

2. CEO's Report

2.1 CEO's Report – January 2024

Papers distributed: 2.1.1 CEO's Report January 2024; 2.1.2 Audited IFI Financial Statements 2021; 2.1.3 Audited IFI Financial Statements 2022

Presenting: Head of Finance & Corporate Services

Papers were taken as read. The CEO provided a review of the matters raised in the CEO's Report. Discussions ensued on meeting obligations under the Habitats Directive and the articulation of the obligations of the organisation with specific reference to those under climate and waste legislation. It was noted that clearly documenting the activities of the organisation would be a fundamental aspect of the strategic review process. The CEO made reference to the increased responsibilities and funding acquired through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's (DHLGH) for the delivery by the organisation of mitigation measures under the National Barriers Mitigation Programme, following its work on barrier assessment.

2022 Statement of Internal Control (SIC)

The CEO provided a verbal report on the matters raised by the OCAG in relation to the Aasleagh property complex in Leenane, County Galway and the organisation's decision to sell the cottages within the complex. S. Campion responded to queries in relation to the infrastructure at the cottages and governance protocols. The CEO provided a high-level briefing on the circumstances leading to the discovery that vehicles were not covered by IFI's insurance policy and the related financial, reputational and welfare risk. S. Campion confirmed that an accrual was provided in the 2024 accounts for potential costs arising and responded to queries on the nature of IFI's fleet, fleet insurance and fleet management. The Board sought assurance that the position taken by IFI's insurers was challenged sufficiently. The CEO confirmed that driver training was provided by the organisation to staff and that vehicles have telematics installed. Assurance was provided in relation to a grant of €4k disbursed by IFI under the 'Angling for All' initiative from funding derived from the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF).

A discussion ensued on sanctions in relation to environmental crime and adequately addressing breaches in new fisheries legislation. Members acknowledged the merits of engagement with stakeholders through education and expressed their low tolerance of environmental crime.

The Board emphasised the importance of internal systems of control, and the implementation of the recommendations of the Ernst & Young (EY) Governance Review in ensuring that appropriate governance oversight, reporting lines, cohesiveness and effective communication structures.

The Board was informed that budgets are currently being profiled and shall be submitted for approval with the Business Plan 2024 and draft accounts for 2023.

3. Matters for Consideration / Decision

3.1 Functions of IFI / Matters for Decision of the Board of IFI

Papers distributed: 3.1.1 Presentation Slides functions of IFI; 3.1.2 Matters for Decision of the Board of IFI V3.4 Scheme of Delegation APPRVD Jan 2024

Presenting: Board Secretary

Papers were taken as read, and the Secretary provided an overview the functions of IFI. The Board was satisfied to adopt the current version of the 'Matters for Decision of the Board of IFI'.

RESOLUTION: Adoption of version 3.4 of the 'Matters for Decision of the Board of IFI'

3.2 Terms of Reference of the Board of IFI / Standing Orders

Papers distributed: 3.2.1 Terms of Reference of the Board of IFI V1.1 Apprvd Sept '22;

Presenting: Board Secretary

Paper was taken as read. Following a brief discussion, the Board was satisfied to adopt the current version of the 'Terms of Reference of the Board of IFI'.

RESOLUTION: Adoption of version 1.1 of the 'Terms of Reference of the Board of IFI'

3.3 IFI Corporate Strategy 2021-2025 – Membership of Steering Group

Papers distributed: 3.3.1 IFI Corporate Plan 2021-2025; 3.3.2 IFI Corporate Plan 2021-2025 A3 Poster

Presenting: Chair

Papers were taken as read. The need to re-engage sub-committees of the Board was acknowledged, which would now include the Corporate Strategy Steering Group.

3.4 EY Governance Review – DRAFT Action Plan / Membership of Steering Group

Papers distributed: 3.4.1 REPORT_IFI Governance Review Final; 3.4.2 ACTION PLAN_IFI Governance Review Draft

Presenting: Chair

These papers were taken as read. The draft action plan was agreed by members. The Chair indicated his membership of the Governance Review Steering Group and invited two non-executive members to work with the former S.18 appointees on this significant programme of work.

3.5 Lough Ree (Brown Trout) Draft Net Licences 2024

Papers distributed: 3.5.1 L. Ree Commercial Draft Net Applications – Jan 2024

Presenting: Head of Operations

This paper was taken as read. A discussion ensued on the conflict between issuing draftnet licences for harvest and the organisation's conservation mandate and ethos. Solutions to addressing the matter were put forward. The Head of Operations confirmed that screening for [Appropriate Assessment](#)¹ is completed on the issuing of these licences.

3.6 Grant Scheme Approval

Papers distributed: 3.6.1 Lough Melvin Trout Genetics Research Grant Scheme Approval; 3.6.2 IFI ESB Eel Research Project Grant Scheme Approval

Presenting: CEO

These papers were taken as read. The Board expressed its support of this scientific work. The Head of Operations confirmed that a portion of L. Melvin lies in Northern Ireland and the CEO confirmed that Data Sharing Agreements exist.

¹ [IFI Appropriate Assessment Determinations](#)

RESOLUTION: Approval of the L. Melvin Trout Genetics Research Project – utilising funding from previous IFI led brown trout genetics studies (approved in 2022)

An outline of the role of the ESB in relation to fishery ownership and responsibilities was provided by the CEO. The Board expressed its support of research responsibility and data ownership lying with IFI.

RESOLUTION: Approval in principle of the ESB/IFI Research Project pending notification of funding.

4. Committees / Forum

4.1 Audit & Risk Committee – nomination of Chair

Papers distributed: 4.1.1 DRAFT Audit & Risk Committee ToR 4.3 – January 2024; 4.1.2 Guidelines for the Appointment of Co-opted Members to Committees of the Board

Presenting: Chair

Speaking on behalf of the members of the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), the Board was informed of the nomination of the Chair of the committee. This nomination was agreed by the Board. The ARC Chair indicated that a schedule of meeting dates would be agreed with a review of the current body of work to be considered i.e. ordinary business and emerging issues. It was noted that the committee will consider co-opting an independent expert external member.

5. Management Assurance/ Presentations

5.1 Sustainability and Climate Mandate Report - December 2023

Papers distributed: 5.1.1 Sustainability and Climate Mandate Report for December 2023

Presenting: CEO

This paper was taken as read and noted. The Board noted the absence of social/behavioural dimension and how these are being implemented.

5.2 Development Projects Progress Report Q4 2023

Papers distributed: 5.2.1 Development Projects Progress Report Q4 2023

Presenting: CEO

This paper was taken as read and noted. The CEO responded to a query on the concentration of angling infrastructure activity in a specific catchment.

5.1 National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) Outcome Report

Papers distributed: 5.3.1 National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) Outcome Report

Presenting: CEO

This paper was taken as read and noted.

6. AOB

The CEO raised the following matters

- IFI is invited to attend the Public Accounts Committee on 7 March.
- Chair Designate has been invited to meet with the Joint Committee of the Oireachtas on 6 February.