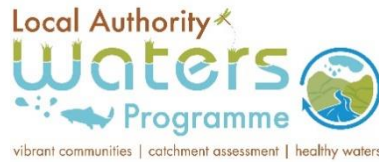


Guidelines for Community Water Development Fund 2024

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1. Objective of the Fund

The Community Water Development Fund aims to fund projects that will bring about improvements in water quality and/or raise public awareness of the value of good water quality and how to improve it. It aims to build community capacity in water related challenges, working together to improve water quality.

The Fund is administered by the Local Authority Waters Programme on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The Fund is open to eligible applicants in the Republic of Ireland only.

The Fund will help meet the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland and the EU Water Framework Directive. It is listed as having a key role to encourage communities to get involved. There is a new Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 - 2027 being developed at present. You can find out more about the draft Plan on gov.ie - [Public Consultation on the draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie)

The draft Plan sets out Programmes of Measures to help protect and restore water quality in our rivers, lakes, estuaries, canals, ground waters and coastal waters in chapter 5. One of the principles to help achieve improved water quality over the next four years is improvements in water quality delivering multiple benefits for biodiversity, climate change and local communities.

2. Who Can Apply?

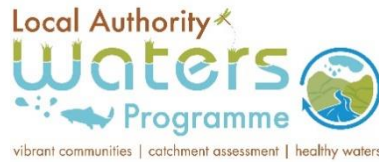
The funding scheme is open to:

- Not-for-profit Community and Voluntary Groups
- Rural and Urban Networks
- Environmental Non-Government Organisations
- Clubs, Associations or other appropriate bodies located in the Republic of Ireland ONLY
- Individuals may NOT apply
- Only one application may be submitted per eligible organisation.

Applicants with a grant approved from LAWPRO and a project in progress may apply under this scheme if their 2023 grant is fully drawn down before the deadline of 6 December 2023.

3. Who to Contact?

Applicants **must** contact their local Community Water Officer (CWO) before submitting their application form. Contact details available on page 13 below.



4. Types of Projects

Projects must demonstrate direct water quality actions and/or water quality awareness benefits and must fall into at least one of the categories listed below.

Bank Stabilisation	Litter Clean Up
Bog Restoration	Raingarden
Citizen Science	Rainwater Planter
Drain Blocking	Reports/Plans
Feasibility Studies	Signage/Water Literacy
Fencing	Tree Planting
Fish Passage	Water Butt
Gravel Installation	Weir Removal
Hard Surface Removal	Wetland
Invasive Species	Woody Debris
Leaky Dam	Education/Awareness Programme of Events

4.1 Water Quality Actions

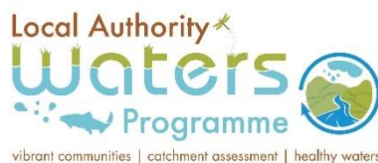
Including Restoration/Habitat conservation/Nature Based Catchment Solutions. Examples:

- Riparian management/tree planting, planting of native species/hedgerows, de-tunneling, etc.
- Creation of habitat near river, lake, wetland
- Fish passage projects
- Removal of invasive species and biosecurity planning
- Silt trapping or 'Slow the Flow' Natural Flood Retention Measures (e.g. the addition of large woody debris to drains)
- Pollution management/prevention measures (e.g., wetlands, buffer zones)
- Flood management measures (e.g., Swales, attenuation ponds)
- Preparation of River restoration plans / feasibility studies
- Wetlands to promote wildlife and reduce pollution and flooding
- Rain gardens and Nature Based Surface Water Management
- Match funding towards a relevant project partially funded under another scheme e.g. LEADER, FLAGs.

4.2 Water Quality Awareness

Community led awareness initiatives with a water-based theme. Examples include:

- Water conservation initiatives such as rainwater harvesting on roof of buildings
- Coastal river or lake stewardship project e.g. adopt a "local water body" project
- Local waterbody awareness initiatives such as biodiversity/nature/demonstration days or workshops
- Citizen Science projects and surveys (including purchase of specialist equipment)



- General amenity (e.g. outdoor biodiversity classroom)
- Innovative techniques for monitoring water quality and biodiversity
- Planting of native wildflowers and vegetation in habitat restoration projects
- Bespoke breeding boxes for birds and mammals
- Leaflet/booklet about nature, biodiversity or local waterbody
- Development of digital/social media tools
- Training workshop
- Targeted surveys
- Conservation plans
- Biodiversity signage
- Local pollution prevention initiatives
- Match funding towards a relevant project partially funded under another scheme e.g. LEADER, FLAGs.

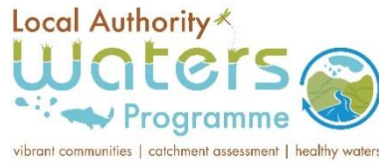
For project ideas and Case Studies see:

Local Authority Waters Programme in house Publication 2019: A Guide for Community Groups – Working with Water and Biodiversity	Publications - Local Authority Water Programme (lawaters.ie)
Database of projects previously funded under the Community Water Development Fund	http://www.lawaters.ie
River restoration demonstration projects in the UK	http://www.therrc.co.uk/demonstration-projects-0
River Restoration and Biodiversity	http://www.ecrr.org/Portals/27/River%20Restoration%20and%20biodiversity_web_1.pdf
Restoring Europe’s Rivers: Case study - Tolka Valley Park at Finglas	https://restorerivers.eu/wiki/index.php?title=Case_study%3ATolka_Valley_Park_at_Finglas
Restoring Europe’s Rivers: Case study - MulkearLIFE	https://restorerivers.eu/wiki/index.php?title=Case_study%3AMulkear_Life_Project

5. Non-Eligible Projects and Activities

The Community Water Development Fund will not formally fund activities involving:

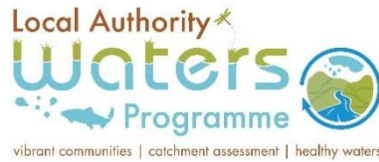
- Projects that solely benefit an individual
- Teaching/staffing in schools
- Travel and transport costs except in exceptional circumstances
- Equipment, unless directly associated with the project
- Income generating projects
- Overheads, ongoing running costs
- Insurance
- Accommodation and subsistence
- Staff costs



6. Funding

6.1 Funding Categories

Category	Description (See 6.2 below to find water body status)	Assessment Criteria	Max Rate of Grant Aid
1. Large scale projects	<p>Projects should be at a catchment scale, promote an integrated catchment approach and be led by local communities.</p> <p>Priority will be given to projects in Blue Dot/high status objective areas or Priority Areas for Action.</p>	<p>Status of waterbody (1-5) Community/landowner/public body engagement (1-5) Actions Proposed (1-5) Potential impact on catchment (1-5) Ability to finance and manage the project (1-5)</p>	€25,000
2. Medium scale projects	<p>Priority must involve some capital works.</p> <p>Priority will be given to projects in Blue Dot/high status objective areas or Priority Areas for Action.</p>	<p>Status of waterbody (1-5) Community/landowner/public body engagement (1-5) Actions proposed (1-5) Benefit to Community (1-5) Ability to finance and manage the project (1-5)</p>	€5,000 to €10,000
3. Small scale projects	<p>These projects will provide 'community gain' or benefit' relevant to good water stewardship.</p> <p>Priority will be given to projects in Blue Dot/high status objective areas or Priority Areas for Action.</p>	<p>Status of waterbody (1-5) Community/landowner/public body engagement (1-5) Actions proposed (1-5) Benefit to Community (1-5) Ability to finance and manage the project (1-5)</p>	€1,000 to €5,000



6.2 Assessment Criteria Explained

Status of waterbody (1-5)

The status of rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters is categorised, based on scientific monitoring data as: High, Good, Moderate, Poor or Bad status. To view the status of your waterbody refer to www.catchments.ie. A number of water bodies have also been chosen as priority 'Areas for Action' where extra Local Authority resources are being focused.

To find out if you are in one of these areas go to <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water>

To check if in a <i>Priority Area for Action</i>	Click the Taking Action Tab → WFD Areas for Action
To check if an <i>At Risk</i> waterbody	Click the Status & Risk tab → WFD Risk 2nd Cycle or 3rd Cycle
To check if a <i>Blue Dot/High Status Objective</i>	Click the Status & Risk tab → High Status Objective

Project proposals involving a water bodies 'at risk' of not meeting Water Framework Directive objectives will be given a higher ranking and a higher level of grant aid may be awarded to areas in Blue Dot (high status objective) areas or Priority Areas for Action.

Community/landowner/public body engagement (1-5)

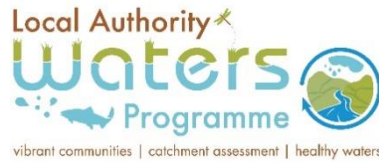
Please outline if your proposed project involves working closely and in partnership with other community groups or interests, landowners, local or public authorities, etc. Any permissions required (e.g. Planning permission, Appropriate Assessments, Strategic Environment Assessments landowner consent, lease arrangements) must be submitted with the application form. Projects with strong partnership arrangements and local involvement will be given a higher rating. Evidence of this will be seen in letters of consent. Applicants should demonstrate how they engage with the wider community.

Actions Proposed (1-5)

Proposals should be well structured, clearly defining project aims, objectives and actions. Any 'on the ground measures' and physical works proposed should be specific and detailed in as far as practicable. Proposed actions should be realistic and achievable in the timeframes of the Fund. A method statement must be included. Any positive or negative impacts on the environment, habitat or sensitive vegetation during project design, delivery and aftercare will be considered. Proposed actions which support Water Framework Directive objectives and multiple benefits to contribute to climate change mitigation and enhance biodiversity will receive a higher ranking.

Potential impact on the catchment/ benefits to the community (1-5)

Please demonstrate how your proposed project will benefit the community and if it involves actions that can be applied in other communities. Projects that demonstrate benefits to the community and that show they can be replicable elsewhere will be given a higher ranking. Projects that demonstrate a potential improvement in the water quality of the catchment will receive a higher ranking.



Ability to finance and manage the project (1-5)

Applicants must demonstrate clearly how the funding will be spent. Project budgets should be well set out and three quotations obtained as appropriate and where possible. Larger scale project proposals must demonstrate previous successful project delivery by the applicant. Clear, well-structured proposals that demonstrate good value for money, efficient use of resources and a level of match funding commitment will receive a higher rating. Projects not eligible under other funding streams will be given a higher priority.

6.3 Total Funding Available

Total funding available under the Community Water Development Fund Open Call 2024 is capped at €500,000. An additional €20,000 will be available for a project selected from a Blue Dot/High status objective to win a Blue Dot Award. Minimum grant awarded for successful projects will be €1,000 up to a maximum of €25,000.

For initiatives / events and project ideas costing less than €1,000 please discuss with your local Community Water Officer.

6.4 Project Delivery

Successful applicants must be able to demonstrate a capacity for project delivery together with appropriate project planning and governance experience.

6.5 Working in or Near Water – Consents and Environmental Assessment

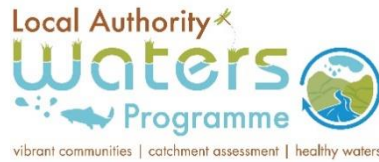
A number of potential consents or environmental assessments may be required depending on the nature of your project. Before submission of your application, consents or requirements under other relevant EU Directives should be considered (such as the EU Habitats Directive) and factored into your project delivery timelines and costs. These requirements may include the following:

6.5.1 Fisheries

Any instream works will require consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). The IFI are the state agency responsible for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources.

Works both instream and along banks can have a potential impact on salmonid spawning activity and habitat. It is critically important that works do not impact the integrity of the river habitat. Removal of spawning gravels and discharge of silt-laden water to fisheries streams is of particular concern.

There are significant variations in the timing and duration of salmonid (Salmon and Trout) spawning activity throughout the Republic of Ireland. To minimise adverse impacts on the fisheries resource works in rivers, streams, watercourses, lakes, reservoirs and pond should normally (Except in exceptional circumstances and with agreement of IFI) be carried out



during the period July-September¹, April-July should be avoided for Lamprey spawning waters.

Given the many variations in spawning activity across the country is critically important that you engage with your local **Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) office** <https://www.fisheriesireland.ie/>

6.5.2 Natura 2000 Sites & Activities Requiring Consent (ARC)

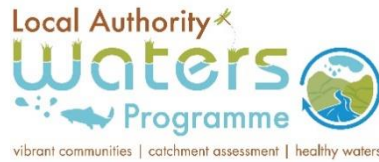
If your project is located in, or has the potential to impact on a NATURA 2000 site (a nature protection area) through hydrological connectivity i.e. a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA), either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, it may require an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening (Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process) under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This must be carried out by a suitably competent Ecologist. If significant effects cannot be excluded, a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will be required in order for the project to proceed. To determine if your project falls within a Natura 2000 site or within the hydrological catchment of a Natura 2000 site, see NPWS Designations Viewer (arcgis.com) or <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water> (protected areas tab and conservation areas tab).

It is important to note that while your project may not be located within a Natura 2000 site there may be an indirect connection via a waterbody to an SAC or SPA. For example, if you are carrying out bank or instream works on a stream this may cause impacts downstream to species and/or habitats of an SAC/SPA. Species designated as qualifying interest of an SAC or SPA may use lands outside of the SAC/SPA boundary, for example an otter may move from a coastal or river SAC and use lands adjacent to the area for foraging and breeding. This may also be true for bird's species in SPAs. Therefore, it is critically important projects outside of SACs and SPAs are considered for indirect impacts to SAC and SPAs.

Activities requiring consent are specific activities which have the potential to damage a SAC or SPA. A list of 38 ARCs has been established by the NPWS and while mainly for landowners, they can at times be relevant for projects. A list of the ARCs can be viewed here: [Activities Requiring Consent | National Parks & Wildlife Service \(npws.ie\)](https://www.npws.ie/activities-requiring-consent). These include for example tracks, paths or access routes, removal or alteration of fences, clearing of scrub etc.

Consent to carry out works on a Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is required from NPWS. In Ireland there are 148 NHAs that have been designated by Statutory Instrument. They are all bogs, either raised or blanket. Landowners are required to apply for permission to the Minister under Regulation 19 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 to carry out certain works on a NHA. This prior consent requirement ensures that the Minister carries out the

¹ Guidelines on protection of fisheries during construction works in and adjacent to waters, Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2016.



necessary environmental assessment to determine if the activity can take place and if any conditions should be attached to any consent given.

The Wildlife Act, 1976-2023, is the principal national legislation providing for the protection of wildlife and the control of some activities that may adversely affect wildlife. Many species which occur outside of SACs and SPAs may be protected under the Wildlife Act. Before commencing a project, you must consider impacts to species protected under the Wildlife Act. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) may be required to identify if there are protected habitats and/or species using your proposed project site. If mitigation is required, an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) Report should be completed to ensure no impacts to protected habitats and species.

In recent years, amendments have been made to the Wildlife Act and therefore it is recommended that you engage with your local ranger on what species or habitat may be within your project zone of influence. **Your National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) local ranger** <https://www.npws.ie/>

6.6 Evidence of Relevant Consents and Environmental Assessments

LAWPRO will require evidence of the relevant consents and environmental assessments e.g. appropriate assessment screening, **before** projects start, and a close working relationship with the Community Water Officer for projects of this nature will be considered mandatory. Method Statements may be required, in order to fully scope out the nature of the project and the consents required of national bodies such as NPWS.

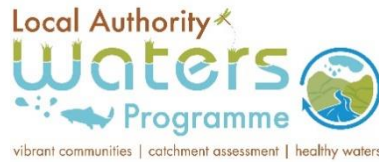
If the scope of your project changes following grant approval or during the course of the works, you must inform your CWO as further consents or assessments may be required.

6.7 Invasive Species

Projects addressing the spread of aquatic or riparian invasive species are eligible, collectively, up to a maximum of 20% of overall fund budget. The use of herbicide or pesticide within a river or stream or within 30m of a river or stream is classed as a Notifiable Action (the National Parks & Wildlife Services must be notified and permission granted by the Minister).

6.8 Citizen Science

A scheme that generates compatible data for Citizen Science monitoring using aquatic macroinvertebrates has been developed. In keeping with this standard, projects that involve the procurement of a Trainer to train volunteers in Citizen Science aquatic macroinvertebrate monitoring techniques are encouraged to use either the Citizen Science Stream Index (CSSI) or the Small Stream Impact Score (SSIS). The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/> are in the process of developing an



online repository. Until this is developed, all recordings should be submitted to your local Community Water Officer.

6.9 Cash Contributions

It is not a grant condition, but it is recommended that applicants can demonstrate their ability to make a cash contribution commitment to projects of a minimum amount of 5% of total project costs. A higher rate of cash contribution shows greater commitment to the project. Proposals that demonstrate good value for money, efficient use of resources and a level of match funding commitment will receive a higher rating in the assessment process.

6.10 Voluntary Labour

Voluntary Labour is a legitimate contribution @ max €14 per hour. If you would like to include voluntary labour, please ensure to complete the Voluntary Labour Schedule in Appendix 1 of the Application Form.

6.11 Geographical Spread and Project Selection

An even geographical spread of funded projects according to the Local Authority Waters Programme regional structure is desirable (see www.lawaters.ie for regional structure). Projects will initially be assessed on a regional and scale of project basis. Where there is an insufficient number of eligible applicants meeting the selection criteria from one region, the office reserves the right to grant aid projects from another region. Projects will be evaluated in a manner that reflects the level of funding sought by the applicant and in line with the assessment criteria.

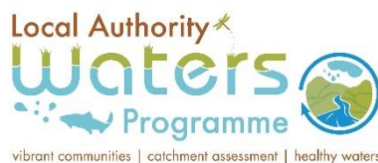
6.12 Letter(s) of Support

Where the involvement or help of another party is required for the success of your project, please include letter(s) of support outlining their agreement to participate and the extent of their involvement.

6.13 Insurance

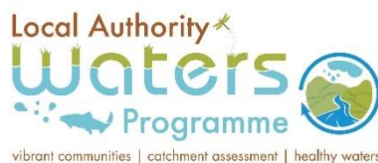
If your project proposes physical work or voluntary labour your group will require appropriate insurance. Standard request for community groups in receipt of Exchequer grant aid is €6.5m indemnity in respect of public liability. Employers liability (including cover for volunteers) should have a minimum indemnity of no less than €13m.

In the event of grant approval, you may be required by this office to amend the policy to include a special indemnity in favour of Tipperary County Council (as provider of the finance function to the Local Authority Waters Programme). If the project involves permissions from landowners, they should also be indemnified on the insurance policy. Sub-contractors are required to have their own in insurance policy.



7. Terms & Conditions of the Fund

7.1	Successful applicants will receive a Letter of Offer and Grant Agreement from the office of the Local Authority Waters Programme via email.
7.2	Grant Agreement must be signed by the beneficiary and returned to the office of the Waters Programme within 14 days by email or post. This will form a contract between the beneficiary and the office of the Waters Programme.
7.3	Grants awarded will only be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer into the beneficiaries bank account.
7.4	Phased payments will be considered on a case by case basis on completion of a drawdown request form. Progress report will be required for each phase.
7.5	A member of the Local Authority Waters Programme team will provide project oversight to ensure project delivery.
7.6	Unsuccessful applicants will be notified and will be informed of the appeals process.
7.7	Appropriate insurances and indemnities must be in place upon commencement of the project.
7.8	The Local Authority Waters Programme will not be responsible or liable for any loss or damage of any kind arising during the course of any work undertaken on a project by the beneficiary.
7.9	The management, implementation and operation of compliance with health and safety legislation for projects funded is the responsibility of the funding applicants.
7.10	It is the responsibility of the applicant to have a policy and procedures in place for the Protection and Safeguarding of Children.
7.11	Any permissions required for project delivery are the responsibility of the applicant and evidence of same must be produced.
7.12	The Local Authority Waters Programme reserves the right to contact other funding bodies such as LEADER, IFI, Heritage Council, Local Authorities, Waterways Ireland etc. regarding project applications.
7.13	The office of the Local Authority Waters Programme may request further information if project application is not sufficiently complete.
7.14	Project activity should be complete by 31st October 2024 . Beneficiaries must submit a drawdown request form, and submit all receipts for invoices paid before 15th November 2024 .
7.15	Any extensions to report deadlines must be agreed by a member of the Waters Programme team.
7.16	If a drawdown request form and a project completion report is not received, the Local Authority Waters Programme may consider that the project is not progressing. The grant awarded may be revoked or reduced if any of the following events should occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The beneficiary abandons the project or reduces the scale of the investment provided for, or - It is found that the award has not been used for the purposes for which it was intended, or - That the investment financed by the award has not been properly carried out or that irregularities in relation to the grant have occurred, or - An order is made, or an effective resolution is passed, for the winding up of the beneficiary.



	- In any case in which payment of a grant is reduced, suspended or cancelled or where the award is revoked or reduced, the beneficiary will be required to reimburse any relevant amounts to the Office.
7.17	Applicants may choose to combine this scheme with other sources of grant aid however, there should be no duplication of funding for the same activity/project.
7.18	Recognition must be given to the Local Authority Waters Programme in any promotional material associated with the project including the use of the Waters Programme logo on publicity material (such as flyers, leaflets, Reports, etc) and must be submitted with the project summary report.
7.19	Applicants must submit a project summary report and include pictures, video clips, media articles, etc., as appropriate.
7.20	Applicants are encouraged to host a water related event during 2024 where possible, for example during National Spring Clean (April); National Biodiversity Week (May); Heritage Week (August).
7.21	The Local Authority Waters Programme may use project details in promotional material and for reporting purposes.
7.22	Public sector requirements apply for procurement. www.procurement.ie
7.23	Where applicable, grantees must, produce a current tax clearance certificate from the Revenue Commissioners (where grants exceed €10,000).
7.24	In the event of failure by a beneficiary to comply with any or all of the foregoing conditions payment of the grant awarded may be suspended, reduced or cancelled.

8. Data Protection and Freedom of Information

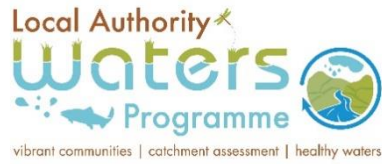
When a grant application is received by the Local Authority Waters Programme, a record is created in your name from the information you provide. The information will be stored by the office of the Waters Programme, where relevant, in paper/electronic form. Information that is collected by the Office, including information that you give us, is added to the record. You have the right, given by the Data Protection Act of 1988 and 2003 to a copy of your information at any time. The Office is also subject to the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 1997.

The information we record is used only for the following purposes:

- Processing of applications;
- Auditing of applications;
- Compiling statistical information to help us plan and improve our services;
- Analysing information about applicants for other bodies such as various Government Departments;
- Producing our own statistics for publication;
- Publication of applicant and project details (including photography) for publicity and promotional purposes.

9. Checklist

A checklist is included as part of the application form as an important reference document and must be ticked.

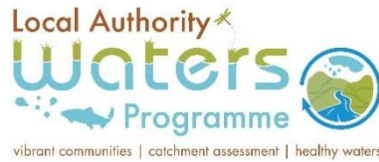


10. Closing Date

Closing Date Deadlines	
Applications via Online Platform www.lawaters.ie	Wednesday, 6th December 2023 at 12 Noon

11. Further Information

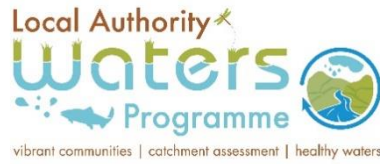
For more information please contact your local Community Water Officer or send an email to funding@laters.ie



12. Community Water Officers Contact Details

Community Water Officers work closely with local communities, public bodies, Local Development Companies and other stakeholders to promote collaboration in the management of rivers and other water environments. You are obliged to contact your local Community Water Officer prior to submitting an application.

Name	Areas	Mobile	Email
South West			
Catherine Seale	Cork	085 8085533	cseale@lawaters.ie
Colum Walsh	Kerry	085 8709575	cwalsh@lawaters.ie
Ruairí Ó Conchúir	Clare, Limerick, Tipperary	085 8083715	roconchuir@lawaters.ie
West			
Conor Ruane	Galway & South Roscommon	085 8083059	cruane@lawaters.ie
Tom Carolan	Mayo & North Roscommon	0858709612	tomcarolan@lawaters.ie
Midlands & East			
Justin Ivory	Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Wicklow, Kildare	085 8820848	jivory@lawaters.ie
Éanna Gallagher	South Dublin, Dublin City, Fingal	085 8716896	egallagher@lawaters.ie
Cathal Flood	Offaly, Westmeath, Laois, Meath	085 8541258	cflood@lawaters.ie
South East			
Ann Phelan	Kilkenny, Waterford, Carlow Wexford	085 8084067	aphelan@lawaters.ie
Border			
Jimmy McVeigh	Donegal	085 8085603	jmcveigh@lawaters.ie
Luke Kenny	Sligo, Leitrim, Longford	085 8085495	lkenny@lawaters.ie
Vacant – Queries to Head Office in the interim	Louth, Cavan, Monaghan	087 2436804	funding@lawaters.ie
Head Office – Funding Queries			
Sheevaun Thompson	Head Office, Clonmel, Co Tipperary	087 2436804	sthompson@lawaters.ie



13. Community Water Development Fund Timelines

28 Sept 2023	• Launch of open call
6 Dec 2023	• Closing date
6 Dec 2023 - 12 Jan 2024	• Screening/additional info/analysis
15 Jan – 26 Jan	• Internal evaluation
Week of 29 Jan	• External evaluation
Week of 29 Jan	• Review and sign off by Management
Week of 5 Feb	• Letters of offer and grant agreement
31 Oct	• Project completion deadline
15 Nov	• Final report and drawdown forms

“The Local Authority Waters Programme works with all 31 local authorities, relevant State agencies, stakeholders and communities with a shared goal of meeting the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive to have all natural waters at a good standard by 2027. This scheme harnesses community involvement which is borne out in the successful projects such as river clean ups and biodiversity information forums.”

– Minister of State Malcolm Noonan TD