



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

BARRIER MITIGATION FUND

Scheme 3
September 2026



What is a barrier?

Barriers to fish migration are those which affect migratory species e.g. Atlantic salmon, sea trout, lamprey or European eel.

What is the purpose of the fund?

The Barrier Mitigation Fund is a key initiative under Inland Fisheries Ireland's (IFI) National Barrier Mitigation Programme (NBMP). Its goal is to enhance river connectivity and restore natural water flows by funding the removal or mitigation of man-made instream barriers that obstruct fish passage.

This scheme supports Ireland's targets under the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, the Water Framework Directive (WFD), and national plans like the Water Action Plan 2024 and Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan. The restoration of 300 km of free-flowing rivers in Ireland by 2030 is a national priority—this fund directly contributes to that goal.

Supporting sustainable river systems

By funding these projects, the Barrier Mitigation Fund helps create healthier river ecosystems, supports migratory fish populations, and restores Ireland's vital freshwater resources for generations to come.

What does the programme aim to achieve?

Through strategic investment, this programme will:

- Improve river hydromorphology and fish passage.
- Restore natural river functions and habitat connectivity.

- Support the conservation of Annex II and V species (e.g. salmon, lamprey) and European eel.
- Address obsolete and ecologically harmful instream barriers.

Who can apply?

State Agencies, State-owned companies, and Local Authorities can apply for this funding.

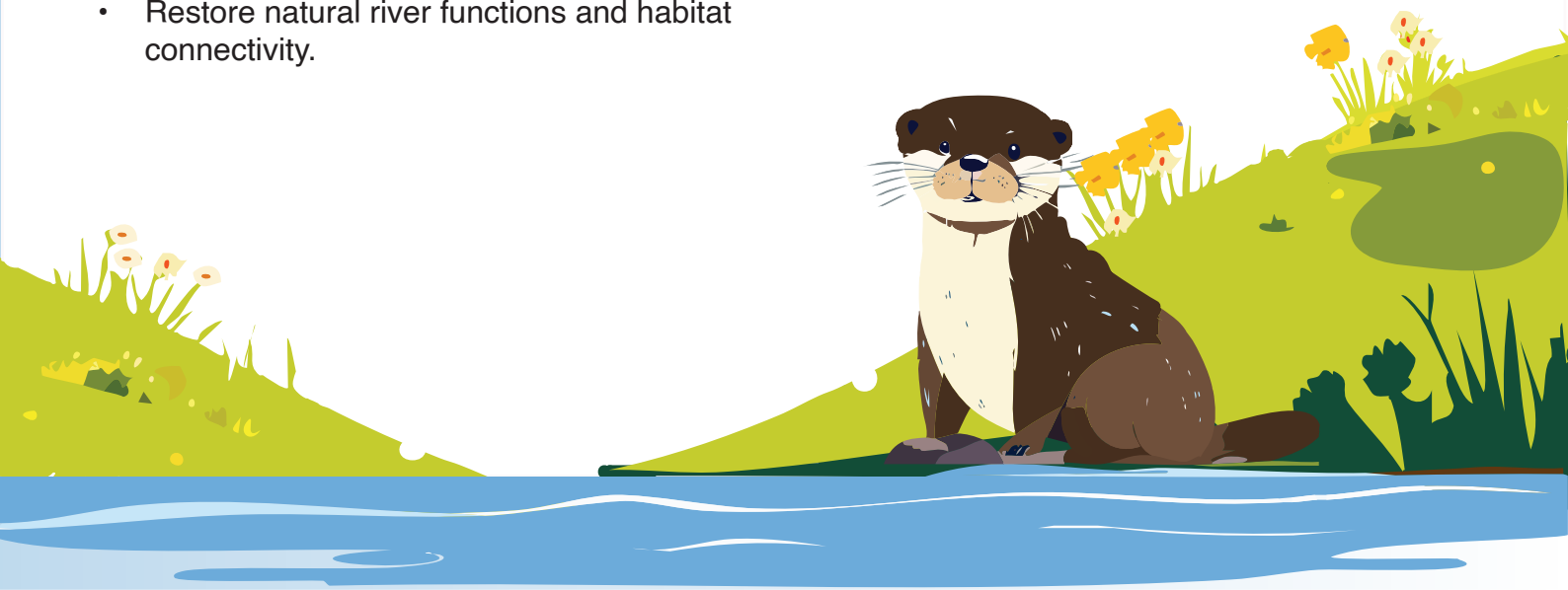
Individuals or interest groups can submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) and the project may be selected to progress with IFI as lead Applicant.

No physical construction works must commence prior to approval to ensure eligibility.

What projects are eligible?

The fund targets man-made instream structures which act as barriers to fish passage such as:

- Dams
- Weirs
- Culverts
- Sluices
- Fords
- Bridges (if impeding flow or migration)



How is the fund structured?

Projects are funded under two categories based on the stage of development:

Category 1: Planning & Statutory Approvals

- Feasibility studies
- Preliminary designs
- Environmental assessments
- Statutory processes (e.g. planning consents)
- Appraisal and business cases

Category 2: Implementation

- Detailed design
- Tendering & construction works
- Site access and mitigation measures

What is the process to apply for funding?

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Submit through the IFI SMARTSIMPLE portal: ifi.smartsimple.ie
Validated and scored using ecological and implementation criteria.

Full Application

(for shortlisted EOIs)
Includes costs, design stage, project plan, and regulatory compliance.
Reviewed, ranked and awarded based on merit, value, and impact.

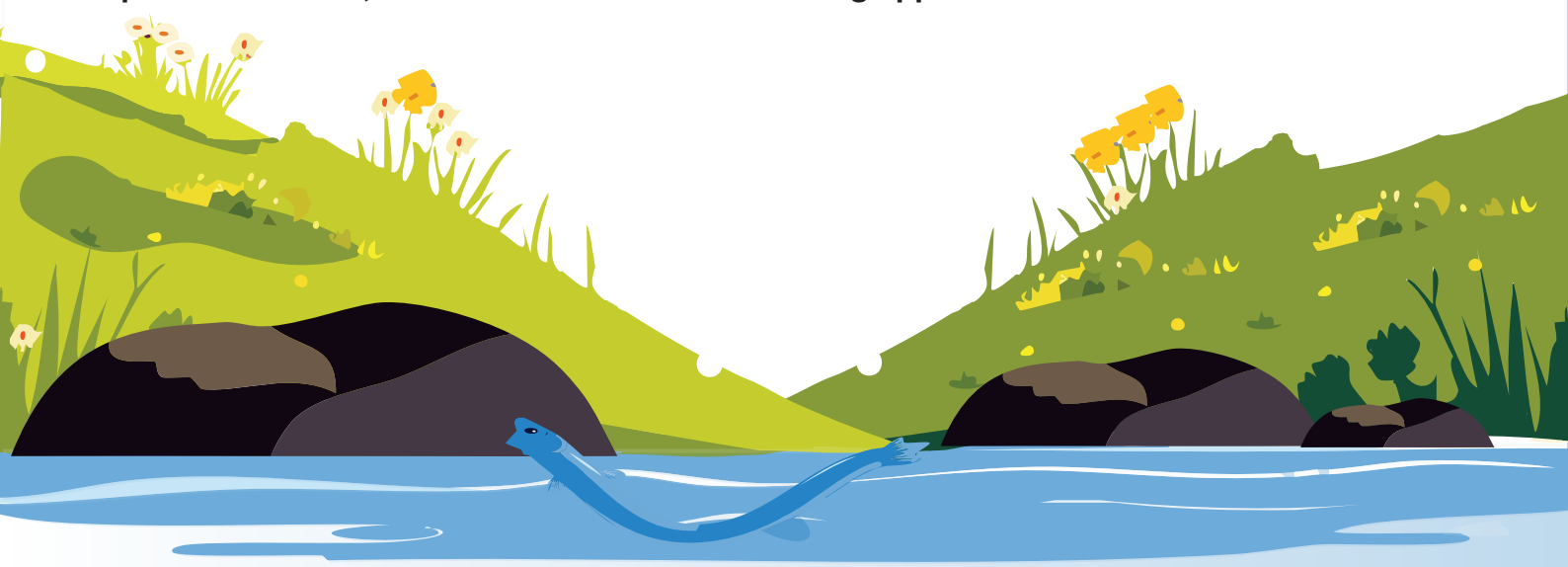
Award, monitoring and release of funds.

What costs are eligible?

Eligible costs may include:

- Professional and consultancy fees (feasibility, design, tendering & construction)
- Environmental studies and surveys
- Structural works (demolition, alterations, access)
- Civil works and mitigation measures
- Local authority planning and development charges
- VAT (if not reclaimable)

Excluded costs include project maintenance costs, application costs, operational costs, or costs incurred before funding approval.





What key information is required for the application?

Mandatory:

- **Location:**
 - GPS co-ordinates of barrier
 - Identify river
 - Upload site location map
- Upload photos of barrier to include site access, front and side elevation of structure, drone/ ariel photographs if available
- What is the primary purpose of your project?
- Category of funding being requested

Further helpful information, if available:

- Map to include proposed point of access for site works
- Ownership of adjacent folios
- Proposed location of site compound for works and laydown area
- Ownership details
- Width of barrier or stream

What is the timeline for applications?

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Call Opens: 02/09/2026

Call Closes: 22/09/2026

Applications Open

(for successful EOIs):

Call Opens: 14/10/2026

Call Closes: 10/11/2026

Project Completion

Target: End of 2029

How do I apply?

- Visit ifi.smartsimple.ie and register
- Review all guidance documents and technical criteria

Contact the Barrier Mitigation Division at IFI if you are unsure about eligibility or need support

Email: barriers@fisheriesireland.ie

Telephone: 01 884 2680

Website: fisheriesireland.ie/what-we-do/barrier-mitigation

Eligible Locations:

Barriers projects must be located within “The State”

Full details are available in the Barrier Mitigation Fund Scheme Guidance

