



Iascach Intíre Éireann  
Inland Fisheries Ireland

# BOARD OF INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND

## Meetings Report of July 20<sup>th</sup> and September 16<sup>th</sup> 2021

This is the report of the meeting of the Board of IFI which took place in July and September 2021.  
This report provides an outline of agenda items raised at this meeting.

# BOARD MEETING – July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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## 1. BOARD CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members to the unscheduled meeting and acknowledged the apology received. In response to his request for declarations of conflicts of interest with matters on the agenda, no conflicts were declared. [However, a conflict of interest arose under item 5.2 and was dealt with under that item]. The Chair notified members of an addition to the agenda under AOB, in respect of the CEO's report of the meeting with representatives of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) (July 16<sup>th</sup>).

## 2. ARC COMMITTEE REPORT

### 2.1 Consideration of Legal Advice Note - Private Session

At the conclusion of the discussion **the recommendations from the ARC** were adopted by the Board.

## 3. Documentation related to Private Session

Due to the outcome of deliberations earlier in the meeting these documents were not considered.

## 4. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

### 4.1 Inland Fisheries Ireland Sponsorship Programme 2021

A document titled '*Inland Fisheries Ireland Sponsorship Programme Outline 2021*' was distributed with the meeting papers was taken as read by members. **The recommendation to support these events in the granting of funding for these applications as outlined (€19,700 in value)** was approved by the Board.

## 5. AOB

### 5.1 Draft Net Licence 20221 – Letterkenny District

A paper titled '*District Draft Net Licences for the Letterkenny District for 2021*' was distributed in advance of the meeting and was taken as read by members. **The recommendation to approve one additional draft net licence as per the information provided in the paper** was approved by the Board.

### 5.2 Increase in ORIS Funding Application

A paper titled '*Increase of Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) Application for Funding*' was distributed in advance of the meeting and was taken as read by members. The CEO provided further information regarding the project located in the Shannon River Basin District. [A conflict of interest was raised, and the member left the meeting while the matter raised was considered and decided upon]. **The recommendation to increase the ORIS application presented and approved at the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of €420k, by a €80k to €500k** was approved by the Board.

### Meeting with Representatives of the Department

The Chair invited the CEO to brief the members on the strategic meeting with representatives of the Department. The CEO reported on the of the following topics raised:

- the progression of the ecologically damaging invasive weed, Lagarosiphon major, in new areas of L. Corrib
- appointing a chair to the National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF)
- pay funding
- the designation of Great western lakes as salmonid lakes
- stakeholder communication

# BOARD MEETING – September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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## 1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, in response to his request for declarations of conflicts of interest with matters on the agenda, three members declared conflicts in respect of items on the agenda and it was agreed that these members would leave the meeting while matters were being considered. In his opening address the Chair discussed; remote Board meetings; IFI's relationship with its parent Department and the Board's task of supporting the CEO and his team in delivering the new Corporate Plan.

## 2. CONSENT AGENDA

### 2.1 Board Meeting – June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Draft Minutes and Report

Pending an advised amendment to the June 30<sup>th</sup> minutes, the **draft minutes of the June 30<sup>th</sup>, July 20<sup>th</sup> meetings and meeting report** were approved by the Board.

#### Matters Arising

Members discussed the Ballynalty project and permissions required/potential derogations due to the fact that the fishery is in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). It was suggested that templates and training would be beneficial. The CEO stated that he was in the process of resourcing this technical expertise at a high level within the Operations Division.

### 2.2 Board Meeting – July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Resolutions and Status on Actions Arising

The resolutions listing and status on actions arising from the June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 20<sup>th</sup> Board meetings were distributed with the meeting papers and noted.

#### 2.3.1-5 Correspondence

Five items of correspondence were discussed and actions taken.

### 2.3.6 River Dodder Flood Alleviation Scheme Update – Brian Beckett, ERBD Director

The '*R. Dodder Flood Alleviation Scheme Update*' paper was taken as read and noted by members. B. Beckett, ERBD Director, joined the meeting in order to brief the members on the issues being raised by a stakeholder. B. Beckett stated that the concerns raised had been addressed and that consultation will continue for the remaining stages of the project. He reported on the works, where a plan for flood alleviation was a multi-annual project which had been originally drafted in 2013 and would not be completed for some years. He added that local staff were working with National Fisheries Habitat Development Manager, D. Cooke to address any current outstanding issues. B. Beckett was thanked for his briefing, and he then left the meeting.

### 2.3.7 Climate Action Mandate Update

The '*Climate Action Mandate for June to August*' paper was taken as read and noted by members. The Board emphasised the importance of leadership effecting positive behaviours in relation to energy usage reduction, citing the example of powering down equipment when not in use.

### 2.3.8 Quarterly Board Report Conservation and Habitats June 2021

The Board provided feedback on the report and pace of delivery of projects, agreeing that managers needed to plan with available resources. The Board commented on the contrast in delivery between districts. The CEO discussed the ambition of the plans, and the benefit of clear role definition of the PMO and local staff implementing the projects. He stated that this would be addressed but would take time and refocus. A discussion ensued on the nature of work the organisation would focus on into the future and the importance of communicating IFI's strategic focus through the Corporate Plan/annual business plans.

#### 2.3.9 Quarterly Board Report Other Categories June 2021

#### 2.3.10 Monthly Protection Plan Review June – July 2021

#### 2.3.11 Mobile Support Unit (MSU) June-July 2021 Protection Review

Board papers as listed above were distributed with the meeting papers, taken as read and discussed. The CEO briefed members on the activities of the Mobile Response Unit (MSU). The Board commended the initiative and the success of the team. The impact of the unit on car hire costs was noted and it was anticipated that hire car requirements would reduce as COVID restrictions eased and the season was coming to an end.

### **10.4 Judicial Review of the Granting of an Aquaculture Licence - Shot Head, Bantry Bay, Co. Cork**

Due to conflicting diary commitments of invitees, item 10.4 was taken at this point in the meeting. The CEO declared a conflict of interest [as a previous member of the Aquaculture Licensing Appeals Board (ALAB)] and left the room while this matter was considered and decided upon. Papers distributed in advance of the meeting were: 'IFI note on ALAB determination of Shot Head Appeal - Technical advisors review 30.7.21' and 'IFI Advices re ALAB decision re Shot Head'

G. Forde and P. Gargan were admitted to the meeting. G. Forde briefed members on the licence granted by ALAB, giving MOWI Ireland permission to set up a salmon farm at Shot Head, Bantry Bay. He stated that the application originally made in 2012 was granted in 2015 and subsequently appealed. The ALAB decision followed a series of requests for further information and was finalised in July 2021. He referred to the legal advice obtained, which was distributed in advance of the meeting. Dr Forde briefed members on a number of the matters raised in the legal advice. P. Gargan provided a presentation on the matter. Invitees responded to queries and left the meeting. A detailed discussion on the matter ensued considering, the licence application assessment process, the judicial review process involving state agencies and the overarching imperative to protect salmonid stocks. The decision to **proceed with seeking a judicial review of the ALAB determination on the appeal to grant an aquaculture licence at Shot Head** was approved by the Board. The Board requested that the Risk Register is modified accordingly. The CEO was invited to return to the meeting.

### **3. CEO'S REPORT**

#### 3.1 CEO's Report - September 2021

The 'CEO's Briefing Note to the Board for September 2021', was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read.

#### Lough McHugh Road Access – Leitrim County Council /ORIS Funding

Members discussed the proposal by Leitrim County Council to collaborate with IFI in funding access to Lough McHugh in Co. Leitrim. **The Board agreed that this project should proceed.**

#### Economic & Social Research Institute – Angler Panel Data Collection

Members discussed the previous decision of the Board to continue to the Anglers Panel data collection with a view to socio-economic research. Members requested further detail where the research output was integrated into plans and activities.

#### Western Lakes Management Plan

The CEO confirmed that Declan Cooke, National Habitat Development Manager, was tasked with drafting the plan. The Board sought assurance that welfare measures would be considered as part of the plan.

#### Roscrea Fish Farm

The CEO confirmed that a tender for the project management of the development of the aquaculture facility at the site was progressing and that it was intended to report on this on a quarterly basis.

#### Contract for Services – L. major removal L. Corrib

The CEO briefed the Board on the monitoring status of the work delivering this contract and the necessity of ordering a significant amount of jute matting in advance of the winter period. The CEO anticipated that the contract for weed removal would be re-tendered while the Chair cautioned that this was subject to the availability of funds from DECC. **The Board advised that the jute matting be ordered in advance to ensure that there will be no further disruption to the programme. (3.4)**

#### Vehicle Usage Monitoring

The CEO confirmed that there was full occupancy of IFI vehicles, that Transpoco was being used to capture vehicle redundancy.

### **STRATEGIC UPDATE – Presentation by CEO**

#### Cong Hatchery

The CEO briefed members on the visit by representatives of the Department to the Cong Hatchery and Cornamona building.

#### Aasleagh Lodge Feasibility Study

The CEO proposed that the consultants tasked with drafting the feasibility study on the future use of the property, would make a presentation to the Board on their work.

## **4. FINANCIAL SUMMARY PRESENTATION**

### 4.1 Management Accounts and Executive Summary – June and July 2021

The 'Management Accounts and Executive Summary for June and July 2021', were distributed with the meeting papers. P. Doherty joined the meeting. P. Doherty briefed members on the contract for the L. major removal from L. Corrib; the impact of mature liabilities on the balance at bank and projected deficit; ensuring that electric vehicles are procured while cautioning members regarding the delay in delivery; and the worrying impact of continued use of a fossil fueled vehicle fleet. A briefing note on vehicle hire costs was included in the meeting pack.

### 4.2 Quarterly Accounts – Q2 (Financial Statements)

The Quarterly Accounts to the end of June 2021 were distributed with the meeting papers and noted.

### 4.3 Discussion on Letter from DECC Re Cash on Hand & Pay Underfunding Gap Report

With reference to the letter received from D. Maher in relation to funds at bank, a discussion ensued on the potential of Departmental funding claw back and planning for this. P. Doherty discussed the previously classified mature liabilities of vehicle and property impacted by the current logistics and commercial construction costs environment.

It was agreed to convene a meeting of the Property Sub-committee to progress the development of the Claregalway base. Progress on proceeding with the development of the Youghal base following a review of costs will be considered by the Property Sub-committee at a future meeting.

A paper titled 'History of Exchequer Funding Deficiency for Pay' was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. P. Doherty left the meeting at this time.

## 5. EXECUTIVE TEAM MEMBER PRESENTATION

There were no presentations under this item.

## 6. VITAL FEW

### 6.1 Appointment of NIFF Chair

This was taken under item 2.3.1.

### 6.2 Business Plan 2021 – Q2 Update

The Q2 updated Business Plan 2021 was distributed with the meeting papers and noted.

### 6.2 Fish Farm Paper

A paper titled, '*IFI Fish Farm Rationale and Time Scale*', was provided in the meeting papers and taken as read. The CEO confirmed that a tendering process had commenced in relation to project management.

## 7. RISK MANAGEMENT - UPDATE

### 7.1 Corporate Risk Register 10.20

The '*Corporate Risk Register 10.20*' was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read.

## 8. STRATEGIC UPDATE – CEO's Presentation

This was taken under item 3.1.

## 9. BOARD COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

### 9.1 Audit & Risk Committee Meeting – July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The draft minutes of the ARC meeting of July 20<sup>th</sup> were distributed with the meeting papers and were noted.

## 10. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

### 10.1 Outstanding Projects for Decision (R. Suck, Owenmore/Ballynahinch, Roach Pond Walkway, Ballynalty)

Three documents relating to this item, titled '*Clarifications on Habitats and Conservation Funding 2021*', '*Board Member Submission on SCF-123*' and '*Ballynahinch Fishery System Cooperative*'. were distributed with the meeting papers.

#### Planning for Instream Enhancement Upper River Suck (MFF-21-0048)

A breakdown of the intended expenditure as part of the funding grant was provided in the clarifications briefing note. Following consideration of this supplementary information, the Board agreed **that this project should proceed.**

#### Owenmore/Ballynahinch Catchment Management 5 Year Plan (SCF-21- 0123)

The Board discussed this project proposal and agreed that a presentation on the scientific/ ecological merits of the project is to be provided to assist in their decision-making process while ensuring that the project is in line with the organisation's strategic objectives.

#### Cong Roach Pond Walkway (NSADF-17-0119)

The Chair left the meeting while this matter was being considered and decided upon. In addition to the detail provided in the briefing note, the CEO outlined the status following his site visit which is located in an SAC. He conceded that costs had risen due to a revised plan to ensure the structure is more enduring. **The increased funding award for NSADF-17-0119 of €30,962.85** was approved by the Board. The Chair was re-admitted to the meeting.

### Ballynalty Stream Riparian Zone Management Project (NSAD-20-0237)

The briefing note confirmed that landowners benefiting from this project have agreed to operate and maintain the solar pumps and drinkers installed. The CEO confirmed that following a visit to this project site, it was decided that the project would be delivered directly i.e. fencing would be erected by IFI staff in order to reduce the cost of delivery.

### 10.2 Drones Purchase Proposal

A document titled '*Business Case SUA (Drones) Purchase Proposal*' was distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. The Board discussed the benefit of drone technology in supporting both conservation and protection activities. **The proposal to further invest in drones** was approved by the members.

### 10.3 Epworth House Roof Works, Clonmel Base

Two documents titled, 'Epworth House Roof Works Clonmel Base' and 'Epworth House Roof Works Tender Report' were distributed with the meeting papers and taken as read. Following a visit to the site, consideration by the Property Sub-committee and a review of the tendered costs, the **proposal to commence roof repair works as outlined** was approved by the members.

## **11. AOB**

### Board Meeting Review

The Chair invited feedback from members in respect of their concerns/suggestions on matters raised in the meeting. Topics raised were; concern regarding the ambition of the corporate strategy and availability of resources to delivery it; aligning resources to ensure planning is in line with the Habitats Directive; ensuring the organisation manages the challenges and promotes the positives and the power of communicating this; organisation culture and delivery of the Corporate Plan.

This concluded the business of the meeting.