
Resilience Pilot Project Evaluation

Inishowen Rivers Trust and Maigue Rivers Trust

2023



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Terms, Abbreviations, and Acronyms	Meaning
AGM	Annual General Meeting
CEAF	Community Environment Action Fund (Local Agenda 21)
CLG	Company Limited by Guarantee
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CRA	Charities Regulatory Authority
CRO	Companies Registration Office
CSP	Community Services Programme
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CWDF	Community Water Development Fund
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine
DCC	Donegal County Council
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DFI	Development Fund Initiative
DHPLG	Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU	European Union
GMA	General Municipal Allocation
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IFA	Irish Farmers' Association
IFI	Inland Fisheries Ireland
LAG	Local Action Group
LAWCO	Local Authority Waters and Communities Office
LAWPRO	Local Authority Waters Programme
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy
NSEP	National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022
NWRM	Natural Water Retention Measures
OPW	Office of Public Works
Q	Quarter
RBMP	River Basin Management Plan
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RT	Rivers Trust
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Acknowledgements

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Unless otherwise stated, all statistical data is based on the CSO Census of Population 2016. Deprivation Index information and mapping are based on Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017) The 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index, accessed at www.trutzhaase.eu

1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Genesis

The Concept Note¹ that provides the rationale for the Resilience Pilot Project was published by the Rivers Trust in 2018. It states that *'the Rivers Trusts need core support in these critical and vulnerable first few years of existence to build capacity, confidence and credibility, enabling them to become more sustainable into the future. This will benefit the Trusts and the Government in achieving its Water Framework and Habitats Directives objectives as rivers Trusts deliver projects such as water quality and habitat improvement and catchment-scale interventions that benefit the water environment.'*

Against this backdrop, the Resilience Pilot Project was created to demonstrate the effectiveness of professionalising the Rivers Trust movement in Ireland to deliver on the individual trusts' core objectives.

Two newly-formed organisations, Inishowen Rivers Trust and Maigue Rivers Trust, were established in 2016 with Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) status and later with Charitable status. The common aim of both Rivers Trusts was to work with local communities to ensure that the respective river systems could achieve their full environmental and recreational potential.

In supporting the two Rivers Trusts, each was funded to employ a full-time Project Officer for three years. The full costs of the Project Officers were to be recouped in year one; two-thirds were to be recouped in year two, and one-third in year three.

1.2 Inishowen Rivers Trust and Maigue Rivers Trust

1.2.1 Inishowen Rivers Trust

The Inishowen Rivers Trust is an environmental charity that aims to protect, restore, and improve the rivers and natural waterbodies of the Inishowen Municipal District.

Established as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) in 2016 and as a charity in 2018, the Trust evolved from a local community group. It worked both for the benefit of the community and the environment.

The main aims of the Trust are to advance the education of the public, or any association, institution, voluntary organisation, company, local authority, administrative or governmental agency or public body or representative body in: -

- ❑ The understanding of rivers, river corridors and river catchments, including their fauna, flora, biodiversity, economic or social activity, and river catchment management.
- ❑ The need for, and benefits of, conservation, protection, rehabilitation, and improvement of aquatic environments.

Inishowen Rivers Trust has eight members on the Board of Directors and one staff member. All board members work in a voluntary capacity. The Trust's operational area is approximately 900 km².



¹ Transcribed in Appendix A1.

1.2.2 Maigne Rivers Trust

The Maigne Rivers Trust was established in 2016. The Trust has eleven directors from sectors representing social, economic, and environmental interests.



The Maigne Rivers Trust grew from a pilot project on the River Loobagh, which was run in 2015. Local farmers, anglers, community groups and interested individuals got together with the Inland Fisheries Ireland and Limerick City and County Council to explore a new way of looking after the rivers and lakes. The vision was to establish an approach that involved the community becoming stewards of their local waterways.

Several exciting ventures came about due to this partnership: Physical works were undertaken in the river channel to improve the habitat for fish.

Maigue Rivers Trust Aims and Objectives

- Create awareness through education programmes, outdoor classrooms and school visits.
- Encourage community participation by developing networks of interest groups who can input into the Trust's action plans and providing opportunities for volunteers to get involved in helping enhance the river
- Improve water quality by working with sectoral interests to minimise impacts.
- Improve fish habitat and numbers by carrying out in-stream works, understanding current fish stocks better and seeking funding for research and fishery management initiatives.
- Protect biodiversity by improving habitat for otters, kingfishers and other species and carrying out catchment-wide biodiversity assessments.
- Control invasive plants such as Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, which can seriously affect a river corridor's biodiversity and amenity value.
- Encourage the local angling tradition by supporting juvenile angling programmes, competitions, and angling clubs in the catchment.
- Develop amenity access to the river for recreational activities such as walking, kayaking, and archaeology.

1.3 Policy Environment

The Water Quality in Ireland Report 2016-2021, published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in October 2022, assesses the quality of Ireland's rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal and groundwaters.

The report shows satisfactory water quality in just over half of rivers, lakes, estuaries, and coastal waters. However, the overall ecological health of these surface waters has declined across all water body types since the 2013-2018 assessment. This means these water bodies are less able to support healthy ecosystems for fish, insects and plants.

The report highlights that since the 2019 assessment, the number of monitored water bodies in satisfactory condition has declined by: -

- One per cent in rivers.
- Three per cent in lakes.
- Sixteen per cent in estuaries.

- ❑ Ten per cent in coastal waters.

The main pressures on water quality are agriculture, physical changes such as land drainage and dredging, forestry activities and discharges from urban wastewater.

1.3.1 European Union Water Framework Directive

The European Union Water Framework Directive (WFD) is designed to protect and improve European water, including rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. The WFD objectives are implemented through River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs).

The WFD (October 2000) places statutory obligations on Member States and local authorities to develop and implement River Basin Management Plans.

The WFD identifies that the best model for a single system of water management is by river basin, which is the natural geographical and hydrological unit, instead of artificial administrative or political boundaries. The Directive also notes that RBMPs must be established and updated every six years.

There are several objectives through which water quality is to be protected. The key ones at the European level are: -

1. General protection of the aquatic ecology.
2. Specific protection of unique and valuable habitats.
3. Protection of drinking water resources.
4. Protection of bathing water.

1.3.2 River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021

The State created new structures for water governance for the second RBMP planning cycle from 2018-2021.

The River Basin Management Plan, 2018-2021, was published by the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage in April 2018. The RBMP builds on lessons learned from the first planning cycle in several areas, including: -

- ❑ More robust and more effective delivery structures were put in place to build the foundations and momentum for long-term improvements to water quality.
- ❑ A new governance structure was created, which brings the policy, technical, and implementation actors together with public and representative organisations to ensure the coordinated delivery of measures.
- ❑ A newly-established Local Authority Waters and Communities Office (LAWCO) was designed to help people get involved in improving water quality at a local level. An Fóram Uisce was established as a forum for stakeholders, community groups and sectoral representatives to analyse and raise awareness of water issues.
- ❑ An enhanced evidence base was developed to guide national policies and the targeting of local measures.

1.3.3 Local Authority Waters Programme

The Local Authority Waters Programme Office (LAWPRO) (formerly Local Authority Waters and Communities Office) notes that *'a water catchment is an area of land contributing to a river, lake or other water body, such as groundwater. County administrative boundaries do not define these*

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areas; therefore, ownership and responsibility for managing these waters must lie with their local communities.'

At a national level, LAWPRO has been established to deliver two key objectives: -

1. Coordinate the activities of all thirty-one Local Authorities in areas relevant to the Water Framework Directive.
2. To conduct public consultation and engagement with communities and stakeholders, as the Directive requires.

The office is operated by Kilkenny and Tipperary County Councils on a local authority shared services basis and is headed up by the Director of Services, Tipperary County Council. LAWPRO works with a network of sixteen Community Water Officers in centres throughout the State.

LAWPRO is a national shared service working for all thirty-one local authorities in Ireland. The organisation coordinates efforts to achieve good or high water quality in rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters, and groundwater, as required by the European Union Water Framework Directive. Healthy rivers and catchments support a healthy environment, a robust economy, health, and wellbeing.

LAWPRO represents a new approach to managing Ireland's natural water assets that sees local authorities, state agencies and public bodies collaborating and working with private sector stakeholders and local communities. The underpinning concept is that delivering water quality improvements and protecting high status rivers requires an effort involving all sectors of society.

2 Summary Findings

This section combines data from written submissions and surveys with interview and focus group feedback to develop a narrative on the unfolding of the Resilience Pilot Project, its impact, effectiveness, and sustainability.

2.1 Introduction

The key activity areas that occupied the Project Officers and directors have been identified as the themes against which the project should be evaluated. The breakdown below uses data from the Project Officers and key board officers.

Table 1 - Key Activity Areas

Key Activity Areas	Activity Occupation Rate
Governance and Administration	33%
Community Engagement and Education	44%
Water Quality Works Projects	23%

The findings show that the governance and administrative work to lay the foundations for future sustainability occupied a third of the Project Officers' time over the three years. This quantum includes the effort expended to account for project funding and generate replacement core funding income. Given that fund-replacement is a central tenet of the project deliverables, it is appropriate to deal with this area as a separate sub-section.

The remaining themes are divided between local-level activity, whether community engagement or direct water quality project work. However, it is worth remarking that attribution of effort for both projects shows consistent levels in terms of time expended with little more than a percentage point separating Public Awareness (23 per cent), Education Activities (21.5 per cent) and Water Quality improvement works (23 per cent), which all contribute to the ultimate aim of the Water Framework Directive.

It is important to bear in mind that the investment effect evident in the work of the Project Officer is but one input into each local activity. An intended outcome of the funding is the harnessing of voluntary effort at the local level. A simple example highlighting its importance is illustrated in the finding that board-level activity in sustainability (400 hours) constituted over a third of the Project Officer's time spent on this activity (640 hours) in the Maigne Rivers Trust. Additionally, small-scale locally contracted work is another important addition to local efforts and has increased most activity levels. Regarding business plans, which are a key project objective, both projects contracted local expertise to conduct the work.

Using these worktime attributions, the evaluation findings are presented below under the headings: -

1. Administration and Governance.
2. Financial Control and attainment of Replacement funding.
3. Community Engagement and Education.
4. Water Quality Projects Overview.

2.2 Resilience Funding: Administration and Governance

Administration and governance are key themes in the contracted outcomes, anticipating that appropriate legal structures would be put in place for the Trust to carry out funding and project activity objectives. In the schedule of project objectives that formed the outcomes anticipated in the contracts, evidence of good governance practices (board meetings, policies produced, CRO and CRA compliance) link with financial objectives relating to the production of annual cashflow forecast and evidence of efforts (bids submitted) to secure funding and plan for futures sustainability with the creation of a business plan.

It is important to reflect on how much activity evolved because of the project investment and the hiring of Project Officers. The stage of project development is important in this regard as in Inishowen, the Project Officers position was in place, while for the Maigue, the position started in June 2020 (during the first lockdown).

2.2.1 Administration and Governance

Good governance standards ensure the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision, and accountability of any organisation. The standards demonstrate a willingness and ability to act in the organisation's best interests, ensuring the operation of effective, open, and ethical processes that adhere to the law and stand up to scrutiny.

The Quarterly Reports and the (cumulative) quantitative surveys record that both the Inishowen Rivers Trust and the Maigue Rivers Trust pursued compliance with the requirements of the Companies Registration Office (CRO) and the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) with considerable effort.

Companies Registration Office

Inishowen Rivers Trust CLG was registered in Ireland on 9th August 2016 (registered number 587285). Maigue Rivers Trust CLG was registered in Ireland on 16th November 2016 (registered number 593027). The record shows that both companies maintain their legal status with the CRO to the present day.

Charities Regulatory Authority

Every charity must provide an annual report to the Charities Regulator showing compliance with the Charities Governance Code. The six governance principles of the code that the Inishowen Rivers Trust and the Maigue Rivers Trust must adhere to are: -

1. Advancing their charitable purpose.
2. Behaving with integrity.
3. Leading people.
4. Exercising control.
5. Working effectively.
6. Being accountable and transparent.

2.2.2 Board Engagement

The Quarterly Reports and survey findings provide evidence of the quality of the engagement of the individual boards in key aspects of governance. This suggests that the relationship between the boards, the Chairpersons and the Project Officers was appropriate and mutually supportive.

The relationship with Rivers Trust Ireland, responsible for administering the contract on behalf of LAWPRO, has also been noted as supportive.

The online quantitative survey reveals that Maigne Rivers Trust has had thirty-one meetings throughout the Resilience Project. An indicator of the Covid-19 challenge is the revelation that although hired in June 2020, it was not until December 2021 that an in-person meeting provided an opportunity for the Project Officer to meet the board.

Monthly meetings have been a feature of the Maigne Rivers Trust board since 2017, and the representative model, which was planned, has proved effective in terms of a balanced appraisal of ideas and plans. Inishowen Rivers Trust indicated twenty-five Board meetings throughout the Resilience Project; board formation in this model centred on the vision and energy of founding activists (acclaimed in one interview as a *force of nature*). This latter model has been a common formation factor in cause-related or public good community projects in Ireland. The different board formation and composition properties in the two pilot project areas are worthy of further study regarding community catchment management structures.

Policy Generation

Both Rivers Trusts produced and adopted a suite of policy statements in compliance with the Charities Regulatory Authority over the reporting period. These included: -

- Child Protection.
- Communications.
- Conflict of Interest.
- Director's Handbook.
- Financial Procedures.
- Public Benefit Statement.
- Risk Policy and Register.
- Social Media.
- Volunteers and Directors' Expense Policy.
- Whistleblowing Policy.

2.2.3 Evidence of Strategy and Business Planning

Though the Quarterly Reports do not provide specific evidence on the review methodologies adopted for the Business Plans, the survey process has revealed that an internal business plan was conducted for Maigne Rivers Trust through SICAP funding and that, though challenging, this has informed the direction in terms of submitting proposals. Furthermore, the Maigne Rivers Trust board adopted a five-year Strategic Plan earlier this year (2022). A business plan has also been completed in Inishowen.

2.2.4 Resilience Project Impact

A considerable proportion of Project Officer and board time has been expended, and it is worth reflecting on the local impact of this effort and if it has contributed to either the community engagement framework and, ultimately, the water quality targets outlined in the Water Framework Directive and National River Basin Management Plan. Evidence for these findings is drawn from surveys, in-person focus groups and interviews (in-person and online).

Credibility and Legitimacy

Core funding has lent credibility and legitimacy, a critical stage of development beyond project-based, mainly voluntary activity. In the words of one agency interviewee, it signifies a professional operation instead of an amateur. While the difference between the two is often inadequately described on a positive/negative arc, many and not least the projects themselves were clear that a simple change such as regular office hours could profoundly impact engaging with agencies and being available as a consistent resource. Core funding built upon the considerable operations achieved with volunteers, a voluntary infrastructure that board members acknowledge was under severe pressure as project scale increased, almost to the point of burnout.

Administrative and Contracting Capacity

It may seem simple to note, but the reality is that funding a core Project Officer position represents a stage of development that implies office infrastructure with appropriate filing, reporting and communications processes and technology. While not unusual in purely voluntary contexts, professional application cannot be assumed in such situations.

Scope of Projects

When the business of community catchment development activity becomes a paid day job, it places the organisation on an equitable footing with all the agencies and authorities in terms of river basin management stakeholder legitimacy (even if the funding and support base of these 'equal' partners is anything but equal). In the views of several agency interviewees, the funding has made the Trust more substantial; up to the time of investment, engagement with the Trust would have related to single-issue small-scale projects. In addition, funding has broadened the scope of projects, which is considered important given that the agencies have relatively narrow mandates.

Impact of Capacity

The following projects would not have been realised without appropriate administrative and governance capacity: -

1. **Maigue Rivers Trust Recreation and Amenity Study:** Agency feedback indicates that a significant project's administrative and reporting requirements would have precluded the voluntary-only body from leading out on this project.
2. **Maigue Rivers Trust Transition Year Curriculum Development and Skillsnet/Irish Water Industry Training:** It is a simple reality to note that contracting capacity is required to engage in official tender contracts. Securing nationally significant curriculum development contracts based on contracting status and appropriately qualified professional staff and volunteers is no small achievement.
3. **Inishowen Rivers Trust Clonmany Natural Water Retention Measures:** The contracting capacity of Inishowen Rivers Trust and the reputation gained during many years of voluntary efforts ensured that Trust assumed the coordinating/lead role among a diverse range of national, regional, county, and local level authorities, agencies and sectors in a nationally significant flood management measure.
4. **Inishowen Rivers Trust INTERREG Project Application:** While contracting rules mean that the County Council must be the tendering body, Inishowen Rivers Trust has been named the coordinating entity. This designation would not have been considered with a purely voluntary body.

The 'grassroots' coordinating function is unique to Community Catchment Management Groups and, in this case, the Rivers Trust model. This will be discussed more fully in the Assessment of Resilience section, but it is worth noting the agency and local community/industry partner scope within the projects listed above.

2.3 Resilience Funding: Financial Model

The funding model for the Resilience Project was reviewed in terms of the following four parameters: -

1. Impact of Core Funding.
2. Impact of Sliding Scale Model.
3. Project Resilience Funding.
4. Replacement Effectiveness.

Evidence was gathered in three ways: quantitatively to explore the activity and funding impact, qualitatively to explore perspectives on the effectiveness of core funding and the sliding scale funding model, and through interviews to review the experience of the key stakeholders over the course of fund distribution and Resilience Project operations.

In addition to reviewing the direct impact of core funding, the review explores corporate sponsorship and membership as a means of diversifying funding sources.

Selected data from the quarterly reports submitted by both Inishowen and Maigue Rivers Trusts provide similar information that can help verify information secured through interviews and surveys. Information sought in the quantitative survey included data on successful bids that were submitted and the resultant amount of new funding received. The qualitative survey and interview process reflect the process of operating a reducing fund, planning, securing, and processing replacement funds, and activating and coordinating project initiation, activation, and reporting.

Evidence from the Quantitative Survey directly addresses core and project funding secured and is shown for each project below.

Defining Core and Project (Capital) Funding

In the context of the Resilience fund, it is worth considering the definition and, perhaps more importantly, the difference between core and project funding, which in the contract is unhelpfully termed '*capital*' funding.

The Resilience Project fund has directly funded the Project Officer position as a core or general operating requirement, for which it was to be expected that replacement funding should involve another funder, public or corporate, replacing that initial source to continue funding the Project Officer and, Rivers Trust general operations and projects.

Project funding is separate and accrues to specific projects that meet the objectives of the Trusts concerning community engagement, education, and practical works, all related to water quality and catchment management.

Although the Trusts have attributed funds to core costs, the funds attributed would commonly be termed project funding.

2.3.2 Mague Rivers Trust: Funding Overview

Table 2- Funding Sources

Mague Rivers Trust Survey		Mague Rivers Trust Quarterly Reports	
Funding Applications	Funding Value	Funding Applications	Funding Value
Core Funding	€49,650.00	Reported Funding	€28,455
Project Funding	€97,380.00		
Corporate Sponsorship	€12,000.00		
Total	€159,030.00		

Mague Rivers Trust quantitative survey information shows total funding of almost €160,000 attributed to core or general operations (40 per cent), project funding (50 per cent) and corporate or industry sponsorship (10 per cent). Corporate funding has been included in core funding in Mague Rivers Trust accounts. The core funding sum also includes a sum equivalent to 50 per cent of the transition year curriculum development project, which is due on project completion.

As noted earlier, the evidence suggests that sources attributed to core funding would more often be considered project funds. The distinction seems to be based on funds directed to Mague Rivers Trust to complete projects (invasive species control, curriculum development, catchment excellence programme) for which funds are dispensed at the board's discretion. Hence, funds have been directed to the Project Officer position (for project work), overheads and other Mague Rivers Trust costs. ICatch Network Coordination funding, which more closely fits the core funding definition, is also included in this stream. In both cases, the finance has gone to sustain Project Officer funding, as it diminished in years two and three.

To illustrate the challenge relating to core funding replacement, a Project Officer interview established that the fund was '*replaced*' by a voluntary reduction of the salary of the Project Officer. It is unclear whether the arrangement included an agreed reduction of hours to compensate, but the feedback suggests that the reduction was effectively a pay cut as the project funding made it difficult to consider project termination or reduction. Over the three years, the salary was scaled back from €54,000 in year one to €44,000 (year two) to €49,000 (year three).

The unfolding *as-it-happened* narrative is worth noting the pressurised context in which planning decisions were made. The invasive species control project was used to subsidise the replacement of the one-third salary cut from Y1. Unsure of how long it would last and what was to come regarding other projects, the Project Officer recommended to the board that gross pay of €45,000 (-17%) would be prudent.

At the start of Y3 (June 2022-two-thirds salary reduction), the Transition Year Curriculum Development Project and the Catchment Excellence Programme were still in the tendering process. For that month, the Project Officer went on part-time pay (while working full-time). In July, the Project Officer successfully lined up teaching work for October and November at the University of Limerick. This allowed the projection of salary reduction to four days a week for that period. The Curriculum Development contract came through in August 2022, which steadied the ship regarding replacement income. As it unfolded, other small contracts and ICatch network funding allowed an increase to €49,000 (-9 per cent).

It seems that the commitment of the Project Officer and the wider board ensured that the focus remained on sustaining projects in the context of considerable wage uncertainty. The *as-it-happened* narrative illustrates the challenge of applying project funds to salaries and the constant

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pressure of salary replacement while progressing the considerable administrative, engagement and project work due as a function of the existing contract and now project funding.

It should be noted that some funding (such as the LEADER Programme) precludes salary payments. For many others, the funding directly addresses direct inputs to the project (tree planting, clearing, water sampling) that must be set up separately. Even in what may become an emerging trend, where project funding allows a proportion to project management, the challenge of creating a viable, long-term community catchment management infrastructure in a regime of small-scale, short-term funded projects can't be overlooked.

In terms of Resilience, it is hard to imagine many public funding circumstances outside of the community sector where such a wage position, in this case volunteered and, in many cases, imposed as, for example, is generally accepted was the case after the financial crash in 2008.

In terms of project funding, Mague Rivers Trust made successful funding applications or bids worth almost €159,000 are shown below, of which nearly ten per cent was secured from local industry. In all, eleven separate funding sources are included, and each of these was secured by tender. Thus, in terms of project requirements (six bids submitted), successful bids add up to almost double the contracted requirements.

Table 3 - Provisional Breakdown of Funding

Stream	Scope	Funding
Core Funding	Limerick County Council - <i>Morningstar Project</i> .	Year Two: €14,000
	Catchment Excellence Programme.	€10,000
	Transition Year Development Programme.	€24,999
	iCatch Training Network Coordinator Funding.	€6,000
Project Funding	LEADER (29k) - Recreation Study.	€29,000
	LAWPRO Community Water Fund (unstated) - <i>Citizen Science</i> .	
	Inland Fisheries Ireland: - <i>Angling for All</i> .	€4,850
	LEADER Programme - Crayfish Ark Project.	€16,000
Corporate Sponsorship	Analog Devices - Freshwater Monitoring Project.	€1,000
	Irish Cement - Crayfish Ark Project	€3,500
	Green Skillnets/ Wyeth - Workshops and Placement Programme.	€10,000

2.3.3 Inishowen Rivers Trust: Funding Overview

Table 4 - Funding Sources

Inishowen Rivers Trust Survey		Inishowen Rivers Trust Quarterly Reports	
Funding Applications	Funding Value	Funding Applications	Funding Value
Core Funding	€11,000,00	Reported Funding	€28,455
Project Funding	€350,818.00		
Corporate Sponsorship	€0.00		
Total	€361,818.00		

Inishowen Rivers Trust has successfully secured general operations funding more closely akin to core funding. This was achieved through securing a fee for administering a six-year New Acres Programme funding grant on behalf of Inishowen Development Partnership. The fee was secured by the then Project Officer as administrative cost in relation to the grant (€900 per month to the total value of €10,800) for the Trust.

Inishowen Rivers Trust was also the lead partner in the ICatch network funding, for which the coordination fee was delegated to the Mague Rivers Trust Project Officer. This represented a not inconsequential gesture that helped to bring that newly recruited position up to speed on the national context in a way that would otherwise be difficult.

It is also not inconsequential that Inishowen Rivers Trust founder secured a full-time position with New Acres, which although not wholly relevant to the Trust, is of benefit in terms of some functional crossover that allows a key activist to maintain a role in the organisation while enabling Inishowen Rivers Trust to build capacity through contributing a local fee to Project Officer sustainability. Technically, the monthly fee should be termed an administration fee, but it has been applied to the Project Officer position in this context. Notwithstanding this funding, the response of the Trust to core fund replacement has been to reduce contract hours to a part-time position.

In terms of project funding, Inishowen Rivers Trust made successful funding applications or bids worth almost €361,000, as shown in the table above. As will be evident from the successful bids data shown below, much of the early funding was secured for Natural Flood Retention measures in the aftermath of the floods of 2017. It is interesting to consider that the project would not have met the population requirements for large-scale capital relief measures. In all, twelve separate funding sources are included, and each of these was secured by tender. Thus, in terms of project requirements (six bids submitted), successful bids add up to almost double the contracted requirements.

To illustrate this point, project bid success evidence from Q4 2020 shows that seven successful funding applications were made to the value of €211,919, as follows: -

- ❑ Donegal County Council (Local Agenda 21 Community Environment Action Fund): €500.
- ❑ iCatch Network Project (The Wheel's Training Links Programme, funded by the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and LAWPRO): €17,938.
- ❑ Innovate Together (Rethink Ireland Innovate Together Fund): €59,491.
- ❑ LAWPRO (Restoration Project): €5,000
- ❑ LEADER (Natural Water Retention Measures): €94,500.
- ❑ Office of Public Works (Natural Water Retention Measures): €34,000.

- ❑ Seeds of Change (Inishowen Development Partnership): €490.

Later in the Pilot Project (Q2 2021), the Trust reported that five successful funding applications were made to the value of €159,988, as follows: -

- ❑ LAWPRO (Community Water Development Fund 2021): €3,000.
- ❑ LAWPRO (Natural Water Retention Measures Project): €7,000.
- ❑ Donegal County Council (Development Fund Initiative Invasive Alien Species Project): €2,500.
- ❑ Donegal County Council (Crana River Engagement): €14,618.
- ❑ Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (European Innovation Partnership): Contracting Partner - Inishowen Development Partnership, Implementing Partner - Inishowen Rivers Trust. €132,870.

2.3.4 Corporate Sponsorship Package

Harnessing corporate social responsibility (CSR) is identified in the Concept Note as a vehicle to engage the business community in supporting activity.

Both Inishowen Rivers Trust and the Maigue Rivers Trust reported that no corporate sponsorship packages had been created throughout the review period. If there has been no formal programme, it would be accurate to say that both trusts have demonstrated significant engagement with their local business communities and, in the case of Maigue Rivers Trust, have secured project funding support from a number of businesses, including a private industry-led Catchment Excellence Project (CEP) for the River Deale.

The survey indicates financial contributions totalling €12,000 from three companies. In a project created with Nestlé's Wyeth Nutrition facility in Askeaton, Co. Limerick, a community project was established that brought all stakeholders in the Deale catchment together to work together on initiatives to improve local water quality.

The impact of Covid-19 public health measures is likely to have been significant in dampening CSR-related activity.

Challenge

The challenge of developing a corporate sponsorship package in an emerging sector for a Pilot Project comprising newly formed companies was not lost on many stakeholders. However, amongst those working in third-level institutions, where corporate sponsorship is common, the feedback emerged that the stage of development and capacity precluded most sponsorship. Potentially what would be required to give impetus for such sponsorship would be the creation of a national promotion and sectoral engagement from which local catchment groups could approach industry.

Another concern noted is to ensure that the potential for the misperception of industry sponsorship in River Basin Management was pointed out in the interviews.

For both Trusts, there is clear evidence of significant industry and local business engagement at a project level, including direct funding and in-kind support through the provision of materials, equipment and, in some cases, skilled personnel. Local businesses have also benefitted from small-scale contracts to provide works beyond the capacity of volunteers, for example, in the case of the Morningstar invasive species project (Maigue Rivers Trust) and another invasive species project on the Clonmany River in Inishowen.

2.3.5 Membership Package

Neither Rivers Trust organisation has engaged in developing a paid membership structure.

In the interview process, the appropriateness of charging volunteers who would also be asked to contribute skills and labour to different projects and the suitability of charging membership was questioned. In addition, the question of exclusion through unaffordability was identified. Maigne Rivers Trust has not developed membership packs to date. Inishowen Rivers Trust reported that no income was generated through membership packages. Individual donations were referenced as the most appropriate way to engage local support at a financial level, with the capacity for tax relief for donors contributing at higher levels, a valuable promotion tool.

2.3.6 Resilience Project Impact

Financial Impact

The contracted amount set aside for both projects was almost €296,000, divided equally between the two projects (€148,000 each) on a schedule of quarterly diminishing amounts related to the sliding-scale/replacement funding objective.

The total amount accruing from activities generated because of the project was almost €521,000, equivalent to a €1.8: €1 return on investment. At the project level, the return is €2.4: €1 for Inishowen Rivers Trust and €1.1: €1 for Maigne Rivers Trust. Several factors accounted for this, including the late contracting of the Maigne Rivers Trust Project Officer (June 2020) and the significant flooding event generating significant Inishowen Rivers Trust project activity.

The contract anticipates the replacement of core or general operations funding. Therefore, the Pilot Projects were asked to provide a breakdown of their funding according to core, project, corporate or membership income classifications.

Table 5 - Funding Breakdown

	Amount	Proportion of Total
Core Funding	€28,000	5.5%
Project Funding	€458,000	92%
Corporate Funding	€12,000	2.5%
Membership Funding	€0	

It is not unlikely that core and corporate funding may be somewhat understated where, for example, proportions of project funding are allowed for salaries or where corporate funds comprise a tender amount distributed by an agency or non-governmental organisation. Nonetheless, the amounts under discussion would be minimal in relation to the overall trend. Over 90 per cent of the funding received would generally be termed project funding, even if some of it was directed to supporting the Project Officer position.

Sliding-Scale Funding Model

In assessing the sliding-scale funding model, the evidence from survey, focus group, and interviews are that it has been, in the words of one board member, a '*poisoned chalice*'. Regarding the sustainability focus, the Resilience core funding investment was acknowledged as

facilitating greater awareness of the need for sustainability and increased networking with local funders and businesses.

The replacement of core funding with what would generally be termed project funds reflects the trend in the community and voluntary sector, where core funding (as opposed to programme or project funding) is rare. Programme funding is perhaps the closest fit to core funding, granted to contracted community organisations within the Family Resource Centre (FRC) Programme for example on a multi-year, core staff basis.. For FRC's, support is targeted at specific populations or areas at a local level within an explicit policy goal and over a contracted period (five years), with an expectation of renewal. The appropriateness of programme funding for Community Catchment Area Management is discussed in the Resilience section.

The impact of considering the replacement funding of a third of the salary from the outset resulted in a continuous (negative) pressure described in one focus group as '*replacement heartache*'. The issue occupied workers and volunteer board members to the extent that some wondered if the effort (640 volunteer hours - Mague Rivers Trust) in this and other administrative policy development undercuts the good '*boots on the ground*' intent in which they engaged as volunteers.

Whereas the policy development could be explained away in terms of building capacity, the sliding-scale mechanism is less easy to justify. It has proven very stressful for many board members and both Project Officers.

Resilience funding, as shown in the Project Development section, added significantly to efforts in relation to water quality.

It is, thus, hard to escape the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that the core funding investment that was so positive in putting in place a Project Officer to generate activity should create pressure on the Project Officer to replace their own funding. The respective boards particularly identified this pressure, given the legal and moral onus to provide a positive, sustainable workplace, which was effectively undermined from the start.

Based on site visits and evidence gathered, the consultants believe that while the investment created a successful local resource infrastructure, the sliding-scale model has threatened the viability of one board and the capacity to engage another resulting from unsustainability.

The annually diminishing core funding for the Pilot Projects represented a '*cliff edge*'. Replacement project funds could not be predicted or timed accurately to offset the reduction. It is considered that the financial pressure created by the model has negatively impacted the wellbeing and personal health of individuals to the extent that one position (considered central to operations by all agency and community stakeholders) has resigned.

2.4 Resilience Funding: Water Quality Projects Overview

In this section, this element of the project is addressed by providing a brief overview of projects, descriptions in the form of case studies of key projects and comments on the workload that featured in the feedback, predominantly from the interview stage.

It should be noted that project work has been achieved in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of the sliding-scale funding model, and the administrative burden relating to incorporation and registration with the Charities Regulator.

2.4.1 Overview and Classification of Main Projects

Projects relating to the Resilience Funding are shown in the table below, classified according to whether the activity refers to the project implementation, education, or engagement objectives underpinning the funding. It is recognised that projects will most likely encompass elements of each theme.

The inclusion of project activities reflects the importance of reporting the increased scale and scope of operations resulting from core funding. There are few outcomes related to project activities (two public meetings, two public engagements, two press releases annually) detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that underpins the funding of the two Trusts.

The Interim Report of Rivers Trust Ireland (June 2022) shows detail relating to MoU elements that are useful in anticipating the achievements of the Trusts over the contract period.

Table 6 - Trust Achievements

Relevant Objectives	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Number of successful bids	15	8
Number of Funders	28	10

2.4.2 Maigue Rivers Trust Water Quality Projects

To illustrate the scale scope of project work resulting from core funding, the table below captures the projects highlighted in the annual Newsletter published at the end of 2021 (two years into the three-year Pilot). The Newsletter and those produced for 2020 and 2022 constitute almost 50 per cent of the external publications (defined as press releases).

A total of sixteen projects are identified in the table below. These projects are referenced in terms of their theme, funding employed, operational partners and links to the strategic objectives set out in the Maigue Rivers Trust Strategic Business Plan. This Plan is itself a contractual requirement. The strategic objectives are detailed below: -

- SP1:** Maigue Rivers Trust will work to protect and improve water quality in the rivers of the catchment.
- SP2:** Maigue Rivers Trust will work to conserve and enhance biodiversity and protect and improve aquatic environments and habitats in the catchment.
- SP3:** Maigue Rivers Trust will work to foster awareness and appreciation of the rivers and lakes of the catchment through education and public participation initiatives.
- SP4:** Maigue Rivers Trust will work to develop water-based amenities and recreation in collaboration with the local tourism sector, angling clubs, community groups, and recreational and heritage interests,
- SP5:** Maigue Rivers Trust will maintain the financial, human, and other resources needed to make progress towards its long-term vision.

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Table 7 - Maigue Rivers Trust Project Activity

Project	Theme	Funder(s)	Partners	Policy/ Resilience References
An Exploration of the Recreation and Amenity potential of the Maigue Rivers.	Community Engagement: Sector Development.	LEADER Programme.	SLR Consultancy.	MRT- SP 4: Water-based amenity and Recreation (Recreation).
Maigue Festival Nature Walk.	Community Engagement.	Creative Ireland.	Kilmallock Traveller Women's Group.	MRT – SP3: Education and Public Participation (Engagement).
Working with an Artist.	Community Engagement.	Creative Ireland.	Knockainey Historical and Conservation Society.	MRT – SP3: Engagement.
Connections, Concerns and caring for your local river Survey.	Water Quality - Citizen Science.	Mary Immaculate College EPA.	Four-year Doctoral Project Citizen Science Investigations- River Environmental Stewardship.	MRT – SP1: Water Quality (Water).
Drumcomoge Project: Assessment of Habitat Quality and Future directions for enhancement.	Water Quality.	LAWPRO.	Inland Fisheries Office of Public Works.	MRT – SP1: Water.
River Insects - train the trainer.	Citizen Science - Freshwater Monitoring.	Scoil Pól, Kilfinane.		MRT – SP1: Water.
EU Waterblitz.	Water Quality (400 Samples in Three Days) - Nitrates and Phosphorous.	Mary Immaculate College. EPA.	DCU Water Institute. Maigue Citizen Scientists.	MRT – SP1: Water.
Citizen Science Training Event.	Education.		Knockainey Community Stakeholders.	MRT – SP1: Water.
Educational Factsheet: understanding the Maigue Rivers.	Community Engagement: Public Awareness.	Mary Immaculate College.	Earthwatch Europe.	MRT – SP3: Engagement.
Morningstar Giant Hogweed Project.	Invasive Species Management Contract.	LAWPRO.	Landowners (15/70).	MRT – SP2: Biodiversity and Aquatic Environments.
Crayfish Plague Update.	Water Quality - Crayfish eDNA Results.		Marine Institute.	MRT – SP2: Biodiversity
Crayfish Arc.	Water Quality: ARK Sites to Preserve White Clawed Crayfish.	LEADER Programme (Feasibility Study Funding).	Atkins Global.	MRT – SP2: Biodiversity.
MRT Strategic Business Plan.	Governance.	Ballyhoura Development Company.	Result (independent contractor).	MRT – SP5: Governance.
Reimagining Irish Rivers online conference (co-host)	Community Engagement (1000 registrations)	Limerick City and County Council. Mary Immaculate College.	Inishowen Rivers Trust.	MRT – SP3: Engagement.
Ballyhoura Beo - Family Fun Day - Croom Town Park	Community Engagement: Information Stand	Ballyhoura Development CLG.		MRT – SP3: Engagement.

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Project	Theme	Funder(s)	Partners	Policy/ Resilience References
Cooperative Work Placement	Governance: capacity building	University of Limerick.	Six-month placement with BA Arts undergraduate.	MRT – SP5: Governance.
Catchment Excellence Training Programme	River Deel workplan training and practical application,	Wyeth Nutrition. Lean and Green Skillnet (Central Solutions Ltd.)- Tender.	Local businesses and community representatives within the Deel catchment area.	MRT – SP1: Water.
Transition Year Module on Water Quality and Catchment Management.	Community Engagement Education	An Foram Uisce (Tender).	Maigne Rivers Trust Board Director- Education.	MRT – SP3: Engagement.

It is important to view the works listed above in the context of the Strategic Plan developed by the Trust, together with the outlay of effort by theme that was shown in section 2.1: -

- Governance and Administration: 33 per cent.
- Community Engagement and Education: 44 per cent.
- Water Quality Works Projects: 23 per cent.

Notably, Water Quality Works Projects (SP1/SP2) was shown to account for the lowest level of Project Officer engagement in the context where the Newsletter features nine projects. It is tempting to suggest that the work of volunteers is important here, and this may be worthy of further exploration. It is important at this point to note the number of sectoral partners (thirteen), successful bids (seven to eight) and funding partners (seven). These represent clear indicators in the mid-year of the three-year project regarding the scope of project activity and evidence of collaboration and networking.

Regarding Community Education and Engagement (SP3/SP4), the Newsletter features seven projects that emerge from four successful bids funded by seven different entities. Four sectoral partners are noted, but it is important to remember that the Recreation Study was developed using widespread consultation, which is project data that does not feature in the Newsletter.

The third thematic activity (Governance and Administration SP5) accounts for the lowest number of Projects (two), funders (one), and successful bids (one). Administration work is not going to feature in a public relations output. Similarly, administration work and policy work was led by the Project Officer and board.

Selected Projects

- **Morningstar Hogweed - Invasive Species Programme**
- The Morningstar Hogweed Invasive Species Programme has been the largest internal project to date involving engagement with sixty farmers. The family background and contacts of the Project Officer in farming have helped establish a connection and provide reassurance of the independence of the Rivers Trust. A total of fifteen farmers have engaged with the Trust in measures to deal with the issue, and a private company was contracted (€6,000) to establish the scale of the issue and deal with the flowering heads. In addition to the familiarity of the Project Officer with the farming community, dealing with the farmers has seen pre-project engagement through phoning and establishing that the Trust is an honest broker. Regular text contact has allowed continuous updates.

- It is worth noting that fully addressing the issue does not fit easily within the three-year core funding timeline. It requires an investment of €20,000 per annum for up to five years, with as-needed monitoring and amelioration works after this. An indicator of the buy-in of the farming community is that one provided a small plot of land for a deep dig to bury the hogweed heads.
- **Glasha Stream Project**

The Glasha Stream Project featured in-stream works that involved twelve farmers. However, it has come to nothing for the moment; the building of the M20 will impact it, and there is little point in addressing works until the influence of that project evolves.

Family contacts have facilitated links and engagement with relevant officers of the IFA, and the Project Officer has made several presentations at Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) meetings.
- **Citizen Science Project**

A Citizen Science project on the Deale has been an excellent forum for community engagement in regular monitoring of the water quality. It has accounted for voluntary engagement with the Trust. However, this should not be taken to represent the voluntary contribution of Tidy Towns, for example, and other groups that get involved. Mary Immaculate College has supported the Citizen Science project.
- **Recreational Study**

The funding of a major Recreational Study has opened the possibility of green and blue way initiatives that have not been a feature of the river and where access is a significant issue. A kayaking event attracted many paddlers and demonstrated first-hand the recreational capacity of the river. There has been significant public and agency sharing of the study. Among the angling community, the access issue is substantial, as is the issue of barriers.

2.4.3 Inishowen Rivers Trust Water Quality Projects

Natural Flood Management Measures

The Inishowen Rivers Trust, with support from the EU LEADER Programme, the OPW, Local Authority Waters Programme and Donegal County Council, has developed nature-based flood solutions in the Clonmany area in what is the first national natural flood management solution to a severe flooding event. After scoping work conducted by Trinity College, a series of simple nature-based solutions which mimic natural processes and fit in with the hydromorphology of the river channel were delivered. The project uniquely combines scientific expertise with deep local knowledge to produce appropriate local-level natural solutions to flood benefit. In addition, local communities have been informed through public engagements and awareness-raising events.

ECO Carn

ECO Carn is a collaborative project formed in 2019 by several community organisations in Carndonagh. The project, funded by Community Foundation Ireland, will develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for Carndonagh through Envision Carndonagh, an umbrella group of local organisations, businesses and individuals catalysing innovative possibilities for the future of the area. In addition, the project has a strong community engagement element and will promote

awareness of biodiversity and support training initiatives and biodiversity enhancement projects in the area.

Through the Rivers Guardians training, supported by Rethink Ireland in 2021, volunteers have gone on to use their skills to do riparian works, and in the case of several trustees have gone on to do some instream works.

Willow Lattice Bank Retention

It is worth exploring the impact of one relatively simple riverbank retention measure below a bridge on a stretch of river where erosion was such that it convinced the landowner that the river would soon be at his door, though it was still a small field away. The farmer, desperate for a solution, recognised that previous '*hard engineering*' and water course redirection measures had failed and that a concrete bridge recently assembled to replace one undermined by erosion was itself in danger, supported the project.

The lattice retention unit was placed on the bank just before the 2017 flood, the works finishing the night before the flood with the apocryphal comment by the Inishowen Rivers Trust worker that he expected the incoming flood to sweep it away. As it happened, the retention unit held, and the riverbank has further stabilised since then, with the willow lattice supporting natural scrub growth to further aid the recovery. The farmer has become one of the Trust's biggest supporters; another large-scale land owner had been very sceptical but again was astonished at how the unit held in 2017, and the subsequent success as a bank retention measure.

Invasive Species Control

Across the river from the retention project, an invasive species control project also shows similar potential for success. Japanese knotweed is synonymous with the dangers of invasive species and the difficulty in removing them from their habitats. Using international research and best practice, a local company used soil samples from the site (bacterial), compared them with soil rich with local '*healthy*' species (biological), and trialled a process of injecting the bacterial soil site with biological nutrient-rich compost. This has been effective in totally reducing the spread of the knotweed and has undermined the health of the existing stand.

Future work will steadily introduce native species to compete with the declining knotweed. The process has thus far been recognised to the extent that the local company is engaging with Councils throughout the country on adopting the practice.

2.5 Resilience Funding: Community Engagement & Networking

Community engagement is a key objective of the Resilience Project Pilot Funding model advocating various engagements at a local level with companies, schools, the public and agencies. Evidence of efforts to engage are required in the form of events scheduled with the public and with volunteers (at least two per annum) secured together with evidence of engagement between the two projects, with LAWPRO personnel and within the business community. Publications in the form of press releases (at least two per annum) are also among the anticipated outcomes.

2.5.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

The Concept Note identifies harnessing corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a vehicle to engage the business community in supporting activity. However, Inishowen Rivers Trust reported that activity in the compilation of a register of local companies had not started by the end of Q4

2021. Consequently, no advance was made on liaison with local companies. On the other hand, Maigne Rivers Trust continuously reported that the compilation of a register of local companies had commenced.

In Q3 2020, Maigne Rivers Trust reported that contact had been made with two companies, and thereafter, further contact was seen to be contingent on completing the Business Plan. In Q4 2020, the Trust reported that €3,500 had been secured from Irish Cement as matching funding for the Crayfish Ark Project supported by the LEADER Programme. This co-financing was repeated in Q4 2021. The survey indicates that financial contributions totalling €12,000 were obtained from three companies.

The potential for the misperception of industry engagement in River Basin Management was noted in the interviews.

2.5.2 Engagement

The Concept Note anticipates that the dedicated Project Officer in each Trust will generate better engagement with stakeholders and enable the organisation of two public engagement events per year to raise the profile of the individual Trust. To this end, the Resilience Pilot Project Quarterly Reports record the number of volunteer events per annum, including the number of event participants and volunteers and the amount and value of the time volunteered.

Volunteer Events

The Concept Note established a target of two volunteer events per annum. To date, the survey reports note that Maigne Rivers Trust recorded that 25 volunteer events had occurred over the project period. Inishowen Rivers Trust reported that seven volunteer events occurred in 2020, with fifty-two in 2021. Rethink Ireland training would have accounted for the high number in 2021.

Public Engagement

The Concept Note anticipates two public engagement events each year by the individual Rivers Trusts to raise the local profile of the organisations and attract members.

The Resilience Pilot Project Quarterly Reports record that in 2020, Maigne Rivers Trust organised two public engagement events whilst Inishowen Rivers Trust held six events. In 2021, Maigne Rivers Trust were responsible for ten public engagement events, whilst Inishowen Rivers Trust undertook forty-six events.

Both Inishowen Rivers Trust and the Maigne Rivers Trust used web-based platforms to provide virtual events in line with the requirements of Covid-19 public health constraints.

According to the quarterly reporting process, Inishowen Rivers Trust recorded ninety-nine participants in public engagement events in 2020, while Maigne Rivers Trust registered seventeen participants. In 2021, Inishowen Rivers Trust recorded 350 participants in public engagement events, and Maigne Rivers Trust recorded 1,400.

2.5.3 Agency Engagement

The Concept Note anticipates that the Project Officers in each Inishowen Rivers Trust and the Maigne Rivers Trust would regularly contact each other to facilitate the exchange of information and experience to reflect best practice. The project funding summaries show the extent and effectiveness of local authority, agency, and industry networking.

LAWPRO: **Resilience Pilot Project Evaluation**

Survey data records significant contact with LAWPRO, with seventy-one engagements recorded in Inishowen, where the positive support of the Community Water Officer has been widely noted. For MRT, the relationship has been more modest (ten meetings), though a recent change of contact personnel has facilitated greater engagement.

Additionally, regular contact between the Project Officers and the respective LAWPRO Catchment Science lead was anticipated in the pilot model. To date, there have been ten engagements in Inishowen and four in the Maigue.

The Project Officer's engagement with County Councils has been equally positive, with forty engagements in Inishowen and twenty in the Maigue.

Similarly, there has been significant engagement with Rivers Trust Ireland (30-IRT:20-MRT), the all-Ireland office contracted by LAWPRO to administer the grant funding and to process the quarterly reports and provide progress reports. The project officers attest to the important support function from being able to contact the office as issues arose. Whether the nature of this support related to projects, governance or administration issues is beyond the scope of this evaluation. The consultants observe that the quarterly reporting schedule and form formed the basis of important support particularly in the early formation stage,

A primary indicator of knowledge transfer between the more established Inishowen Rivers Trust and the Maigue Rivers Trust (Project Officer hired in June 2020) is shown in the email, and the contact trail between the Project Officers is recorded. Evidence of knowledge transfer is not requested in the Resilience Pilot Project Quarterly Reports. However, it is instructive to note that the Inishowen Rivers Trust Project Officer engaged the Maigue Rivers Trust Project Officer to administer the ICatch Training Network. The Maigue Rivers Trust Officer acknowledged this action as the most crucial step in steeping her into the culture and relationships among rivers trusts, and catchment area groups.

3 Additional Work Achieved

The following section summarises the additional work that can be accredited to the Resilience Funding Model.

The Resilience Pilot Funding Project is intended to test the capacity to develop a self-sustaining local office, engagement, education, and operations infrastructure to catalyse local Water Framework Directive objectives on the ground. In this section, evidence from surveys, interviews and focus groups highlights unique capacities available at a local community level that are largely beyond the remit and institutional capacity of authorities. If Active Involvement at the catchment management level is to be the focus of government policy and support, it is these additional capacities that will be sought in the drive to increase water quality levels in line with the Water Framework Directive and national policy objectives.

In terms of evidence, it is essential to acknowledge that professional opinion based on local operations experience is a key input from a relatively small sample of community activists, funders and agencies with knowledge of the Trusts and the Pilot Project. The assessment of unique capacities is referenced in several important indicators: -

1. Evidence provided in financial reports and other financial documentation.
2. Evidence of project outputs: reports, site visits, photographic evidence and training materials.
3. Professional judgement based on almost universal agreement on the need for and success of the Pilot Projects for Mague and Inishowen Rivers Trusts.

To begin, it is worth looking at the extent of additional activity based on average percentile increases provided by survey respondents and backed up in interviews and focus groups.

3.1 Resilience Funding: Additional Attributable Activity

Resilience Project funding was intended to boost Rivers Trust community engagement and activity levels onto a sustainable footing so that Inishowen and Mague Rivers Trust could realise the community engagement dimension. This was a vital component for delivering on the Water Framework Directive. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which Resilience Funding has increased percentage activity levels above the level achieved in the years prior to the availability of the funding mechanism.

Table 8 - Attributable Activity

Activity	Attributable Increase in Levels of Activity
Volunteer Engagement	58%
Catchment Improvement Works	58%
Site Surveys	40%
Public Awareness / Promotion Activity	70%
Schools Activity	58%
Skills Training	70%
Company Formation	44%
Board Meetings	50%
Policy Development	60%

3.1.1 Administrative Activity

Pilot projects were expected to implement the appropriate company formation infrastructure to engage in funded activities and fundraising. This generally means setting up as a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status in Ireland. This process is demanding in terms of policy development and reporting requirement.

Three of the activities listed above (company formation, board meetings and policy development) relate to administration and while the increase in activity levels of two of these are among the lowest, with the number of board meetings increasing by 50 per cent, while company formation levels increased by 44 per cent. With 60 per cent increased activity levels, policy development showed higher added activity levels, attributable to compliance with the policy development requirements of the Charities Regulator.

3.1.2 Community Engagement and Skills

Sustainability at the local level requires meaningful engagement, for which getting locals involved and grounding the work in knowledge are both important dimensions. The increased volunteer engagement (+58 per cent) and public awareness activity (+70 per cent) attest to the scale of activity to get people of the catchment involved in the water quality agenda.

Schools' Activity and Skills Training add to the River Basin Management and Water Quality knowledge. Increased levels of Schools Activity (+60 per cent) and Skills Training (+70 per cent) reflect positive levels of engagement. Notably, the highest increases in activity related to Skills Training and Public Awareness and Promotion.

3.1.3 Water Quality Activity

While the Resilience Project funding primarily focuses on developing a viable grassroots engagement model, water quality improvement is the purpose of that engagement.

Catchment Improvement Works show average increased activity levels of +60 per cent and +40 per cent for site surveys. As an important outcome, it is encouraging to see the increase in activity while noting that the ultimate improvement in the water quality agenda will require rigorous assessment of all inputs, even if this is a medium-term project.

3.2 Resilience Funding: Unique Capacities

The Unique Capacities considered relatively unique to the Community Catchment Management Groups are identified below.

3.2.1 Community Engagement: *The Last Mile*

In the words of several agency respondents, Rivers Trusts or Catchment Management Groups have the inherent capacity to operate to *'the last mile'* where agencies do not have the same scope for local engagement. The broader focus of the Catchment Management Groups is useful as it can help to draw together the narrower remits of different agencies.

The potential for *'deep'* community engagement has been a significant outcome of the funding resulting in a significant level of buy-in among the farming community. Similarly, businesses, families and groups in catchment towns and villages show renewed interest in their watercourses. Here increased activity has brought the community closer to the everyday life and meaning of the river.

Grassroots-led community catchment management is uniquely placed to generate effective activities and solutions for the farming community. However, the farming community can be subject to tension with different authorities and agencies that have jurisdiction over place and practice. The degree of contact and water quality activity with the farming community has been significant in both pilot areas. For this reason, the natural flood management activity with its 46 small-scale amelioration measures was facilitated to proceed. Similarly, invasive species control and natural river bank retention schemes have proved successful for the participating farmers since they solve pressing issues. Even measures such as water sampling require the goodwill of farmers for access to river banks.

3.2.2 Agency, Interagency and Community Crossover

The community is the local common denominator between agencies, local authorities and government departments mandated to operate national, regional, and local policies.

An empowered, independent, grassroots community representative, be they individuals or groups, can effectively mediate as an honest broker between agents of the State and local groups and individuals. This space has no other occupant and has proved critical in facilitating contact and action among otherwise hard-to-reach groups.

3.2.3 Volunteer Choice

The Resilience Pilot Project funding model, the Project Officer appointment, and the resultant greater technical capacity for complex project work can be key factors in the decision of volunteers to engage by contributing their own time and resources. Projects with greater potential, duration and relevant outcomes will be more enticing for volunteers. The Pilot Project investment is seen to help the Trusts to attract more skilled volunteers. The example was given in relation to the development of a readily transferable Transition Year Module delivered as part of the school curriculum.

3.2.4 Local Small Scale Project Work (not viable at commercial contract level)

It is generally acknowledged that the scale of riparian, bank retention and small-scale in-stream works throughout the country cannot rely on public funding. The skilled voluntary capacity of Catchment Management Groups represents a powerful input into small-scale projects beyond the capacities of local authorities and the commercial contracting sector. Several examples relating to the 2017 flood incident on Inishowen peninsula illustrate the scope of this unique capacity.

Crana River Snarl-Up Local Solutions: This real-world example came to light in the interview process and related to dealing with downstream impacts of the 2017 flooding incident on one of the tributary rivers adjacent to Buncrana. Community concern about an unsightly and potentially damaging snarl-up of debris, including uprooted trees was brought to the local authority's attention. Subsequently, a public tendering process to deal with the issue realised several proposals, the lowest priced of which was €150,000. Unfortunately, the necessary resources were not available to the local authority.

In this circumstance, Inishowen Rivers Trust was invited to assess the project and bid if the group considered it could complete the work. A price of €12,000 was submitted, and the work was completed using trained, skilled personnel.

From this example, it is not difficult to see the value of local voluntary work in the equivalent of an enhanced *'Tidy Towns'* style of project. The project would not have been considered cost-effective in terms of the public tendering process without the voluntary component. In this example, the cost saving (8 per cent of the lowest commercial bid price) amounted to €138,000 saving for a project that would ultimately have had to be remedied in the event of another flood event. The savings from this single project are almost equal to the three-year investment through public funding for one Resilience Pilot Project.

3.2.5 Scale and Capacity

The impact of the Pilot Project funding has made the Rivers Trusts more meaningful and broadened their agenda to address local needs. This is considered important, given that individual agencies have relatively narrow mandates.

Capacity

Several agencies note that the Rivers Trusts brought much more to the agency than could be reciprocated. For example, agencies could piggyback on Rivers Trusts' events and broaden the awareness of their work with a broader audience. This wider audience extended beyond the agency's general target group. Similarly, agencies sometimes receive calls for assistance that go beyond their remit. In this circumstance, having a local body for referral, instead of *'dumping'* it on another agency, is more satisfactory.

Rivers Trusts can also mediate for the community, such as a safe place to report suspicious activity without individuals' *'squealing'* directly to agencies. Additionally, it has been shown that Rivers Trusts can operate between agencies to assist in coordinating complex projects requiring a multi-agency response.

Scale

According to the agencies and the trusts themselves, the Resilience Pilot Project was very important in increasing the scale of projects that could be undertaken and more importantly, the

Trusts could assume a leadership and coordinating role in many projects since they were well placed to facilitate interagency coordination.

The Recreation Study on the Maigue would not have been resourced to a voluntary group, given that the administration and reporting processes were considered too comprehensive. Similarly, the industry training that has been part-funded by local companies was a tender that had to be delivered by a legal entity.

Although much of the natural flood management was delivered by a largely voluntary Trust, it was acknowledged that the level of engagement required was unsustainable in terms of the personal cost of volunteering provided by individual volunteers and board members.

3.2.5 Networks: ICatch

An unanticipated benefit of the Pilot Project has been the development of the ICatch network. It came about through the fund awareness of the Inishowen Rivers Trust Project Officer and the subsequent funding and administration of the initiative through the Maigue Rivers Trust. As a result, eight additional partners were engaged, and the network was opened to other Trust areas.

Most network sessions were held online, and many involved governance issues, resulting in the members considering that the network initiative was a crucial support platform. A measure of the success of ICatch is that Rivers Trust Ireland has now taken on the coordination of the network with funding provided by LAWPRO.

4 Community-Led Governance: Current Context and Recommendations

A report² by An Fóram Uisce points out that water governance is simultaneously global and local (2019: P3). Ireland may be said to be well set up in terms of global structures and, at the same time, still searching for appropriate community-level governance structures. There is also the prospect of what Crowe³ terms '*multiple elements*' (2021: P7), where the community-level water agenda shares space with agendas concerning Climate Change, Air Quality, Nature (Biodiversity) and economic and social sustainability. Individual and community wellbeing has also been noted in the consultations in this regard.

One of Crowe's recommendations seeks 'collaborative implementation and role clarity' (2021: P7). In a 'crowded' local space where community-level governance structures compete, it is tempting to envision the river catchment area as a clear reference place where the 'multiple elements' relate. A healthy river catchment can become a clear, easily understood shared space (integrated catchment management) into which less clear and more contested themes (climate change, biodiversity) can be more easily translated.

An EPA case study report (2021)⁴ anticipates the Resilience Pilot Project while noting that the '*current model of financial support for catchment groups is inadequate, with little support for personnel costs and a reliance on project funding*'. This echoes findings from this evaluation and, if for different reasons concerning sliding scale funding, a further assertion that if 'maintained in its current scale and form, the funding approach will impede continued activity and growth of trusts or catchment groups' (2021: P7).

LAWPRO, described in Crowe's Review as the '*engine room*' (2021: P9) of implementation, oversees Project Resilience as one of what might be termed '*experimental governance models*'⁵ in community governance. Community Catchment Water For a, another of these models that LAWPRO is set to launch as it seeks 'further building the capacity to work with groups such as farmers and local communities to change behaviour and attitudes, particularly building capacity' (Boyle 2022: P ix) in what might be termed the last mile.

An internal discussion document on Community Water Fora, sent to the consultants for reference is explored (Appendix A6) within a framework of community led governance approaches that includes the Resilience active involvement (WFD) model. Such a framework may prove helpful in terms of '*experimental governance*' and the vexed question of applying appropriate support models within the context of varied community capacity and commitment.

The community context of River Basin Management Planning has seen much research evolve from the initial Water Framework Directive where community engagement was presented in terms of: -

1. Community Consultation.
2. Active Community Involvement.

² Bresnihan and Hesse. Fóram Uisce - Desk Study on Public Engagement in Water Governance. 2019.

³ Crowe M. Review of Local Authorities Water Programme. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. 2021.

⁴ O'Conneide M, O'Riordan J. Annotated EPA case studies on Local Catchment Groups in Ireland 2018-2020. EPA. 2021.

⁵ Boyle R. et al. Using an Experimental Governance Lens to Examine Governance of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021. EPA 2022.

The research referenced in previous chapters expands on and advocates Active Community Involvement, broadly in line with National and EU policy direction. Based on the evidence provided and the largely successful evaluation outcomes for the Resilience Project this evaluation positively confirms the appropriateness for core funding to underpin 'active involvement' models, in this case Rivers Trusts. However, the sliding-scale funding model used to seed fund towards independent sustainability (beyond exchequer funding) was almost universally regarded as inappropriate and unfit-for-purpose.

Therefore while it is important to note that the Active Involvement Model upon which the Resilience Pilot Project investment initiative was predicated has been successful, the sliding-scale funding model assuming core funding through local public, corporate or membership funding should be discontinued (based on the experience of Inishowen and Maigne Rivers Trusts).

In reality, the absence of any comparator sliding-scale funding models in national public funding mechanisms perhaps reflects its challenges. In Ireland, community sector grant funding is generally directed through programme or project funding.

If the Water Framework Directive narrative is to be followed and Active Involvement is seen as the best approach for catchment-level management, then the Resilience Pilot Project Model has provided clear evidence of its effectiveness in the two Rivers Trusts observed.

It should further be noted that in the context of engagement and operations restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 public health measures during 2020 and 2021, the achievements of the Pilot Projects are even more impressive.

4.1 What should happen now?

In the public consultation document issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the significant water quality issues that formed the basis for the consultation phase for the third RBMP are used to frame the consultation process. The public consultation document notes on page 22 that: *'in Ireland, we are fortunate in having a large number of groups, communities and individuals who are actively engaged in the river basin management planning process and are interested in improving water quality. The government wishes to nurture and grow that active engagement'*.

The investment of core funding in the Resilience Project may be said to be an initial *'pilot' project* in terms of nurturing and growth identified above. This evaluation is satisfied that the pilot projects chosen have been an unqualified success in generating project activity, replacement funds and viable collaborative engagements with local authorities and agencies.

The recommendations are drawn from the assessment above, but also reference recent relevant assessments. In particular the Consultants are drawn to the broad principles relating to the future direction and role of LAWPRO (Crowe:2022) with particular reference to:

Role clarity and Collaborative Implementation (R6, R7) –

Multiple benefits (R2)

Integrated Catchment Approach and Plans (R1, R2, R4)

In some cases the recommendations extend the principles beyond the scope (LAWPRO review) of Crowe's work; it is important however that future developments reflect cumulative learning and guidance, and in this respect the spirit of the broad principles apply.

Similarly, the recommendations reference work by O’Cinneide et al and in particular the argument that ‘community water structures are not on a sustainable footing’ and a call for a blend of ‘core and project funding support’ for catchment groups (EPA:2021, p7).

4.2 Observations

To summarise In terms of core funding and the sliding-scale funding model, the following characteristics have been identified: -

1. Inishowen and Maigue Rivers Trusts achieved replacement funding objectives, although these funds related generally to successful and, in some cases nationally significant projects and, collaborative networks and partnerships focussed on achieving water quality aims. The achievements of both projects are particularly commendable given that the project funding period coincided with the Covid public health emergency.
2. In common with most community-level funding mechanisms, core funding remains elusive in the Irish context. The sliding-scale funding model, for which it appears that there is no other national comparator, is inappropriate and risks undercutting the commitment and dedication of largely voluntary groups. In addition, it has been identified that the funding model tends to deflect attention away from the water quality agenda.
3. Core funding has successfully drawn the attention of both boards to the issue of sustainability and financial planning. In addition, it has facilitated corporate-level engagement to limited financial effect. There is evidence that it has also leveraged significant in-kind and collaborative efforts.
4. It appears incompatible to expect individual Trusts to charge membership and seek voluntary inputs from the least funded element of the water governance structure. It is inappropriate and risks excluding local activists. Voluntary contribution by donation, widely accepted in the community sector, may be more appropriate.
5. The generation of corporate sponsorship cannot replace the core funding needed to operate the Trusts, particularly in rural areas. The business community is generally responsive but will tend to engage at a project level.

This assessment concludes that whilst core funding has been successful, the sliding-scale fund distribution model has not worked. In relation to the somewhat limited sustainability-oriented contract requirements and the broader water quality community engagement, education and water quality objectives as required by the implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

In terms of the ‘active involvement’ approach anticipated in the draft National River Basin Management Plan, the consultants are of the view that within a new national approach to public participation, the Pilot catchment areas together with pre-application catchment areas (3-5) should immediately be funded to extend the WFD water quality agenda into communities.

4.3 Recommendations

The consultants concur with the recommendation from An Foram Uisce. and echoed in most of the research featuring in this report that adequate ‘*structures and resources*’, including personnel, must be put in place from the outset. These resources must be provided based on contracts that set appropriate, realistic targets and standard reporting requirements. Furthermore, a formative evaluation mechanism should be implemented to observe the progress within an overall contracting framework.

4.3.1 Immediate Measures

Recommendation R1 – Interim Funding (urgent)

Core funding will end in May 2023 for Inishowen and Mague Rivers Trust. It is clear from this assessment that the successes achieved under challenging circumstances by both Trusts has put in place an effective local water quality project infrastructure that merits continued support.

For an interim period of one year from the date of contracting, core funding should be made available to both Trusts to continue the work achieved. This will enable core funding to be maintained while further consideration is given to a more appropriate core or programme funding mechanism.

Interim funding support should also be extended to other funding-ready catchment groups (3-5) that demonstrate similar (pre-application) structures and processes for which Inishowen and the Mague were chosen for the pilot.

Interim Funding will distribute an interim budget to the sector so that Core Funding can be maintained to fund core staff and contribute to overhead, administrative and project costs.

Interim support is intended to bridge an initial gap between the end of Project Resilience Funding (30 May 2023) for the two projects that have successfully used the fund to put in place an effective community level infrastructure to address the broader water quality agenda, and to support authority and agency initiatives (County Councils, Inland Fisheries, Teagasc, Irish Water, OPW).

In addition to standard contracting clauses between the State and the community and voluntary sector, the contracts should include as objectives, or clauses (if agreed targets, outputs, outcomes can be put in place) relating to the added capacities noted in this review, that pertain to community catchment management effectiveness:

Community Engagement: *The Last Mile*

Grassroots-led community catchment management is uniquely placed to generate effective activities to operate to '*the last mile*' where agencies do not have the same scope for local engagement. The contract should stipulate the local actors (particularly the farming community) with whom the Trust should seek to engage in driving the water quality agenda at community level.

Agency, Interagency and Community Crossover

Community is the local common denominator between agencies, local authorities and government departments mandated to operate national, regional, and local policies. The contract should reference ongoing contracts, culminating in shared initiatives and where relevant project funding or in-kind resourcing,

Volunteer Engagement

For the Trusts, Project Officer appointment, and the resultant greater technical capacity for complex project work proved to be key factors in attracting skilled volunteers. The contract should reference direct engagement with volunteers or indirect focused engagement through existing groups such as Tidy Towns and community councils.

Local Small Scale Project Work (not viable at commercial contract level)

The skilled voluntary capacity of Catchment Management Groups represents a powerful input into small-scale projects beyond the capacities of local authorities and the commercial contracting sector. It is the reason that many groups formed and activity in this area should be a feature of the contract.

Skills / Professional Development - ICATCH Network:

Membership and engagement with the ICatch network should be mandated as part of the contract to ensure that local groups make use of the considerable peer and technical support and expertise made available through the ICatch network.

4.3.2 General Measures

Recommendation R2 - Appropriate Catchment Scale Support Models

The sliding-scale funding model should be discontinued and in terms of replacement, it will be necessary to undertake research into alternative programme funding contracting models.

Programme funding (Family Resource Centres) has already been referenced as a multi-year, core staff funding model, structural elements of which may transfer to a future model.

Similarly, the Community Services Programme (Pobal, Department of Rural and Community Development) has a framework and structural elements that have relevance when considering a future model. In particular, it has a manager and targeted (supported) staff. The strands currently being supported (Enterprise, Disability, Community Infrastructure) are not directly relevant but the essential elements (manager and staff, multi-year funding) can transfer.

Among other options a shared funding model integrating '*multiple elements*' (Crowe: 2021), encompassing climate action, biodiversity, air quality and other related policy areas should be explored. The Consultants note that Strategy development is currently (May, 2023) underway for all Leader programmes in the country and that Leader has supported the work of both Trusts.

It is important to review relevant models, nationally and within the EU, with a few to informing sustainable funding models for implementing the Water Framework Directive and National (Local) River Basin Management Plan at community level.

Recommendation R3 - Water Quality

The evaluation established that the core funding investment contributed by the state generated a return on investment, mainly in the form of project funding of more than two euro per euro invested. These funds generated local and nationally significant projects (eg. curriculum development, natural flood management measures) projects.

Further research would be beneficial on the interaction between state-funded investment as a catalyst for project funding and its relationship to changes in catchment-level water quality improvement. The key determinant is likely to depend to a significant degree on skilled voluntary inputs. Therefore, particular attention should be paid to defining the optimum dynamic that sees an adequately funded core capable of supporting an inclusive, committed voluntary team.

Recommendation R4 - Optimum Community Catchment Governance Models

The two pilot projects were successful in using different local governance models. Maigne Rivers Trust operates a representative model at the board level, while the Inishowen governance model

is built on the vision and commitment of an inspirational volunteer. Both have operated effectively in very trying circumstances, and it would be necessary for broader application of the funding that communities have access to research on the different dynamics inherent to both models. Each approach implemented by the pilot Trusts appears to have successfully met the local needs, and specific research could help refine the dynamic that has worked in each area and at the same time explore the most sustainable governance model to coordinate catchment management water quality improvement at community level.

Recommendation R5 - Community Capacity

Variable capacity-building responses will be required to respond to the competence levels within community catchment area voluntary structures. The capacity building will likely include the governance, management, operations, and representation themes necessary for effective community-level river basin management.

Research on appropriate models that might better support future Resilience Pilot Projects should consider the potential for community-level realisation of climate action goals, to which the river basin geography might assist in creating a more precise focus amidst the contributory themes, including climate change, carbon reduction and biodiversity.

Recommendation R6 - Rivers Trust Ireland

The role of Rivers Trust Ireland in Project Resilience has been anecdotally reported as being positive. The role of a contracting intermediary between LAWPRO and future funded programmes should be explored. This could be started by assessing in greater detail the work of the national office in relation to the Resilience Project on the basis of the contract. Clarity of function between LAWPRO (intermediary organisation disbursing state/ department funding) and a specific project intermediary (RTI) should be examined to optimise the support structures available to projects.

Recommendation R7 - I Catch Network

The I-Catch network has evolved over the course of the Resilience Project as a real success story connecting the funded Trusts with a range of projects throughout the Country. Originally funded through the Wheel as the community and voluntary equivalent of the industry led Skillnets programme, continued support for ICATCH was assumed by LAWPRO based on the success of the initial programme. It is now worth exploring how the I Catch network is to evolve in terms of structure and scope. A key question in this regard is the relationship with the significant technical expertise available through LAWPRO in the form of Community Water Officer and Catchment Scientist positions.

Appendices

A1 Concept Note

The following Concept Note was published by the Rivers Trust in 2018.

A1.1 Introduction

This concept note sets out the need, proposal, outcomes and budget for a pilot project that will support two recently established rivers Trusts in Ireland through the first few years of operation, as they transform from volunteer-led fledgling organisations to sustainable charities capable of securing and delivering catchment-scale projects. These first few years are critical to the long-term survival and sustainability of rivers Trusts, allowing them to fulfil their charitable purpose for wide public benefit.

Map 1 - Rivers Trusts in Ireland



There are currently ten rivers Trusts in Ireland (Bandon Rivers Trust, Blackwater Rivers Trust, East Wicklow Rivers Trust, Galway Waterways Foundation, Inishowen Rivers Trust, Maigue Rivers Trust, Nore Rivers Trust, River Moy Trust, Slaney Rivers Trust, Waterville Lakes and Rivers Trust) that are established to conserve, protect and rehabilitate the rivers, streams and watercourses, within their respective catchments, and to educate the wider public on the importance of a healthy freshwater environment.

A1.2 Need

All Rivers Trusts start as a group of enthusiastic and dedicated individuals who share a common concern and vision for their local water environment. With guidance from The Rivers Trust, they embark on a journey to identify others who share their concern and vision, establish a 'board', register the organisation as a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) with the Companies Registration Office (CRO) and then register for charitable status with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA).

They form a charity because it enables the rivers Trust to display its public benefit credentials, helping it become a credible organisation worthy of attracting funds. Indeed, many funding streams are limited to, or directed towards, charitable organisations. Furthermore, charities are well placed to attract public funding grants; they are exempt from income/corporation tax, therefore being able to make full use of their income, and can take advantage of tax concessions such as on donations made under Gift Aid.

Whilst the benefits of establishing a CLG with charitable status are significant in terms of the Trust being able to fulfil its purpose, the journey to achieving this and the operation of the Trust in the immediate period after registration is fraught with obstacles that challenge the very survival of the Trust, at a time in its existence that could arguably be described as its most vulnerable.

1. There is a significant lag between the Trust achieving CLG status and charitable status due to a 9-12 month waiting list for registration with the Charities Regulatory Authority. During this time, the CRA is advising that the Trust does not operate as a charity, which limits the Trust's ability to secure funding for costs it is already incurring, including insurance, accounting, travel, subsistence and overhead expenses. The result is that, in some cases, volunteer board members are covering these expenses out of their own pockets, making unsecured loans to the Trusts from personal funds, or the Trust is relying on the limited grant being made available through LAWPRO (currently €1,500 pa), all of which are unsustainable.

2. Once the charitable status is awarded, the Trust needs to secure project funding to cover all the above ongoing expenses, plus deliver project outputs that fulfil its charitable objects. However, securing this funding falls to the volunteer board, who must find the time to commit to often lengthy and detailed funding applications, requiring many hours/days/weeks of evidence trawling and interpretation, project budgeting and form completion, with no guarantee of success. The result is that the Trust's board struggles to commit the time, resources and expertise required to secure this funding. As a result, it delivers small-scale projects with limited impact and in a voluntary capacity. This ongoing delivery risks 'burn-out' of the board's energy and enthusiasm.
3. The Trusts are beginning to have some success in securing funding for capital costs to deliver charitable objectives. However, they find it hard to identify funding that covers staff costs. For example, Inishowen RT has been successful in securing over €60k in 2018 to deliver a Natural Flood Management Project and training for volunteers in river conservation and management, but there is no funding for a person to deliver the outputs, so it must be done by the Board in a voluntary capacity. Capital projects are time-hungry in terms of not just delivery but the initial procurement/tendering of services, project financial control and project management of contractors/supplier thereafter. The result of not being able to secure funding for a project officer to deliver project outputs is that the Trusts struggle to deliver the capital projects and with a lack of available staff resource, funding is turned down or not applied for in the first place (e.g. LEADER funding across Ireland is struggling to spend any money under Biodiversity/Environment due to that fact that staff costs are not eligible - Capital only. There is a real risk that this funding will be diverted to other areas resulting in missed opportunity for investment in the environment and for rivers Trusts to deliver large-scale projects).
4. Projects are rarely fully funded by one funder and an element of match funding is always required. Given all of the issues explained above, the Board struggle to then commit the time and energy to raise the required match funding for projects.

Rivers Trusts need core support in these critical and vulnerable first few years of existence to be able to build capacity, confidence and credibility, enabling them to become more sustainable into the future. This will not just benefit the Trusts but also Government in achieving its Water Framework and Habitats Directives objectives as rivers Trusts deliver projects such as water quality and habitat improvement and catchment-scale interventions that benefit the water environment.

A1.3 Proposal

The '*Resilience Pilot Project*' will provide funding to two newly established rivers Trusts, Inishowen Rivers Trust <http://inishowenriversTrust.com/> and Mague Rivers Trust <http://maigueriversTrust.ie/> , to each employ a Project Officer for a period of three years. The Trusts are both newly formed, in a position to deliver this pilot project and represent different parts of the country economically, socially and environmentally.

A dedicated Project Officer will be able to submit more funding applications and of a higher standard than volunteers. This has the potential to draw significantly more funding into the area of water quality management that might otherwise be the case. There are numerous relevant funding streams available that are under subscribed by groups active in the environmental and particular water quality sphere. LEADER is a particular case in point: the environmental theme is still significantly undersubscribed in this round.

Other funding streams which would become more accessible to rivers Trusts with dedicated support include the following: -

- LIFE.
- National Strategy for Angling Development.
- Heritage Council.
- Local Agenda 21.
- Community Windfarm Fund.
- Benevolent funds.
- The Ireland Fund.
- Funding via the diaspora.

.....*To name but a few.*

A dedicated Project Officer in each Trust will also generate other benefits including: -

- Better engagement with stakeholders.
- Higher organisational profile.
- More professional management.
- Better governance.
- Achieve more faster.

During the three-year funded pilot project, the Project Officers will: -

- Undertake the general coordination of each Trusts core business activities, including: -
 - Organising Board meetings.
 - Prepare project management accounts.
 - Liaise with company secretary.
 - Manage the member networks and stakeholder groups of the Trust.
 - Manage the Trusts website and social media.
 - Implement the Charities Code of Governance and other Trust policies.
 - Generally, progress the work of the Trust.
- Prepare a Business Plan in year 1, to be reviewed in years 2 and 3.
- Prepare a Cash Flow forecast in each year.
- Dedicated staff time to projects that have secured Capital funds for delivery in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.
- Submit at least two funding applications per year for projects that deliver the Trusts charitable objectives and secure funds to sustain the Project Officer post.
- Identify opportunities for local companies to support the work of each Trust through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sponsorship.
- Meet with at least one local company each year to discuss CSR sponsorship.
- Develop a Corporate Sponsorship Package for the Trust.
- Develop a Membership Package for the Trust.
- Organise two volunteer events per year.
- Organise two public engagement events per year to raise the profile of the Trust.
- Issue two press releases per year to raise the profile of the Trust.
- Cooperation between the Project Officers in each Trust sharing best practice.
- Liaise with LAWPRO's Community Water Officer and Catchment Science lead in the Trust's respective catchment areas.
- Liaise with the All-Ireland Director on progress and make information available in a timely fashion to allow reporting to the Department.

This pilot project will allow us to explore what benefits initial support for dedicated staff resources, in a newly formed rivers Trust, can generate in terms of capacity building and sustainability; allowing the Trusts to speed up their development and get on with delivering mutually beneficial outcomes for both local communities and government agencies in the protection and improvement of our rivers.

A1.4 Outputs and Measures of Success

Output	Measure of Output Success	Impact Indicator
Good governance of each Trust in line with the expectations of the Companies Registration Office and the Charities Regulatory Authority.	The Trust and its Board operate Good Governance as a matter of best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of Board meetings held each year. The number of policies produced. The record of policy updates. The Trust is compliant with CRO and CRA good governance expectations. The Trust adopts best practice, even if not a regulatory requirement. Feedback from the Board.
A Business Plan for each Trust.	A Business Plan is Produced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Business Plan is adopted by the Board. The plan is review annually by the Board.
Annual Cash Flow Forecasting.	A Cash Flow Forecast is Produced.	The Cash Flow is reviewed annually.
Project Officer Time on Delivery of Capital Projects in 2019, 2020 and 2021.	Time is spent delivering projects that help the Trust to meet its public benefit objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of hours of staff time committed as match funding. The amount of additional funding secured/invested from other sources.
Two funding applications per year for each Trust to make the Trust and the Project Officer posts more sustainable.	At least two funding bids per annum are submitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of successful bids. The amount of new funding secured. Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids are used to make future bids stronger.
A register of local companies with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies or commitments in each Trust area.	On online search of local companies is completed to identify CSR commitments.	The number of companies on the register.
	A register of companies with CSR is compiled and maintained.	The number of companies on the register.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	A meeting with at least one company to discuss CSR is held each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A meeting with at least one company to discuss CSR is held each year. The number of meeting with companies secured each year. The number of companies offering support the Trust. The amount of funding generated through CSR.
A Corporate Sponsorship Package for each Trust.	A Corporate Sponsorship Package is produced for each Trust.	The number of companies to which the package is disseminated.
A Membership Package for each Trust.	A Membership Package is produced for each Trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of membership packs disseminated each year. The number of members obtained each year. The amount of income generated each year through membership.
Two volunteer events per year held by each Trust to raise the profile of the Trust and attract membership.	At least two volunteer events are held each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of events held. The number of participants at each event. The number of volunteers in each year. The total amount of time volunteered. The value of the time volunteered as time in kind. Feedback from volunteers.
Two public engagement events per year to raise the profile of the Trust and attract membership.	At least two public engagement events are held each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of events held. The number of people engaged at each event. The number of people engaged in each year. Feedback from those engaged.

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Output	Measure of Output Success	Impact Indicator
Two press releases per year to raise the profile of the Trust and promote the support given by the Department.	At least two press releases each year are issued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of press releases issued. The number of press releases published. Reach – readership figures for each press release.
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Project officers in each Trust are in regular contact with each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of meetings. Number of cooperative actions. Record of knowledge transfer.
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts and LAWPRO.	Project Officer in each Trust are in regular contact with LAWPRO's Community Water Officer and Catchment Science lead for their catchment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of meetings. Number of cooperative actions. Record of knowledge transfer.
Annual reporting to the Department on progress in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced for the Department on the outputs and impact indicators.	The value of making an initial investment in a rivers Trust is realised through the Trust becoming more sustainable.

A1.5 Budget

It is proposed that the budget to support the role of the Project Officers and associated costs would deplete over the three-year life of the pilot project. In year 1 (2019-20), 100% of the funding for the posts would come from the Department, reducing to 66% in year 2 (2020-21) and 33% in year 3 (2021-22).⁶ This provides an at-cost level of funding for each Trust to employ a project officer and deliver the outputs in each year, with the expectation that each Trust will have to seek additional funding from other sources to sustain the Project Officer post, as well as further develop the outputs e.g. volunteer events/engagement events. It also provides a reasonable and planned exit strategy for the Department from this pilot project.

The project costs are as follows:

	Year		
	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Project Officer Costs	€54,000	€36,709	€18,905
Overheads	€6,980	€4,607	€2,303
Travel and Subsistence	€6,000	€3,960	€1,980
Recruitment Cost	€1,500	€0	€0
Capital Start-up Costs	€3,900	€0	€0
Promotion/Comms Costs	€5,000	€1,000	€1,000
Total annual cost per Trust	€77,380	€46,276	€24,189
Funding Request ⁷	€154,760	€92,552	€48,377

Inishowen Rivers Trust and Maigne Rivers Trust are both not-for-profit charities and are not VAT registered. The funds would be held, managed and utilised by each rivers Trust (Inishowen and Maigne) and not by The Rivers Trust. All funds will be ringfenced as restricted funding by each Trust for their intended purpose.

The Rivers Trust will provide support to both Trusts through the All-Ireland Director post funded by DHPLG through LAWPRO.

The Rivers Trust will collate and report information back to the Department on progress.

Acknowledgement of DHPLG funding and support will be made in line with the Conditions of Grant by both The Rivers Trust, Inishowen Rivers Trust and Maigne Rivers Trust.

⁶ 3% increase on salary, overhead and travel and subsistence costs has been factored in to allow for inflationary rises.

⁷ Funding request from the DHPLG, depleting over three years.

A2 Check on Delivery

Each calendar quarter, Inishowen and Maigue Rivers Trusts were required to complete a report on progress with respect to each of the agreed deliverables of the project. The following provides a summary of the progress and variances reported by quarter.

A2.1 Q2 to Q3:2020

Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Good governance in line with CRO and CRA.	Board meetings convened.	Two.	'Broadly on track'.
	Policies produced.	Seventeen.	Staff handbook in preparation.
	Record of policy updates.	Complete.	Commencing policy creation. Priority: Child Protection Policy and Financial Procedures.
	CRO and CRA compliance.	Compliant.	Project Officer training to be completed by the end of the October 2020.
	Best practice adoption.	Complete.	Complete.
	Board feedback.	Complete	'Broadly on track'.
Business Plan.	Business Plan adopted.	Not started.	'Broadly on track'.
	Business Plan reviewed annually.	Not started.	'Broadly on track'.
Annual cashflow forecasting.	Cashflow annual review.	Not started.	'Broadly on track'.
Project Officer: delivery of capital projects.	Staff hours committed to match funding effort.	Not reported in budget. Approximately 400 hours.	Not stated.
Funding applications submitted.	Successful bids.	Three.	'Broadly on track'.
	Amount of new funding secured.	€9,142	Not started.
	Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids.	Not stated.	Not started.
Compilation of a register of local companies with CSR strategies or commitments.	Number of companies on register.	Not started.	Not started.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	Number of meetings with companies.		
	Number of companies offering support.	Not started.	Not started.
	Amount of funding generated through CSR.		
Corporate sponsorship package.	Number of companies engaged.	Not started.	Not started.
Membership package.	Number of membership packs.	Forty.	Not started.
	Number of members obtained.	Five	Not started.
	Amount of income generated.	None.	Not started.

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Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Two volunteer events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Three.	'Broadly on track'. Events postponed due to Covid-19 public health constraints.
	Number of event participants.	Ten to forty-three.	
	Number of volunteers.	Sixteen.	Not started.
	Amount of time volunteered (hours).	332.	
	Value of time volunteered (€15/hour).	€4,980.	
Volunteer feedback.	'Enjoyable events. Would like to get involved with further projects.'		
Two public engagement events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Three.	'Broadly on track'. Events postponed due to Covid-19 public health constraints.
	Number of event participants at each event.	Eighteen to twenty-four.	
	Number of participants engaged per annum.	Sixty.	
	Participant feedback.	'Interesting and informative.'	
Two press releases per year to raise profile and promote the support given by DHLGH.	Number of press releases issued.	Three.	Not started.
	Number of press releases published.	Five.	
	Readership figures for each press release.	4,000 to 5,000.	
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Number of meetings.	Ten.	
	Number of cooperative actions.	Two.	
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Zoom meeting records.	
Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Number of meetings.	Sixteen.	One.
	Number of cooperative actions.	Three.	Not started.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Not started.
Annual reporting to DHLGH in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced.		

A2.2 Q3: 2020 Maigne Rivers Trust

Output	Key Indicator	Maigne Rivers Trust	Detail
Good governance in line with CRO and CRA.	Board meetings convened.	'Broadly on track'.	Annual General meeting and Board membership rotation.
	Policies produced.	'Broadly on track'.	Staff Handbook approved. Human Resource policies approved.
	Record of policy updates.	'Broadly on track'.	Policies currently being developed: - 1. Child and vulnerable adult safeguarding. 2. Health and Safety. 3. Financial Procedures.
	CRO and CRA compliance.	'Broadly on track'.	CRA Good Governance compliance training completed. CRO Annual Returns lodged.
	Best practice adoption.	'Broadly on track'.	Covid-19 compliance.
	Board feedback.	'Broadly on track'.	
Business Plan.	Business Plan adopted.	'Broadly on track'.	Commencement of planning for Business Plan 2021.
	Business Plan reviewed annually.	'Broadly on track'.	
Annual cashflow forecasting.	Cashflow annual review.	'Broadly on track'.	Reviewed at Annual General Meeting.
Project Officer: delivery of capital projects.	Staff hours committed to match funding effort.	Not started.	
Funding applications submitted.	Successful bids.	'Broadly on track'.	Training Links proposal to iCatch (€18,300).
	Amount of new funding secured.	'Broadly on track'.	Preparatory LEADER applications for a Crayfish Ark, a Biosecurity, and a Citizen Science Project.
	Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids.	'Broadly on track'.	
Compilation of a register of local companies with CSR strategies or commitments.	Number of companies on register.	'Broadly on track'.	Commenced database.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	Number of meetings with companies.	'Broadly on track'.	Contact with two companies.
	Number of companies offering support.		
	Amount of funding generated through CSR.		
Corporate sponsorship package.	Number of companies engaged.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
Membership package.	Number of membership packs.	Not started.	
	Number of members obtained.		
	Amount of income generated.		

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Output	Key Indicator	Maigue Rivers Trust	Detail
Two volunteer events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Not started.	
	Number of event participants.	Not started.	
	Number of volunteers.	Not started.	
	Amount of time volunteered (hours).	Not started.	
	Value of time volunteered (€15/hour).	Not started.	
	Volunteer feedback.	Not started.	
Two public engagement events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	'Broadly on track'.	1. Nature Walk with a local Traveller Women's' Support Group. 2. Citizen Science Day.
	Number of event participants at each event.	'Broadly on track'.	Nature Walk: twelve participants. Citizen Science Day: five participants.
	Number of participants engaged per annum.	'Broadly on track'.	Seventeen.
	Participant feedback.	'Broadly on track'.	Satisfaction.
Two press releases per year to raise profile and promote the support given by DHLGH.	Number of press releases issued.	'Broadly on track'.	Local radio interview.
	Number of press releases published.	Not started.	
	Readership figures for each press release.	Not started.	
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Number of meetings.	'Broadly on track'.	Weekly contact.
	Number of cooperative actions.	'Broadly on track'.	iCatch Training Links Project submission.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	'Broadly on track'.	
Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Number of meetings.	'Broadly on track'.	Email with LAWPRO Community Officer. Zoom with LAWPRO.
	Number of cooperative actions.	'Broadly on track'.	Support sought for Biosecurity Project.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	'Broadly on track'.	Meeting record.
Annual reporting to DHLGH in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced.	'Broadly on track'.	

A2.3 Q4: 2020

Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Good governance in line with CRO and CRA.	Board meetings convened.	26 th October 2020. 9 th December 2020.	October, November, and December 2020.
	Policies produced.	Seventeen policies and procedural documents in place.	1. Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy. 2. Health and Safety Policy. 3. Covid-19 Policy.
	Record of policy updates.	Financial Policy.	Policies work in progress: - 1. Financial Procedures. 2. Conflict of Interest. 3. Communications.
	CRO and CRA compliance.	Complete.	Complete.
	Best practice adoption.	'Broadly on track'.	'Broadly on track'.
	Board feedback.	Complete.	'Broadly on track'.
	Business Plan.	Business Plan adopted. Business Plan reviewed annually.	'Broadly on track'. 'Broadly on track'.
Annual cashflow forecasting.	Cashflow annual review.	Complete.	'Broadly on track'.
Project Officer: delivery of capital projects.	Staff hours committed to match funding effort.	Approximately 556 hours.	'Broadly on track'.
Funding applications submitted.	Successful bids.	Seven.	Two.
	Amount of new funding secured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iCatch Project: €17,938. • Innovate Together: €59,491. • Seeds of Change: €490. • OPW - NWRM: €34,000. • DCC CEAF: €500. • LAWPRO Restoration Project: €5,000 • LEADER NWRM: €94,500. 	IFI Angling for All: €4,850. Crayfish Ark (LEADER): €16,605.
	Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids.	All bids successful.	Be project-ready when calls open.
Compilation of a register of local companies with CSR strategies or commitments.	Number of companies on register.	Not started.	Database started.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	Number of meetings with companies.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
	Number of companies offering support.	None	One
	Amount of funding generated through CSR.	Not started.	Irish Cement (€3,500 match funding for Crayfish Ark (LEADER).
Corporate sponsorship package.	Number of companies engaged.	Not started.	'Broadly on track'.
Membership package.	Number of membership packs.	Eight.	Not started.
	Number of members obtained.	Eight.	
	Amount of income generated.	€0.	

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Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Two volunteer events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Four.	
	Number of event participants.	Two to six.	
	Number of volunteers.	Two to six.	
	Amount of time volunteered (hours).	Eleven hours.	Not started.
	Value of time volunteered (€15/hour).	€690.	
	Volunteer feedback.	Need to increase awareness.	
Two public engagement events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Three.	
	Number of event participants at each event.	Eleven to seventy-seven.	Covid-19 public health measures prevented activity.
	Number of participants engaged per annum.	Ninety-nine.	
	Participant feedback.	Demand for more webinars.	
Two press releases per year to raise profile and promote the support given by DHLGH.	Number of press releases issued.	One.	'Broadly on track'.
	Number of press releases published.	Two.	'Broadly on track'.
	Readership figures for each press release.	4,000 to 5,000 for each release.	Not started.
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Number of meetings.	Thirteen.	Not started.
	Number of cooperative actions.	Two.	'Broadly on track'.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	'Broadly on track'.
Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Number of meetings.	Eleven.	'Broadly on track'.
	Number of cooperative actions.	One.	Communications with LAWPRO Community officer, and Catchment Scientist.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Record of contacts.	'Broadly on track'.
Annual reporting to DHLGH in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced.		

A2.4 Q1: 2021

Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Good governance in line with CRO and CRA.	Board meetings convened.	1 st February 2021.	January 2021.
		22 nd February 2021.	February 2021.
		AGM: 22 nd February 2021.	March 2021.
	Policies produced.	Seventeen policies and procedural documents in place.	Policies work in progress: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Procedures. • Conflict of Interest. • Communications.
	Record of policy updates.	Covid-19 Response Plan updated.	Commenced 2020.
	CRO and CRA compliance.	Complete.	Complete.
	Best practice adoption.	Complete.	Complete.
Board feedback.	Complete.	Complete.	
Business Plan.	Business Plan adopted.	<i>'Broadly on track'</i> .	Secured SICAP funding for Business Plan development mentoring.
	Business Plan reviewed annually.	Strategic vision reviewed by Board. Commencement of three-year Strategic Plan process. Consultant appointed.	Complete.
Annual cashflow forecasting.	Cashflow annual review.	Complete.	To form part of Business Plan development.
Project Officer: delivery of capital projects.	Staff hours committed to match funding effort.	525 Resilience hours.	Project Officer and Chairperson engaged in preparing funding applications.
		47 non-Resilience hours.	
Funding applications submitted.	Successful bids.	One successful bid and five pending.	Two bids pending decision.
	Amount of new funding secured.	€1,000 LAWPRO Local Awareness Initiative.	Covid-19 public health measures curtailed activity.
	Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids.	Two unsuccessful bids (Community Foundation for Ireland Environment Fund, and DCC Community Enhancement Fund).	Be project-ready when calls open.
Compilation of a register of local companies with CSR strategies or commitments.	Number of companies on register.	Not started.	Database started.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	Number of meetings with companies.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
	Number of companies offering support.	None.	One.
	Amount of funding generated through CSR.	Not started.	None.
Corporate sponsorship package.	Number of companies engaged.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
Membership package.	Number of membership packs.	Twelve.	Not started.
	Number of members obtained.	Twelve.	Not started.
	Amount of income generated.	€0.	Not started.

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Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Two volunteer events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	None (Covid-19 public health measures curtailed activity).	None (Covid-19 public health measures curtailed activity).
	Number of event participants.		
	Number of volunteers.	Two placement students for fieldwork and projects.	None.
	Amount of time volunteered (hours).	Twenty-eight hours.	Not started.
	Value of time volunteered (€15/hour).	€420.	Not started.
	Volunteer feedback.	Work commenced.	Not started.
Two public engagement events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Three webinars.	Coordinated 'Reimagining Irish Rivers' conference.
	Number of event participants at each event.	45 to 77.	1,000+ registered.
	Number of participants engaged per annum.	171.	1,000.
	Participant feedback.	Good feedback.	Generally, very positive.
Two press releases per year to raise profile and promote the support given by DHLGH.	Number of press releases issued.	One.	
	Number of press releases published.	One.	One.
	Readership figures for each press release.	4,000 to 5,000.	
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Number of meetings.	Twenty.	Not started.
	Number of cooperative actions.	Two.	Two.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Number of meetings.	Eleven (telephone or Zoom meetings).	Ongoing.
	Number of cooperative actions.	One.	
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Annual reporting to DHLGH in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced.		

A2.5 Q2: 2021

Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maugue Rivers Trust
Good governance in line with CRO and CRA.	Board meetings convened.	15 th April 2021. 7 th June 2021.	April 2021. May 2021. June 2021.
	Policies produced.	Seventeen policies and procedural documents in place.	Policy templates being produced.
	Record of policy updates.	Landowner Agreement.	Commenced 2020.
	CRO and CRA compliance.	Complete.	Complete.
	Best practice adoption.	Complete.	Complete.
	Board feedback.	Complete.	Complete.
Business Plan.	Business Plan adopted.	'Broadly on track'.	Chairperson completed draft Business Plan.
	Business Plan reviewed annually.	Strategic vision reviewed by Board. Commencement of three-year Strategic Plan process.	Complete.
Annual cashflow forecasting.	Cashflow annual review.	Complete.	Complete.
Project Officer: delivery of capital projects.	Staff hours committed to match funding effort.	506.	
Funding applications submitted.	Successful bids.	Five.	Two.
	Amount of new funding secured.	LAWPRO CWDF 2021: €3,000	LAWPRO CWDF 2021 (partial funding): €4,000. Limerick GMA allocation: €3,000.
		LAWPRO NWRM Project: €7,000	
		DCC DFI IAS Project: €2,500	
		DCC Crana River Engagement: €14,618	
		DAFM (EIP): €132,870	
Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids.	Project phasing.	Be project-ready when calls open.	
Compilation of a register of local companies with CSR strategies or commitments.	Number of companies on register.	Not started.	Database started.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	Number of meetings with companies.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
	Number of companies offering support.	Not started.	None.
	Amount of funding generated through CSR.	Not started.	None.
Corporate sponsorship package.	Number of companies engaged.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
Membership package.	Number of membership packs.	Eight.	Not started.
	Number of members obtained.	Thirty-five.	Not started.
	Amount of income generated.	€0.	Not started.

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Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Two volunteer events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Twenty-four.	Two.
	Number of event participants.	Six to twenty-five.	Nineteen.
	Number of volunteers.	Three placement students for fieldwork and projects.	Nineteen (Q1 and Q2).
	Amount of time volunteered (hours).	Forty+ hours.	Ninety-five hours.
	Value of time volunteered (€15/hour).	€900.	Not started.
	Volunteer feedback.		Positive.
Two public engagement events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Twenty-four.	None.
	Number of event participants at each event.	Six to twenty-five.	
	Number of participants engaged per annum.	275.	1,000 (Q1 and Q2).
	Participant feedback.	Good feedback.	
Two press releases per year to raise profile and promote the support given by DHLGH.	Number of press releases issued.	None.	None.
	Number of press releases published.	None.	None.
	Readership figures for each press release.		
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Number of meetings.	Eighteen.	Not started.
	Number of cooperative actions.	One.	One.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Number of meetings.	Fourteen.	Ten.
	Number of cooperative actions.	One.	
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Annual reporting to DHLGH in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced.		

A2.6 Q3: 2021

Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Good governance in line with CRO and CRA.	Board meetings convened.	28 th July 2021.	July 2021. August 2021. September 2021. AGM: 13 th September 2021.
	Policies produced.	Seventeen policies and procedural documents in place.	Social Media Policy.
	Record of policy updates.	Trustees Declaration of Interests.	Commenced 2020.
	CRO and CRA compliance.	Complete.	Complete.
	Best practice adoption.	Complete.	Complete.
	Board feedback.	Complete.	Complete.
Business Plan.	Business Plan adopted.	Strategic Plan preparation in progress.	Strategic Plan preparation in progress.
	Business Plan reviewed annually.	Strategic Plan preparation in progress.	Complete.
Annual cashflow forecasting.	Cashflow annual review.	Complete.	Complete. Given the Resilience Year Two reduction, the Project Officer salary was reduced.
Project Officer: delivery of capital projects.	Staff hours committed to match funding effort.	600. 105 non-Resilience.	
	Successful bids.	None.	Two.
Funding applications submitted.	Amount of new funding secured.	None.	LAWPRO CWDF 2021 (partial funding): €4,000 (returned). Limerick GMA allocation: €3,000.
	Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids.		Be project-ready when calls open.
Compilation of a register of local companies with CSR strategies or commitments.	Number of companies on register.	Not started.	Database started.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	Number of meetings with companies.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
	Number of companies offering support.	Not started.	None.
	Amount of funding generated through CSR.	Not started.	None.
Corporate sponsorship package.	Number of companies engaged.	Not started.	Contingent on Business Plan 2021.
Membership package.	Number of membership packs.	Seven.	Not started.
	Number of members obtained.	Twenty-six.	Not started.
	Amount of income generated.	€0.	Not started.

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Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Two volunteer events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Twenty-one.	Not started.
	Number of event participants.	Two to twenty.	Twelve.
	Number of volunteers.	One placement student for fieldwork and projects.	Five.
	Amount of time volunteered (hours).	397.	Not started.
	Value of time volunteered (€15/hour).	€5,588.	Not started.
	Volunteer feedback.	Volunteer coordinator required.	Not started.
Two public engagement events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Fourteen.	Seven.
	Number of event participants at each event.	Six to thirty.	Three to twenty-five (total 91).
	Number of participants engaged per annum.		1,091 (Q1 to Q3).
	Participant feedback.	Good feedback.	Appreciative.
Two press releases per year to raise profile and promote the support given by DHLGH.	Number of press releases issued.	Two.	None.
	Number of press releases published.	Seven articles.	None.
	Readership figures for each press release.	Approximately 7,000.	
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Number of meetings.	Thirty+.	Not started.
	Number of cooperative actions.	One.	Four.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Number of meetings.	Six+.	
	Number of cooperative actions.	One.	
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Annual reporting to DHLGH in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced.		

A2.7 Q4: 2021

Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maugue Rivers Trust
Good governance in line with CRO and CRA.	Board meetings convened.	21 st October 2021. 9 th December 2021.	October 2021. November 2021. December 2021.
	Policies produced.	Two.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directors Handbook. • Public Benefit Statement. • Volunteers and Directors Expense Policy. • Finance Policy. • Register of Conflicts Policy. • Whistleblowing Policy. • Risk Policy and Register.
	Record of policy updates.	Seven.	Commenced 2020.
	CRO and CRA compliance.	Complete.	Complete.
	Best practice adoption.	Complete.	Complete.
	Board feedback.	Complete.	Complete.
Business Plan.	Business Plan adopted.	Strategic Plan Completed.	Strategic Plan preparation in progress.
	Business Plan reviewed annually.	'Broadly on track'.	Complete.
Annual cashflow forecasting.	Cashflow annual review.	Complete.	Complete. €45,000 to be raised in 2022.
Project Officer: delivery of capital projects.	Staff hours committed to match funding effort.	567. 30 non-Resilience.	
	Successful bids.	None.	Limerick GMA: €3,000
Funding applications submitted.	Amount of new funding secured.	None.	Limerick City and County Council - Giant Hogweed Control (Morningstar River): €13,875. iCatch Network Coordination: €2,568.
	Lessons learnt from unsuccessful bids.		Be project-ready when calls open.
Compilation of a register of local companies with CSR strategies or commitments.	Number of companies on register.	Not started.	Database started.
Liaison with at least one local company each year to try and secure CSR sponsorship.	Number of meetings with companies.	Not started.	
	Number of companies offering support.	Not started.	Crayfish Ark Project (Irish Cement): €3,500.
	Amount of funding generated through CSR.	Not started.	€2,000.
Corporate sponsorship package.	Number of companies engaged.	Not started.	None.
Membership package.	Number of membership packs.	Two.	Not started.
	Number of members obtained.	Three.	Not started.
	Amount of income generated.	€0.	Not started.

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Output	Key Indicator	Inishowen Rivers Trust	Maigue Rivers Trust
Two volunteer events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Seven.	Not started.
	Number of event participants.	Two to thirty.	Not started.
	Number of volunteers.	One.	Not started.
	Amount of time volunteered (hours).	40.	Not started.
	Value of time volunteered (€15/hour).	€560.	Not started.
	Volunteer feedback.	Good.	Not started.
	Two public engagement events per year to raise profile and attract membership.	Number of events held.	Five.
Number of event participants at each event.		10 to 250.	310+
Number of participants engaged per annum.		350	1,400+ (Q1 to Q4).
Participant feedback.		Good feedback.	Good feedback.
Two press releases per year to raise profile and promote the support given by DHLGH.	Number of press releases issued.	None.	
	Number of press releases published.	None.	None.
	Readership figures for each press release.		
Cooperation between Rivers Trusts to share best practice.	Number of meetings.	Twelve+.	Not started.
	Number of cooperative actions.	One.	Three.
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Number of meetings.	Four+.	
	Number of cooperative actions.	Two.	
	Record of knowledge transfer.	Complete.	Complete.
Annual reporting to DHLGH in the Resilience project.	Annual report produced.		

A3 Water Management Key Actors

Summarised from An Fóram Uisce Factsheet 3.

Table 9 - Water Management in Ireland

Level	Responsible Body	Responsibility
National	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	<p>Water policy development and legislation, including: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Implement the Water Framework Directive and RBMP. <input type="checkbox"/> Nitrates Action Programme to protect water resources from agricultural practice. <input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish Waters Directive. <input type="checkbox"/> Bathing Water Directive. <input type="checkbox"/> Floods Directive. <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking Water Directive <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation for water abstraction. <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Marine Protected Areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Manage the Water Services Investment Programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Manage the development of the Rural Water Programme.
	The Environmental Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The EPA monitors and reports on the Implementation of the Water Framework Directive to the European Commission. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor water quality of lakes, rivers and groundwater trends. <input type="checkbox"/> Surveys of water quality in estuaries and coastal areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Assesses and reports on water quality in bathing waters and other protected areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Monitors and reports on drinking water quality data in public and private supplies. <input type="checkbox"/> Acts as the Supervisory Authority for public water services under the Drinking Water Regulations. <input type="checkbox"/> Operates a National Hydrometric Programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordinated environmental research and regular reports on water quality.
National, Regional, and Local	Local Authority Waters Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Catchment assessments through field and desk studies in the Priority Areas for Action under the RBMP and work with agencies to develop measures to improve water quality in these areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Community engagement on the importance of healthy waters and support local projects and initiatives under the Community Water Development Fund to protect and improve waters. <input type="checkbox"/> Support the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme to work with farmers to improve water quality.
Regional and Local	Local Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> With the EPA, carry out monitoring on rivers, lakes, groundwaters and bathing waters and support the national programme for the collection, analysis and distribution of surface water quantity data. <input type="checkbox"/> Primary responsibility for water management and protection under the Water Pollution Acts <input type="checkbox"/> Support the implementing of the Water Framework Directive. <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect under the National Nitrates Action Programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Inspect under the Domestic Waste Water Treatment National Inspections Plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Act as Supervisory Authority for Rural Water Services. <input type="checkbox"/> Administer the Multi-annual Rural Water Programme. <input type="checkbox"/> Implement Sludge Management Plans.

A2.1 Specialist Focus Organisations

Table 4 - Specialist Focus Organisations

Sector	Organisation
Advisory	Water Advisory Body monitors Irish Water and reports quarterly to the Minister on progress against IW business plan and its transparency and accountability.
Fisheries	Inland Fisheries Ireland has responsibility to advise on conservation, protection, management, development and improvement of inland fisheries and sea angling.
Flooding and Drainage	Office of Public Works has responsibility for the implementation of the Floods Directive and for coordinating the implementation of the Flood Risk Management Plans and works with the EPA and Local Authorities on flood defence schemes and the management of the arterial drainage schemes.
Groundwater	Geological Survey of Ireland is responsible for providing geological advice and information. The organisation provides maps and scientific data about groundwater quality, quantity and distribution as well as advice and expertise to support policies and regulations.
Marine	Marine Institute is responsible for Marine Research, Technology Development and Innovation (RTDI). They monitor estuaries and marine waters, assess the economic potential of Ireland's marine resource; promote the sustainable development of marine industry and safeguard our marine environment.
Natura Sites	The National Parks and Wildlife Service has responsibility for the protection of habitats and species through designation and management of Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas and national parks.
Public Health	Health Service Executive Environmental Health Officers Association promotes the awareness of Environmental Health issues among the public particularly in the area of drinking water quality.
Regulation	The Commission for the Regulation of Utilities regulates public water and wastewater services. It has responsibility for ensuring that water services are delivered in a safe, secure and sustainable way and that IW operates in an economic and efficient manner.
Rural Water Services	National Federation of Group Water Schemes is a representative organisation for over 400 community owned Group Water Schemes delivering rural drinking water services. While representing the sector at both National and local level the Federation also provides support services, mentoring and training to ensure water quality and consumer service standards.
Stakeholder Engagement	An Fóram Uisce provides a platform for stakeholder engagement in water resource management. It has an advisory role in Government water policy, Irish Water plans, the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan and rural water services.
Water Services	Irish Water is the national utility responsible for public water and wastewater services. It is tasked with operating, improving and investing in water and wastewater infrastructure and systems to provide a safe, reliable and high quality service to consumers. It sources, treats and delivers 1.7 billion litres of drinking water to 1.8 million households and 184,000 businesses and processes 1.2 billion litres of wastewater every day. It manages 755 water treatment plants and 1,062 wastewater treatment plants.

A3 Consultation Methodology

The stakeholder consultation was an essential process undertaken to obtain views that can address the appropriateness of the Resilience Pilot Project in achieving its stated objectives.

The stakeholder consultation took place at two levels.

A3.1 Level 1 Consultation: High Level

The first level of consultation was with representatives of the Rivers Trust and the Local Authority Waters Programme staff. The primary objective was to determine an operational perspective of the supports provided to the Inishowen Rivers Trust and Maigne Rivers Trust and the extent to which these provided the anticipated outcomes.

A3.2 Level 2 Consultation: Local Level

Inishowen Rivers Trust and Maigne Rivers Trust

The chairperson (or board representative) and Project Officer of the individual Rivers Trusts was invited to a consultation meeting. The objective of this was to determine the nature of the local experiences in establishing and maintaining the organisation. In seeking to understand any challenges that might have been experienced, particular attention was paid to unmet or unsatisfied local needs. This was framed in the context of the initial expectations of the Resilience Pilot Project and the eventual outcomes. The consultation was structured to elucidate the following key factors: -

1. Governance standards adopted and experience of compliance.
2. Identification of local issues.
3. Financial performance and sustainability.
4. Fundraising capacity.
5. Untapped funding opportunities.
6. Under-developed local traded income opportunities.
7. Anticipated future growth.
8. Capacity for delivery innovation.

Community Water Officers

The Community Water Officers engage with local communities and individual sectors of society. The interaction between the individual Rivers Trusts and their respective CWO is particularly important. To capture the views of the CWO, a consultative meeting was arranged to focus on any changes in the effectiveness of the interface with the Rivers Trusts following the implementation of the Resilience Pilot Project.

A3.3 Consultation Methodologies

Action Learning Approach

An action-learning approach was used when engaging with the consultees. Action-learning allowed all participants, including the facilitator, to learn from the experiences and viewpoints of all who contribute.

Experience shows that action-learning provides an ideal vehicle to tap into the expertise of local groups and agencies and build participation into the consultation process from the beginning. It achieves this by creating a meaningful dialogue with the participants, generating mutual learning and understanding.

From the outset, engagement with the consultees was designed to encourage contributions. This was achieved by organising sessions as a '*conversation*' around the themes of the Resilience Pilot Project and allowing sufficient time for personal reflection. The action-learning approach helps to connect diverse perspectives, using initial conversations, to generate intra-sectoral discussions and connections and, thereafter, cross-sector dialogue.

Confidentiality and anonymity were assured for all those engaging in the consultative process. No detail was used in the reporting process that might lead to the identification of participating individuals.

Online Survey

In parallel with the consultation processes detailed above, an online survey was developed and made available. In addition to broadening the reach of the consultation process, the online survey enabled the participation of individuals for whom the timing or location of consultation sessions might be inconvenient.

Written Responses

Written responses to a framework of appropriate questions were encouraged. This will provide a further opportunity for individuals, organisations, and agencies to submit corporate inputs into the consultation process.

A4 NSEP Supports

Information in the following table has been extracted from the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022 (NESP).

Table 10 – NSEP Social Enterprise Supports (Edited List)

Organisation Name	Supports and Advice	Networking	Funding and Finance	Training	Description
An Cosán Virtual Community College.				✓	Providing support in setting up and managing voluntary boards etc.
Bank of Ireland.				✓	Business Skills Academy Training nominal cost for courses
	✓			✓	Consultation for Charities Capacity building (consultation services) Three-month consultation services, three face-to-face meetings, agreed limited amount of communication/interaction in between meetings
Boardmatch	✓				Boardmatch is the only Irish charity that specialises in not-for-profit board recruitment. The organisation connects individuals interested in volunteering their skills with organisations with board vacancies.
Carmichael Centre.	✓			✓	Carmichael Mentor Programme.
ChangeX.		✓	✓		ChangeX connects people with proven ideas for strengthening communities with the resources needed to start them.
Charities Institute Ireland.				✓	CII will develop, guide and support members through objectives outlined in three strategic pillars - Advocacy, Education and Communication. The three measures of these standards are good governance, best practice fundraising and transparent financial reporting.
Circular Economy Academy at Rediscovery Centre, Ballymun.	✓	✓		✓	The Circular Economy Academy is a free mentoring and support programme that assists social enterprises and community organisations in any part of Ireland to move their activities towards sustainability and embrace the circular economy.
Coca Cola.			✓		Thank You Coca Cola fund competition. Capital: €100,000 total; €5,000, €10,000 or €20,000 prizes; potential for an additional extra €5,000 for winner of People's Choice Award
Collaboration Ireland.		✓			To provide an end-to-end facilitated process for organisations seeking to Collaborate. Broker Collaborations with key stakeholders support the formation of sustainable and effective services in the Third Sector.
Community Foundation Ireland and EPA.			✓		Environment and Nature Fund for Circular Economy and Sustainable Consumption. Project; excludes capital. €300,000 in funding for community groups tackling environmental issues; three grant size categories.
Community Reuse Network Ireland.	✓	✓			CRNI members are involved in recycling materials that cannot otherwise be reused, including mattresses, electrical and electronic goods, textiles, paper and card.

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Organisation Name	Supports and Advice	Networking	Funding and Finance	Training	Description
Community Support Fund		✓			Kerry County Council provides support for animating and empowering communities through projects ⁸ . Funding is targeted under four categories, as follows: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebuilding and reconnecting communities. • Community Tidy Town Initiatives and Amenity Projects. • Community Economic Innovation. • Community-Based Tourism, Festivals, and Events.
Community Work Ireland.	✓	✓			CWI creates the conditions for community work to develop by advocating for policies, programmes, and resources to enable the growth and sustainability of Ireland's robust and autonomous community development sector.
Company Registration Office.	✓				Specific help with technology/ and IT for non-profits and charities.
Department of Communications, Climate Action, and Environment.			✓		Community Environment Action Fund (LA21) Project: €2,000-€5,000 grant size.
			✓		Climate Action Fund: to total at least €500 million by 2027.
Department of Rural and Community Development.			✓		Dormant Accounts Fund - Measure 1 Social Enterprise. Capital; Capacity Building. €800,000 total in funding for training and mentoring for social enterprises.
Department of Rural and Community Development (Pobal).			✓		Dormant Accounts Fund - Small Capital Grants Fund. Capital (equipment, repairs or refurbishments). €1 million total funds; grants €2,000 up to €15,000.
Department of Rural and Community Development (Pobal) and Local Action Groups.			✓		Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2018 - 2022
Department of Rural and Community Development (Pobal) and LCDCs.			✓		LEADER Programme 2014-2020 LEADER Transition Programme 2021-2023
EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI).			✓		For 2021-2027 the EaSI programme will be a strand under the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).
EIT Climate-KIC, UK and Ireland			✓	✓	EIT UK and Ireland is a branch of a knowledge and innovation community established by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) in 2010. EIT UK and Ireland provides: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, training, and entrepreneurship programmes. • Citizen engagement initiatives such as Climathon. • Grant-funded innovation projects and consortia (tailored to support place-based systems transitions) • Open innovation and matchmaking. Grant-funded innovation projects and consortia; education, training and entrepreneurship programmes.

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⁸ See Appendix A7 for 2022 beneficiaries.

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Organisation Name	Supports and Advice	Networking	Funding and Finance	Training	Description
Enactus	✓	✓	✓	✓	Enactus is the world's largest experiential learning platform dedicated to creating a better world while developing the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders and social innovators. The Enactus network of global business, academic and student leaders is unified by a vision to create a better, more sustainable world.
ENSIE (European Network of Social Integration Enterprises)		✓		✓	ENSIE, the European Network for Social Integration Enterprises, represents the interests of national and regional networks of 'Work Integration Social Enterprises' (WISEs) striving for more inclusive and integrated forms of employment at European level.
Enterprise Ireland	✓		✓		Supporting improvement in social services
			✓		€12m in funding was provided by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and administered by Enterprise Ireland. Eligible enterprise centres can apply for funding as follows: - Minimum of €10,000 and maximum of €150,000. Funding is administered as grant aid of up to 80 % of eligible costs detailed in the Recovery Plan submitted by each applicant.
Environmental Protection Agency			✓		Event Support (including Workshops and Conferences). Maximum €3,000 per event. Rolling call with four submission deadlines each year as follows: - (31 st December; 31 st March; 30 th June; 30 th September).
			✓		Green Enterprise Fund. Grant-aid for demonstration-type projects. Maximum €100,000 per grant award.
European Social Catalyst Fund (ESCF)			✓		European Social Catalyst Fund (ESCF). Planning and capacity building (implementation plan Development. Up to €100,000, along with capacity-building support. A minimum of €600,000 will be allocated to support at least six plans.
Immigrant Investor Programme.			✓		The Immigrant Investor Programme (IIP) is open to non-EEA nationals who commit to an approved investment in Ireland. Requires minimum investment of €1m from applicant's resources (not financed through a loan or other such facility), must be committed for a minimum of 3 years. To encourage investors and business professionals from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) to avail of opportunities for investing and locating business interests in Ireland and acquire secure residency status in Ireland.
Ireland Funds.			✓		Flagship Grants. Core funding, capacity building or programme costs. Up to €100,000 in financial support over two years and an array of additional nonfinancial supports.
			✓		Small Grants Flagship Awards. €2,500, €5,000, and €10,000 grant amounts.
Irish Cooperative Organisation Society.	✓	✓			The Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS) serves and promotes commercial cooperative businesses and enterprises across multiple sections of the Irish economy.
Irish Research Council.			✓		New Foundations Research (including travel, consumables, training, and dissemination). €5,000-€15,000 grant size.

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Organisation Name	Supports and Advice	Networking	Funding and Finance	Training	Description
Irish Social Enterprise Network.	✓	✓			Assists social enterprises, social entrepreneurs, and social innovators in getting their idea off the ground and providing support to grow.
Local Enterprise Office - Training Programmes.				✓	Web page listing general training supports - some may benefit social enterprises.
Probation Services.	✓		✓		Kickstart Programme.
Social Enterprise Toolkit (prepared by Dublin South City Partnership).	✓				Downloadable resource for local and community groups and individuals interested in setting up social enterprises in Ireland.
Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI Academy).	✓	✓	✓	✓	Supporting social entrepreneurs and people developing new, innovative solutions to address social and environmental challenges.
Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI).			✓		Ignite Fund , provides cash grants, business support, and a place in SIFI's Accelerator Programme. €550,000 fund.
			✓		Growth Fund , provides support to secure private funds for an agreed growth capital fundraising target, cash uplift on the capital secured, dedicated SIFI team to support the organisation to achieve targets for scale and impact. The organisation's funding target is at least €150,000 annually for three years.
			✓		Ability to Work Fund , providing cash grants, business support, a place in SIFI's Accelerator Programme, training, and mentoring. Cash grants of up to €90,000 each year for three years.
Social Impact Ireland.	✓	✓		✓	Social Impact Ireland is designed to make a difference in the social enterprise sector in Ireland. It works with individuals, at whatever stage, to fulfil the potential of making a positive impact on society.
Young Social Innovators.	✓	✓		✓	Young Social Innovators (YSI) is a non-profit organisation that empowers young people to use their talents, insights, passion, and creativity to come up with innovative solutions to social challenges.
Yunus and Youth.				✓	The Yunus and Youth Fellowship Programme is a six-month online program designed to empower young social entrepreneurs and help them develop their full potential by strengthening their business models, helping them measure their social impact, and defining a scaling strategy.

A5 State Employment Initiatives

A5.1 Community Employment Scheme

The Community Employment (CE) programme is designed to help the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities. Participants can seek other part-time work during their placement. After the placement, participants are encouraged to seek permanent part-time and full-time jobs elsewhere based on their experience and new skills gained while in a Community Employment scheme.

There are two different categories of Community Employment, each with its own set of eligibility requirements. These are the Part-time Integration Option and the Part-time Job Option.

CE Part-time Integration Option

The Part-time Integration Option allows the individual to work under the Community Employment scheme for a maximum of 1 year.

Depending on individual needs, it may be possible to have a one-year placement extended by another year. To do this, the sponsor must apply in writing at least two months before the end of your placement. Generally, participants complete their one-year placement and then seek a permanent full-time or part-time job elsewhere based on the placement experience, the good reputation developed with local employers, and any new skills learnt throughout the placement.

Part-Time Job Option

This CE Part-Time Job Option provides participants with part-time work placements of up to 6 years for participants over 55 and up to 3 years for participants under 55. This option is designed to give extended access to employment to older people who may have been unable to secure regular employment for some time. The participation limits for people on one of the specified disability payments (see below) are seven years for those aged 55 to 65 and 4 years for those aged 35 to 54. Time spent on CE before 3 April 2000 is not counted in these participation limits.

A5.2 Community Services Programme

The Community Services Programme aims to support local community activity to address disadvantages and provide local employment opportunities for certain groups of people. It funds community services and businesses, including community services for older people and those with disabilities, rural transport initiatives and environmental projects.

The Programme focuses on communities where public and private sector services are lacking, either through geographical or social isolation or because demand levels are insufficient. The Programme also enables the benefit of other public investment to be realised (as in the case of investment in community centres and resources).

The Community Services Programme evolved from the Social Economy Programme.

Types of Projects

In general, applicants must be not-for-profit companies with sufficient capacity to undertake service delivery and staff management. They must also have adequate financial resources and the opportunity to generate revenue to maintain the proposed service and, where necessary, prepare a business plan acceptable to the Programme.

The types of projects eligible to apply for funding include: -

- Community services for older people (excluding healthcare provision)
- Community services that support or employ people with disabilities (excluding healthcare provisions)
- Projects that support and employ stabilised and recovering drug misusers (excluding healthcare provision)

- ❑ Community services or community enterprises for island communities
- ❑ Community radio
- ❑ Community enterprises that support or employ Travellers (excluding healthcare provision)
- ❑ Supervising community halls and facilities with a priority focus on disadvantaged areas

Following assessment, contracts of up to three years are typically issued to successful community companies and cooperatives that meet the criteria for the Programme.

A5.3 JobsPlus Incentive Scheme

JobsPlus is an employer incentive that encourages and rewards employers who employ jobseekers on the Live Register. This incentive replaces the Revenue Job Assist and Employer Job (PRSI) Exemption Scheme. It is designed to encourage employers and businesses to employ people who have been out of work for long periods.

The Department of Social Protection pays the incentive to the employer monthly in arrears over two years. It provides two levels of regular cash payments: -

- ❑ €7,500 for each person recruited who has been unemployed for more than 12 but less than 24 months.
- ❑ €10,000 for each person recruited who has been unemployed for more than 24 months.

JobsPlus Youth

Under the JobsPlus Youth part of the scheme, the qualifying period for JobsPlus for jobseekers under 25 years of age has been reduced to 4 months. However, it remains at 12 months for other job seekers.

Eligible young people will be given a certification to qualify for the JobsPlus subsidy, which they can use when applying for jobs.

A5.4 Rural Social Scheme

The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) is aimed at low-income farmers and fishermen/women. The participant must receive a social welfare payment to qualify for the RSS. In return, people participating in the RSS provide services that benefit rural communities.

The Department of Social Protection is responsible for policy concerning the Rural Social Scheme, including eligibility criteria. The Department monitors the implementation of the RSS and supports the various bodies that manage the RSS locally. The Department may also inspect any scheme and visit projects. At a local level, the scheme is managed by implementing bodies such as local development companies and in the Gaeltacht areas by Údarás na Gaeltachta.

The work carried out by RSS participants includes projects relating to not-for-profit cultural and heritage centres and community administration or clerical work.

A5.5 TÚS - Community Work Placement Initiative

The TÚS initiative is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and be provided by community and voluntary organisations in urban and rural areas. Local development companies manage the TÚS initiative for the Department of Social Protection, which is responsible for the scheme.

All the work carried out by participants in the Tús scheme must benefit the community. The projects eligible for the scheme may include social care for all age groups and people with disabilities, work supporting cultural and heritage activities, and community administration and community event management.

A5.6 EmployAbility

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection funds a range of employment supports to help employees with a disability gain and retain employment. Under the Reasonable Accommodation Fund, there is the Job Interview Interpreter Grant, Personal Reader Grant, Employee Retention Grant, and Workplace Equipment/Adaptation Grant.

Other employer supports include the Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Disability Awareness Training Support Scheme.

A6 Preliminary Community Governance Discussion Brief

Further work on 'experimental governance', building on the experience of the Resilience Pilot Project may be required for LAWPRO to adopt appropriate local community engagement approaches on a continuum between community consultation and active involvement.

A6.1 Community Governance Options

The options presented below relate to 'source to sea' catchment areas. This definition identifies local activist groups in urban and rural settings whose efforts are often directed at specific issues, including river clean-up, invasive species control and recreation.

In defining a Catchment Level Management approach (Active Involvement), the assumption is made that, over time, the representation will grow to include the total catchment area (all communities, schools, and groups). Similarly, the scope of projects should relate to all that is happening in the main watercourse and its tributaries. It is argued that a single group representing the whole catchment area is potentially unlimited in respect of the number of local activists and community groups that might be engaged.

If the group is community-led by local voluntary activists, a resourced management and administration to support project development activities will be necessary. Catchment size (area, settlements, population) will determine the appropriate resources for effective operations.

A6.2 Consultation and Engagement Models

The extent of WFD related Consultation and Active Involvement models is shown below. In terms of community level implementation measures two experimental governance models are considered. The success of the Resilience Pilot Project in Inishowen and Maigne catchment areas provides the basis for one in terms of active involvement. The second is based on the LAWPRO Community Catchment Fora ([pilot) model that is differentiated by designation as a Consultation model in the WFD framework (even if that term might be considered somewhat reductionist to the active information and knowledge sharing function that is anticipated in the Model.

In the context where it is anticipated in the 3rd National RBMP that catchment plans will be issued in the 46 catchment areas, it is timely to consider these options at community level. The Resilience Project has shown an extensive workload in the active involvement model that anticipates an existing effective voluntary catchment group. Where this is not in place, or in situations where advisory input is all that is sought, the Consultation model is more than appropriate.

Table 11 - Extent of Catchment Level Engagement

Indicator	Consultation	Involvement
Catchment: extent of engagement	Information and knowledge sharing, public fora.	Watercourse project work, community education, third-party brokering, contracting.
Catchment Management Plan	Advisory, public fora, community oversight.	Coordination, agency co-development, community engagement, and signatory.
Support Structure	LAWPRO. Local Development Companies.	Core administration, management, and Project Worker infrastructure.
Agency Network Links	Information and knowledge exchange, and advisory oversight.	Contracting, project coordination, volunteer coordination.
Organisation Type	Advisory Council.	CLG / Charitable Status.
Funding	Significant enhancement of LAWPRO Community Water Officer levels, Local Development Company project support worker.	Core or Programme funding 2-3 positions.

The continuum on which the models are presented relate to active involvement that anticipates contracted and voluntary 'boots on the ground' work whereas for Community Fora the extent of engagement may relate more to information, knowledge, advocacy, and advice, leaving on the ground work to existing groups, local authorities and agencies.

Experimental Governance Models within the National WFD Implementation Structure

The figure of relationships (below) captures all actors in the clean water narrative reflected in the Water Framework Directive at EU level and in what will be the third National River Basin Management Plan, for which it is anticipated that management plans will be drawn for the forty-six catchment (hydrometric) areas identified by the Environmental Protection Agency.

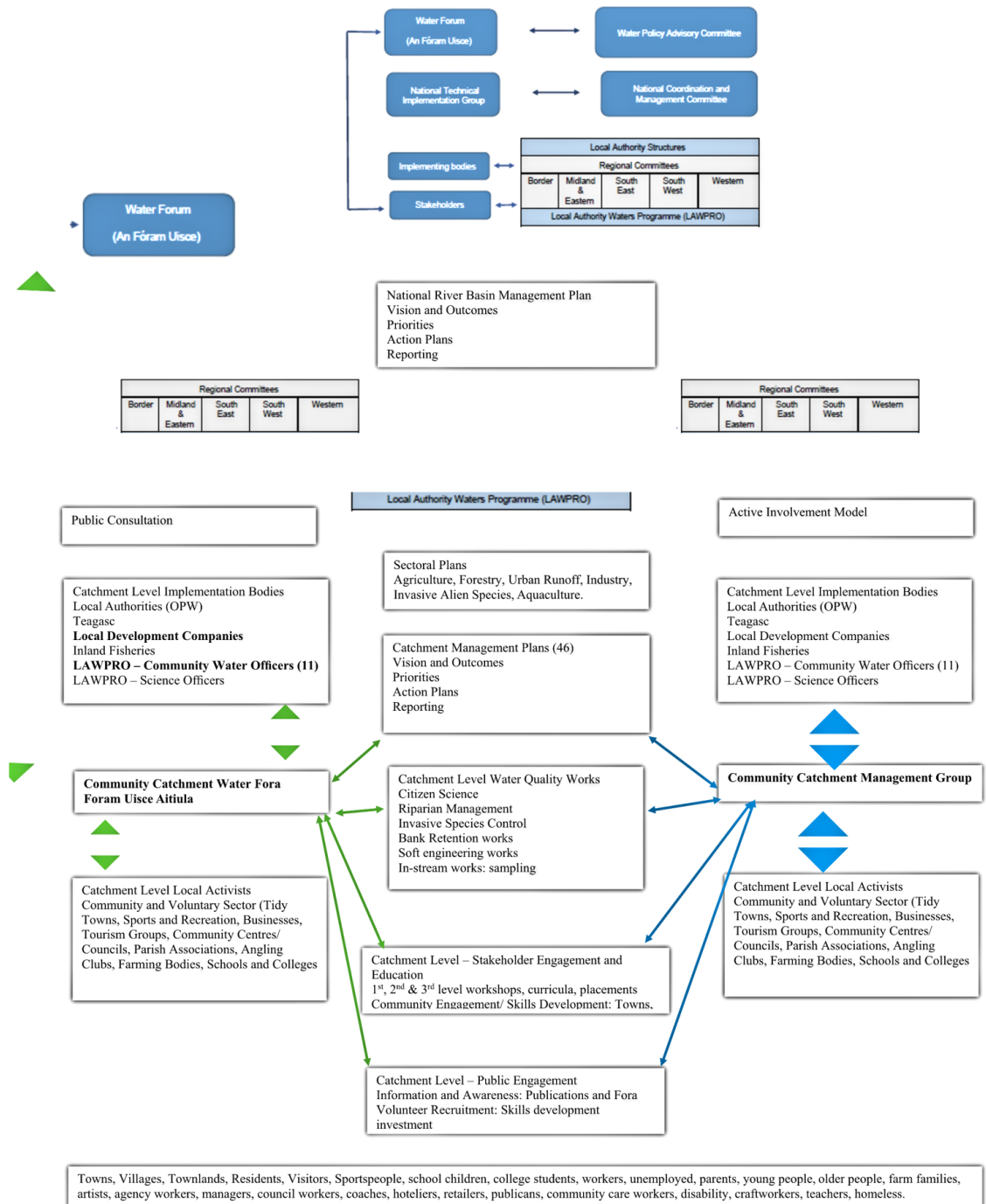
The map captures the effective hierarchy of relationships from the national level fora at the top of the figure right to the '*last mile*' where the policy, programme and project work is realised along the watercourses and surrounding communities. Every community member is a water quality stakeholder, at least in terms of drinking water and wastewater discharge.

The centre column on the figure comprises the key work plans to positively impact water quality. This column is flanked on one side by the subset of relationships and work areas relating to the Water Framework Directive public consultation designation. This column is mirrored on the other side with similar considerations for Active Involvement designation.

Figure 1- Experimental Governance Models

Experimental Governance Models within National and Regional WFD Framework

Catchment Level Governance Options: Public Consultation or Active Involvement



The first point of contact to consider is between the top (Tier 1) and bottom (Tier 3) in Water Framework Directive terminology. Two relationship nodes are of significance: -

1. The Regional Management Committees oversee catchment-level implementation through regular submissions by authorities and agencies regarding the River Basin Management Plans.

2. An Fóram Uisce is the national community representative body that advises at the Departmental and national implementation levels. If the Catchment Community Fora is chosen as the key community engagement mechanism, it is anticipated that catchment level fora/ Fóram Uisce Áitiúla will develop formal links with the national body to ensure consistent representation of community interests.

LAWPRO is the key link between national policy and catchment-level implementation largely through the Community Water Officer and Catchment Scientist positions. Where fora are the catchment model, these positions will be a critical conduit of information and knowledge to and from the catchment area fora.

Implicit in whatever model or combination thereof is chosen is the recognition that resources are the key supports necessary from the Exchequer regardless of the selected model. Therefore, research is anticipated over the medium term as to return on investment regarding water quality, engagement, and effectiveness.

In terms of public engagement, the Water Framework Directive and, consequently, National Policy reflect much of the research literature in favour of Active Involvement. The Resilience Pilot Project is a successful demonstration of the active involvement model. It is true to say too that active Involvement is now in the national and local stakeholder mindset, and a significant communications effort will be required if a lesser 'public consultation' model emerges as the sole option in terms of the practical effectiveness of achieving improved water quality.

The unique benefits of 'last mile' agency coordination, skilled volunteer capacity and cost-saving community-level projects have been found to attest positively in the Rivers Trust model of Community Catchment Management.

It is important to recognise, though, that active involvement implies a community-level management, administration, and project worker infrastructure that will require investment to support an appropriate agreed quantum of full-time equivalent positions over the life of the plan. Feedback in the current situations suggest a staffing requirement of 2-3 positions (manager, administrator, project officer). If these positions were to be applied in each of the catchment areas identified by the EPA it would necessitate a quantum of 90 to 140 positions.

For the Catchment Level Fora model, the investment will be required to boost Community Water Officer and Community Science Officer positions to engage sustainably in forty-six catchments. At present (March 2022), eleven Community Water Officer positions operate for the country. This number would have to increase to support and large scale application of the model, and it is also likely that there would be a requirement for a secretariat support function at catchment level too. The secretariat function to the Catchment Forum will in some cases entail a support worker position possibly funded through Local Development Companies.

It may well be that there will be no great resource allocation difference between active involvement and consultation options. The question will then be what model is the most effective in addressing improved water quality. The Water Quality improvement question has many more actors than those involved in community level models and assessment will require a medium to long-term assessment of the soft (community activist) and existing hard (legislative) measures to improve catchment water quality. Other relevant objectives relating to public awareness, engagement, and action will require similar investigation.

As shown in the section above the key differences between the two approaches relate to the active coordination of measures, as opposed to oversight and advisory functions. Similarly, the scope is different, with activity limited to information and awareness in the Fora model with more direct engagement in education and projects anticipated in Resilience type models.

The placing of the Community Catchment Water Fora on the border of the hierarchy highlights its advisory role in terms of each of the catchment level water quality works, engagement, and education. In contrast, in the Catchment Community Management Group model, the central placing reflects its direct role in planning and activating all water enhancement activities. Regarding project support from the implementing bodies, the Catchment Community Management Group is set up to tender and contract like any community or business provider. In the Community Catchment Water Fora model, such activity is not anticipated beyond some information and awareness projects.

However, it is worth pointing out, even at this stage, that each approach comes with a resource cost for the Exchequer as the needed 'local' investment to match the relatively well-resourced global oversight/ implementation framework at the National level.