



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

BOARD OF INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND

Meeting Report of April 26th and 30th, 2021

This is the report of the meetings of the Board of IFI which took place in April 2021.
This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at these meetings.

BOARD MEETING – April 26th, 2021

1. Welcome & Apologies / Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and relayed apologies. In response to his request for declarations of conflicts of interest with matters on the agenda, no conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Corporate Plan 2021-2025

The '*Draft Corporate Plan 2021-2025*' was distributed with the meeting papers. P. Millar joined the meeting. He provided an overview of the content of the draft plan and invited members to raise any queries or provide feedback in relation to the document. Members provided feedback. The Board expressed their appreciation of the facilitation provided by Mr Millar and the work of the CEO and staff on the actions and key performance indicators. The **draft Corporate Plan 2021-2025** was approved by the Board for submission to the Minister. P. Millar left the meeting.

3. External Board Evaluation 2020 – Presentation and Recommendations

The '*Draft 2020 External Board Evaluation*' was distributed with the meeting papers. The findings of the review were welcomed, and it was agreed that a pragmatic approach would be taken in the implementation of the recommendations. Eileen Cole, Board Excellence, was admitted to the meeting and provided a presentation to members on the areas of focus of the review and the key recommendations. Following her presentation Ms. Cole invited members to provide feedback, proposing the allocation of priority settings by the Chair on the individual recommendations with a timeline for delivery. Following discussion of the review and recommendations, the Board thanked Ms. Cole for her work, and she left the meeting. The **recommendations of the 2020 External Board Review** were adopted by the Board.

4. Risk Management

This item was discussed during private members' time.

5. AOB

No matters were raised under any other business.

6. Private Members' Time

The meeting was concluded following private members' time.

BOARD MEETING – April 30th, 2021

1. Welcome & Apologies / Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and relayed apologies. In response to his request for declarations of conflicts of interest with matters on the agenda, one conflict was raised.

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The **draft minutes, as amended, and meeting report of the March 25th meeting**, were approved.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. Correspondence

Correspondence distributed in the meeting papers was noted by the members.

Board Member Submission – Annacotty Weir

A briefing note from a member, on the public petition proposing the removal of Annacotty weir on the Mulkear system, was distributed with the meeting papers. A discussion ensued on this barrier to passage for salmon and lamprey and IFI's responsibilities for these species under the Habitats Directive. The Board acknowledged that barrier removal is a long term plan, impacting wide categories of stakeholders, and advised that a priority list should be drafted where the executive works with the relevant authorities in processing this work.

5. IFI Fish Farm

The CEO outlined the progress of the paper outlining the options in addressing the existing strategic, operational and health and safety risks at the Roscrea Fish Farm. He stated that the Fish Farm Working Group would be reconvened in order to work with stakeholders.

6. Climate Action Framework 2019-2021

A copy of the '*IFI Climate Action Framework 2019-2021- March Update*' was distributed with the meeting papers. The Board noted the content and commended the organisation's progress in relation to the Climate Action Bill.

7. National Inland Fisheries Forum

The CEO outlined the progress in re-establishing the National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF) as per S.7(4) of the 2010 Act. He stated that key factors were the appointment of a Chairperson, the balance of stakeholders represented and the manner in which it would function effectively. The Board emphasised the need for gender and sectoral diversity.

8. CEO's Report

The CEO's Report for April was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. The CEO briefed members on specific costs in relation to the removal of Clondulane weir. Members discussed the different approaches to development work in RBDs.

9. Finance

P. Doherty and M. Martin were admitted to the meeting.

Management Accounts March 2021

The '*Management Accounts and Executive Summary for March 2021*' were distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. M. Martin presented on these accounts responding to queries in relation to; exchequer income; the closing balance at bank and matured liabilities. P. Doherty indicated that capital investments forecasted are intended to support longer term savings, both financial and carbon.

Quarterly Financial Statements Q1 2021

The '*Quarterly Accounts and Executive Summary for Quarter 1, 2021*' were distributed with the meeting papers. The accounts and executive summary were taken as read and noted.

Draft Capital Budget 2021

A copy of the draft 'Capital Budget for 2021' was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. P. Doherty provided a detailed review of the draft Capital Budget and responded to queries. He reported the success of IFI's reaching a 44.5% decrease in emissions being well ahead of the 33% Public Sector target for 2020. He expressed his gratitude for the commitment of staff in achieving this

target and identified Brian Beckett, the Green Team and Thomas McGrory specifically for his tenacity in identifying opportunities for carbon emission reduction. He stated that unutilized capital funds (due to unforeseen impediments) would be directed towards sustainability projects. The Board commended this noteworthy achievement and expressed gratitude to those involved. P. Doherty stated that the Board's leadership on reaching climate targets was very important to the organisation. The draft **Capital Budget 2021** was approved.

Capital Appraisal – Boat Shed Aasleagh

The '*Capital Appraisal for the Construction of Boat Shed at Aasleagh*' was distributed with the meeting papers. This **expenditure** was approved.

Projected Vehicle Hire Costs 2021

The '*Projected Vehicle Hire Costs 2021*' paper was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. Due to the fact that the seasonal officer uptake would impact vehicle hire costs, the Head of Human Resources was admitted to the meeting. With reference to the recommendations of the value for money audit of fisheries patrols, the Board indicated that it was critical to optimise IFI's Transpoco system in providing the necessary data to inform management decisions. R. Bradley stated the system was in place since 2018 and that training delivery would be widened out to RBD Directors, Inspectors and managers to ensure effective utilisation of the system's functionality. Noting the costs associated with vehicle hire as projected in the paper, the organisation needed to resource operations, in order to deliver its strategic objectives. The Board approved the progression **to recruit 38 seasonal fisheries officers**. Ms Bradley indicated that dual occupancy of vehicles was planned under anticipated eased restrictions, in compliance with government guidelines. The Board thanked Ms. Bradley for her input, and she left the meeting.

Draft Comprehensive Report to the Minister

The draft '**Comprehensive Report to the Minister for 2020**' was distributed with the meeting papers, taken as read and approved.

Draft IFI Annual Report 2020

The draft '**Inland Fisheries Ireland Annual Report 2020**' was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read and approved.

Draft Recommendations arising from the C&AG Audit of 2019 Financial Statements

The '*Management Letter arising from the C&AG Audit of the 2019 Financial Statements*' was distributed with the meeting papers. The Head of Finance provided background to issues raised by the C&AG and the actions to be taken to avoid re-occurrence. The Chair of the ARC stated that the committee reviewed the management letter in detail at its meeting on April 20th. She stated that the Head of Finance responded in detail to queries on travel and subsistence, timely credit card bill reconciliation, and governance surrounding tenders and contracts. The **2019 C&AG Management Letter - audit recommendations** were adopted.

National Strategy for Angling Development Review (*Brought forward from Agenda Item 13*)

A review of the '*National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) Projects*' was discussed, and the Chair expressed his gratitude for the work completed on this review.

P. Doherty and M. Martin left the meeting.

10. Audit and Risk Committee

The minutes of the ARC meeting of March 11th were distributed with the meeting papers and noted. The ARC Chair provided a verbal report of the committee meeting of April 20th under Item 9 above.

11. Property Sub-committee

The minutes of the Property Sub-committee meeting of April 20th were distributed with the meeting papers. The Committee Chair provided a verbal report of the meeting where 8 IFI property locations were discussed. The Board Chair added that accommodating staff in Sligo and Drogheda was a priority for the organisation.

12. Matters for Decision

Draft Internal Audit Value for Money Review of Fisheries Protection

A document containing management responses to the VFM review was distributed with the meeting papers, taken as read and discussed by members.

Protection Plan 2021

A document titled '*Clarification regarding the allocation of additional man-hours to Development since 2019*' was distributed with the meeting papers, taken as read and discussed. The **Protection Plan for 2021** was approved.

Commercial Salmon Licence Applications 2021

A document titled '*Commercial Salmon Licence Applications – Summary Report 2021*' was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read, the recommendations for the **Commercial Salmon Licence applications for 2021** were approved.

Update on Lagarosiphon major control

A paper titled '*Update on Lagarosiphon Major Contract*' was issued with the meeting papers. The Chair noted that all queries raised by the Board had been addressed within the paper. The CEO stated that he was satisfied sufficient assurance was provided in the responses to each query raised and confirmed that contract delivery would be reviewed as agreed after a four month period (within the six month contract). The update paper was noted, and the CEO stated that he would brief the members on the progress of the contract.

Draft Private Waterkeepers Policy & Procedure

The updated draft **Private Waterkeepers Policy and Procedure** was taken as read and approved.

Farm and Community Biodiversity Initiative Application for Funding

A paper titled '*Farm and Community Biodiversity Initiative*' was distributed with the meeting papers. It was noted, that if successful, this funding of €184,698 would enhance the biodiversity on 7 rivers in the Lough Sheelin catchment in counties Cavan and Meath, which aligned with IFI's strategic goals. The **Farm and Community Biodiversity Initiative application for funding** was approved.

13. Management Assurance

National Strategy for Angling Development Review Report

This matter was taken under Item 9 Finance.

Non-contractor Habitats Projects Scheduled 2021

A paper titled '*IFI Non-contractor Habitats Project Listing 2021*' was distributed with the meeting papers and discussed.

Protection Plan Review Report

A paper titled '*Monthly Protection Plan Review - March 2021*' was distributed with the meeting papers and noted by the members.

Habitats & Conservation Works and Other Works Reports

Two papers titled '*Habitats & Conservation Works - March 2021*' and '*Structures, Commercial, Education & Outreach Projects Report - March 2021*' were distributed with the meeting papers and noted by members. In response to a comment on the need to for IFI staff to conduct appropriate assessment screenings the CEO indicated that there were plans to address this.

14. Risk Management

Corporate Risk Register 10.18

The Corporate Risk Register was distributed in the meeting papers and noted. The CEO outlined a number of risks in relation to communications on social media regarding IFI's stock management operations in the west.

15. AOB

An item was added to the agenda of the May 26th meeting.

This concluded the business of the meeting.