



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

BOARD OF INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND

Meeting Report - 21 March 2024

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

BOARD MEETING – 21 March 2024

1. Meeting Administration

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

The agenda was adopted. One conflict of interest was raised in respect of an approval in relation to funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The confidential nature of matters to be raised was agreed.

1.2 Apologies

One apology was received.

1.3 Meeting Minutes – 27 February 2024

Paper(s) distributed: 1.3.1 DRAFT Meeting Minutes of IFI Board 27 February 2024

RESOLUTION: Approval of draft **minutes of the 27 February 2024** Board meeting

1.4 Matters Arising

Minutes of meetings in early March will be distributed with papers in advance of the April Board meeting.

1.5 Board Meeting Actions Arising & Resolutions

Paper(s) distributed: 1.5.1 Board Meeting Actions Arising; 1.5.2 Board Meeting Resolutions

Presenting: Deputy CEO

Actions arising and resolutions from the previous meeting were taken as read. The Deputy CEO provided a verbal briefing in respect of: co-operative links with the Marine Institute; identifying the appropriate regulatory role in respect of aquaculture facilities; providing members with a list of IFI's statutory obligations extending beyond the consolidated fisheries legislation. A discussion ensued on the proportion of resources deployed to activities related to these obligations, accessing funding sources and activities undertaken by the organisation are incorporated into the IFI's Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreements with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC). Members briefly discussed the request to the DECC seeking approval to progress the arrangement of an overdraft facility.

2. CEO's Report

2.1 CEO's Report – March 2024

Papers distributed: 2.1.1 CEO's Report March 2024

Presenting: Deputy CEO

The Deputy CEO provided a briefing on his report, areas raised were: the appointment of the interim Head of HR; an overview of the operation IFI's Fish Farm in Roscrea; reporting from the IFI Salmonid Index Catchment – R. Erriff; IFI's hosting of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Galway in March and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) in June; and sanction for the retention of proceeds of the sale of IFI property for re-investment in property development.

An historical account of the fish farm at Roscrea was provided. The Board acknowledged the length of time/resources the organisation has invested in seeking to crystallise plans for this site, and requested, in light of the Deputy CEO's presentation and members' discussions on accessing funding, education/sustainability initiatives and partnerships, that a paper is developed for submission within 3 months.

The Deputy CEO informed members of the attendance by IFI representatives, at the Oireachtas Committee on Compliance with the Nitrates Directive: Implication for Ireland. The Head of Operations, Director of Sustainability and Climate Action and Senior Research Officer presented the organisation's role and responded to queries raised by Deputies.¹

The Deputy CEO also notified members of the receipt of queries from the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General (OCAG) in respect of its 'Special Audit' of IFI (originally notified to IFI in May 2023).

¹ [Oireachtas committees video archive – Houses of the Oireachtas](#)

3. Matters for Consideration/Decision

3.1 Updated Scheme of Delegation

Papers distributed: 3.1.1 Updated Scheme of Delegations - March 2024

Presenting: Head of Finance & Corporate Services

Paper was taken as read. The updates applied to the Scheme of Delegation presented to the S.18 Appointees were noted. The Chair stated that the priority for the Board is obtaining assurance that the necessary delegations of authority are in place and documented.

3.2 DRAFT Financial Statement 2023 – Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG)

Papers distributed: 3.2.1 Inland Fisheries Ireland Draft Financial Statements 2023 - C&AG; 3.2.2 Internal Audit - Systems of Financial Control (SIFC)

Presenting: Head of Finance & Corporate Services

Papers were taken as read by members and the ARC Chair provided feedback from the Committee's review of the Statement on Internal Financial Control 2023 and draft Financial Statements 2023, the updated Capital Plan 2024 and the proposed capital expenditure for the National Barriers Programme. She confirmed that the ARC recommends these to the Board. The Board was satisfied with the presentation provided.

RESOLUTION: Approval of the **Draft Financial Statements 2023** for submission to the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG)

RESOLUTION: Adoption of the **Review of the Systems of Internal Financial Control SIFC 2023**

3.3 Capital Plan 2024

Paper distributed: 3.3.1 Capital Plan as at March 2024;

Presenting: Head of Finance & Corporate Services

Paper was taken as read. S. Campion presented on the changes made to the plan in relation to property, vehicles, and field equipment. The Board noted the reduction of €141k on matured liabilities in relation to vehicles.

RESOLUTION: Approval of the **updated Capital Plan 2024** on the understanding that risks exist in relation to the completion of transactions within the financial year, the potential for matured liabilities or need for substitutes.

3.4 CapEx - National Barrier Mitigation Programme (NBMP) (External Funded) - Ford Ranger

Paper distributed: 3.4.1 CapEx - National Barrier Mitigation Programme (External Funded) - Ford Ranger

Presenting: Head of Finance & Corporate Services

This paper was taken as read. It was agreed that a process of presenting capital expenditure relating to the NBMP to the Board under a unique governance stream. It was noted that the NBMP would be placed on the Board agenda as a standing item. In response to a query in relation to the Board's commitment to de-carbonisation, it was confirmed that IFI's Climate Action targets incorporated the purchase of EVs, but some activities require the use of 4-wheel drive, all-terrain and towing vehicles. It was agreed that drawdown and budget management would be presented to the ARC.

RESOLUTION: Approval of the **purchase a double cab, automatic Ford Ranger**

3.5 IFI Sustainable Angling Marketing Strategy 2023-2027

Paper distributed: 3.5.1 IFI Sustainable Angling Tourism Strategic Marketing Plan

Presenting: Head of Finance & Corporate Services

Paper was taken as read and noted. The IFI Sustainable Angling Tourism Strategic Marketing Plan, was presented. This comprised: legislative underpinning; rationale for a marketing plan; strategy formulation; the vision and proposition of the plan; the plan's priorities and implementation of the plan. Members commended the significant collaborative work by the Angling Marketing Steering Group in reaching this stage of the process. Queries were responded to on: membership of the steering group; matching the sustainability of angling with tourism/ economic interests; relevant environmental assessments; and risk assessments in relation to specific fisheries. Feedback was provided. Members acknowledged that anglers have a role as environmental custodian. A discussion ensued on potential benefits to rural communities and the need to ensure new legislation enables the work to be done.

3.6 Matter of Contingent Liability - Fixed Term Contracts

Papers distributed: 3.5.1 Matter of Contingent Liability - Fixed Term Contracts

Presenting: Interim Head of Human Resources

Paper was taken as read. Following presentation on the subject matter, feedback from members comprised: that pension, sick leave, contracts of indefinite duration should also be considered; i.e. the inclusion of contingencies in overheads when entering into contracts. It was agreed to put this matter on the next ARC agenda due to potential costs associated with the practice.

4. Committees / Forum

4.1 Audit & Risk Committee – Verbal Report of Meeting of 19 March 2024

Papers distributed: Not applicable

Presenting: ARC Chair

The ARC Chair outlined areas of work considered by the Committee at its meeting on 19 April: the SIFC, the paper on learnings from the recent WRC Adjudication, the updated draft Internal Audit Programme for 2024, IFI Risk Management Policy and Corporate Risk Register and the resourcing of finance and governance. A brief discussion ensued on the preparation of a report in respect of related policy adherence to be provided by the SMT to the ARC.

4.2 Governance Review Steering Group – Verbal Report of Meeting of 4 March 2024

Papers distributed: Not applicable

Presenting: GRSG Chair

The Board Chair briefed members on the recent meeting the steering group.

5. Management Assurance/ Presentations

5.1 Protection Reporting – 2023

Paper distributed: 5.1.1 Monthly Protection Review – January 2024

Presenting: Head of Operations

Paper was taken as read and noted. Members requested the inclusion of staff numbers, providing insight into the level of efficiency achieved. Members acknowledged the reduced volume and increased focus of the monthly protection report.

5.2 Health and Safety Reporting

Paper distributed: 5.2.1 IFI Health and Safety Report - February 2024

Presenting: Head of Finance & Corporate Services

This paper was taken as read and noted. S. Campion presented on the report and responded to queries raised in relation to the time-period prescribed as the two years statute of limitation and the medical investigation protocol.

5.3 Presentation – River Habitat Restoration IFI's Role, Legal Responsibilities and Processes

Papers distributed: 5.3.1 Presentation -River Habitat Restoration IFI's Role, Legal Responsibilities, and Processes; 5.4.1 IFISH – Fish and Habitats Science and Management Guidance

Presenting: Director, Development Programme

A presentation was provided on the organisation's role, legal responsibilities and processes in river habitat restoration.

5.4 Sustainability and Climate Mandate Report - February 2024

Papers distributed: 5.5.1 Sustainability and Climate Mandate Report - February 2023

Presenting: Deputy CEO

This paper was taken as read and noted. It was agreed to present a more strategic focused report at the next meeting.

6. AOB