



Iascach Iníre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
between
INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND
and
COILLTE

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INTRODUCTION

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Coillte and Inland Fisheries Ireland is intended to establish the framework and process for collaboration and enhanced cooperation in areas of collective responsibility and shared interest, leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of the respective work programmes of both organisations.

1.0 THE PARTIES

1.1 Inland Fisheries Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland is the state agency responsible for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources.

Inland Fisheries Ireland's mission is to facilitate efficient and effective management of the inland fisheries resource; to provide streamlined, coherent and integrated national policy for the protection, conservation, management and promotion of inland fisheries and sea angling resource; to enforce the various Fisheries Acts and the Water Pollution Act (1977) as described under the Inland Fisheries Act (2010); and to ensure optimum use and efficiency of staff and resources.

1.2 Coillte

Coillte, Ireland's semi-state forestry company, is responsible for managing 440,000 hectares of primarily forested lands. It is the nation's largest forester and producer of certified wood, a natural, renewable and sustainable resource. Coillte is also the largest provider of outdoor recreation space in Ireland, it enables wind-energy on the estate, processes forestry by-products and undertakes nature rehabilitation projects of scale. Coillte delivers the multiple benefits of forestry, including forests for climate, for nature, for wood and for people.



2.0 PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

- 2.1 Inland Fisheries Ireland and Coillte recognise the benefit to be gained from co-operating in the delivery of legislative responsibilities. Both parties affirm their commitment to cooperate and coordinate on common work areas in the interest of enhanced sustainability, environmental stewardship and climate action in Ireland. This commitment will facilitate the exchange of information and data which will help support our respective responsibilities and provides a platform for promoting best practice in areas of common interest. This memorandum does not override the statutory duties and powers of either organisation, rather it expresses a convergence of will between all the parties, indicating an intended common line of intent and action to ensure the best possible service is delivered and the best possible outcomes are achieved.
- 2.2 The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to:
- 2.2.1 Establish the basis and general principles for collaborative working.
 - 2.2.2 Clarify areas of mutual interest and responsibility of the parties in the context of relevant legislative frameworks.
 - 2.2.3 Establish a platform for professional exchange to share information and best practice and foster co-operation, harmonisation and collaboration on initiatives;

3.0 AREAS FOR COLLABORATION

Inland Fisheries Ireland and Coillte will seek to further enhance existing levels of engagement and develop new collaborative arrangements which contribute to the aims of both parties including:

3.1 Basis for collaborative working

In order to maximise efficiencies and use of valuable resources Inland Fisheries Ireland and Coillte agree to:

3.1.1 Continued bi-lateral cooperation between parties to ensure that common goals and potential areas of conflict are managed effectively.

3.1.2 Endeavour to develop and maintain a network of designated contact personnel to liaise, exchange information and collaborate at appropriate levels within both organisations.

3.1.3 Identify future training and development programmes that are of mutual benefit, particularly regarding joint training programmes or programmes specific to one authority but where a mutual benefit would arise through sharing. Both parties will also develop procedures to improve efficiency of interactions.

3.1.4 Exchange of data and advice relating to the assessment and management of ecosystems and areas protected under the relevant water and nature directives.

3.1.5 Where appropriate cooperate closely in the assessment of damage to protected species and natural habitats where appropriate collaborate on relevant environmental monitoring activities to ensure that work programs of both organizations can be effectively implemented.

3.1.6 Where appropriate promote scientific / technical cooperation through commissioning mutually beneficial research projects including through Inland Fisheries Ireland's Research program.

3.1.7 Where appropriate, contract support services of mutual benefit to both organizations (such as monitoring programs).

3.2 Areas of mutual interest

3.2.1 Data Sharing and Strategic Forestry Planning and Catchment Management

IFI and Coillte will endeavour to share data as appropriate and permissible to facilitate and support enhanced sustainability, environmental stewardship and climate action in Ireland.

IFI have compiled an extensive database on the condition and ecological status of watercourses in Ireland. Information on the pressures currently affecting these streams and rivers is also available. Where sub optimal ecological conditions are identified in channels within the Coillte estate, both agencies will collaborate to restore habitat and return ecosystem status to its reference state.

Coillte and IFI will endeavour to develop a list of prioritised catchments where opportunities for collaboration on broad scale projects under the following 2 general catchment management headings will be explored and progressed where feasible:

1. Strategic Forestry Catchment Planning for Ecological Enhancement (Coillte Lead)
2. Forestry / Water Restoration Projects (IFI Lead)

3.2.2 **Bioforest / Nature Restoration**

IFI and Coillte will endeavour to work together on nature restoration / 'rewilding' projects and programmes to facilitate and support enhanced sustainability, environmental stewardship and climate action in Ireland. Particular emphasis will be placed on restoring and enhancing riparian corridors within the Coillte estate to enhance the climate resilience and flood management potential of river ecosystems.

3.2.3 **Guidelines and Best Practices**

Both parties will endeavour to share best practice examples in riparian and aquatic zones in order to facilitate more impactful, positive and effective interventions and management strategies.

3.2.4 **Barriers to the free passage of fish and other aquatic fauna**

The extensive construction of access roads, bridges and culverts throughout Ireland has resulted in numerous partial and complete barriers to fish migration, particularly in smaller rivers. Where these arise on the Coillte estate, IFI will endeavour to identify, categorise and mitigate the impacts of these barriers. Cooperation with Coillte will be required to access, design construct and/or remove appropriate structures to facilitate ecological continuity on impacted watercourses.

3.2.5 **Challenging Legacy sites such as those where conifers are planted close to watercourses**

Forest sites which were established prior to the forest service guidelines may have conifers planted in commercial densities close to watercourses. Other more recently planted sites will most likely be entirely unplanted in riparian areas. Recent research has identified the importance of broadleaf planting adjacent to streams and rivers to mitigate against the effects of high-water temperatures and flash flooding, particularly in upland areas. Coillte will endeavour to work with IFI and other regulatory bodies to develop a plan to redesign and sustainably manage riparian zone subject to these pressures.

3.3 **Platform for professional exchange / operational liaison**

A working group made up of operational and technical representatives from both parties, at middle management level, will be set up to drive the implementation of this MOU. This forum shall be known as the **IFI / Coillte Liaison Group**. This group will meet at least twice per year to share information and knowledge and track the implementation of this MOU. It is envisaged that the Implementation Group may split into subgroups to take the implementation of a particular area forward. The relevant expertise from both parties may be asked to attend or contribute to joint meetings or delivering the work of subgroups.



4.0 REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 This protocol is not intended by either party to be legally binding. A failure by either party to meet their responsibilities under the terms of this agreement will not constitute a breach of contract.
- 4.2 A joint review committee, at senior management level, will meet, at least annually, to review the working of the Memorandum, to include activities under 3.3 above, and the delivery of actions. The Chair will be taken alternately by the Chief Executive Officer representing Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Managing Director, Forest, Coillte.