



LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund

Guidelines 2024



**This scheme is subject to the availability of funding to the
Local Authority Waters Programme in 2024**

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Introduction

LAWPRO works on behalf of Ireland's 31 Local Authorities to protect and restore good water quality in our rivers, lakes, estuaries, ground and coastal waters, through catchment science and community engagement. LAWPRO was established to fulfil requirements under the European Union Water Framework Directive and is funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. LAWPRO coordinates the efforts of local authorities and other public bodies in the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan.

A key element of LAWPRO's activity is to foster stronger local partnerships through the continued support and development of bodies who can provide additional vital water quality services to communities and support the objectives of the draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027.

One of the ways we do this is by administering the LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund.

Objective of the Fund

The LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund aims to build the capacity of non-governmental organisations working in the area of water quality in Ireland by providing funding towards their core costs.

This funding would provide support to:

- develop and strengthen the skills, processes, and resources that catchment organisations need to survive, adapt, and thrive.
- water quality focused organisations who play a key role in the protection and restoration of the river and stream network of Ireland and help in achieving the objectives of national policy and plans.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to not-for-profit non-governmental water focused organisations with demonstrated catchment relevance.

Organisations that fit the following criteria are eligible to apply:

- **Company Type:** Your not-for-profit organisation must be established as a Company limited by guarantee (CLG) and must not be controlled either directly or indirectly by any state or other body if applying for Strand 2 funding. Specific purpose water quality organisations may be considered under strand 1.

- **Constitution requirements:** The constitution of the organisation must prohibit the payment of remuneration to the directors.
- **Interaction with LAWPRO:** Organisations that have a track record of interacting with LAWPRO community and/or science teams. This interaction should continue for the application stage in applying for funding and for the duration of the project.
- **Proven Delivery:** Organisations that have proven delivery in the area of water quality improvement projects including projects funded under the Community Water Development Fund.
- **Priority Areas:** Groups operating in Blue Dot/high status objective areas, Priority Areas for Action and Community Fora pilot catchments will be given priority.
- **Demonstrated catchment relevance:** The organisation must carry out work that has application at a catchment scale or, its work is being used to inform policies at a catchment scale.
- **Organisational work plan:** The organisation must be undertaking innovative actions that provide clear outcomes that assist in the delivery of the Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027 and any other relevant national plans, regional, county and local plans.
- **Purpose of the Organisation:** The purpose must relate to one or more of the objectives as set out in the draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027.

Ineligible Organisations

Private companies, individuals, public bodies or organisations controlled either directly or indirectly by any state or other body are not eligible to apply for funding under this scheme.

Funding Available

The LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund is divided into two strands; Strands 1 and Strand 2. Organisations can apply for Strand 1 or Strand 2 or both strands together.

- **Strand 1:** This fund will support costs such as; insurance associated with catchment management, statutory and/or legal responsibilities, accounting, auditing, organisational promotional material and website costs, group development activities (e.g., Development of group plan/strategy; group management; governance assistance).

We envisage grant offers will range from €500 – €5,000.

- **Strand 2:** This fund will support the organisation's core costs. We envisage the average grant offers for strand 2 to be in the region of €20,000 – €40,000. Applications above this will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Funding will be allocated on a competitive basis. This will be in line with the assessment criteria set out below.

How and when to apply

You must apply through LAWPRO's online grants system located on our website www.lawwaters.ie. We only accept forms submitted online. We do not provide or accept paper forms. To consider your application, we must receive your online application along with supporting documents by: **Tuesday, 16th April 2024 at 5pm**. Applications, or additional information will not be accepted after this time. We will let you know, in writing, whether your application is successful or not within four weeks of the deadline.

Please Note: Only one application can be made per organisation.

What we can Fund (Strand 1)

The following cost are eligible under strand 1:

- Statutory and/or legal responsibilities
- Insurance, associated with catchment management
- Auditing/accounting
- Website annual support cost
- Organisation promotional materials
- Group development activities (e.g., Development of group plan/strategy; group management; governance assistance).

What we can Fund (Strand 2)

Strand 1 costs plus:

- Funding towards your organisation's core costs. Core costs include existing staff salaries, rent, rates
- Costs to help your organisation be more resilient in the future, for example, adapting business plans, corporate governance improvements, risk management reviews and piloting new ways of working
- Training and skills development costs.
- Hiring of new or contract staff to help deliver the organisations work

programme A clear job description for the post must be provided with your application.

National Living Wage: LAWPRO supports organizations in receipt of LAWPRO funding paying employees the real living wage.

Supporting Information

You **must** submit the following supporting documents with your application:

(a) Constitution (Strands 1 and 2)

The Constitution of your organisation.

(b) Accounts

Strand 1

Most recent Bank Statement.

Strand 2

Most recent audited or accountant verified accounts.

(c) Background information (Strands 1 and 2)

Background information on your organisation such as your most recent Annual Report, Strategic Plan, partnership agreements, and so on.

(d) Costed Work Plan (Strand 2 only)

Completed Cost Work Plan

- i) The costed work plan should include the 2024 budget. We need information that allows us to assess budgets, the feasibility of what you are proposing, and who you are working with. The budget should provide details of expenditure areas and other sources of income.
- ii) Actions and initiatives clearly linked to the following:
 - Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 - 2027
 - National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 - 2030
 - And any other relevant national plans.

Support letters (Strand 2 only)

A minimum of two letters of support from key external stakeholders or other organisations you work closely with (this can include local authorities, state agencies and departments, and other natural heritage NGOs and community groups working in the catchments).

Outcomes of your Work Plan

In the table below, we list examples of outcomes that we would like to be achieved as a result of this grant fund. Outcomes are changes, impacts, benefits, or any effects which happen as a result of your work. The number of outcomes you achieve will vary depending on the actions in your work plan and should be proportionate to the size of grant you are requesting or the specific focus of your work plan.

We expect work plans to achieve some outcomes more strongly than others. Please focus on the outcomes that are strongest. If you are successful in your application, you will use them in your final report to LAWPRO.

You must choose **at least two** outcomes from the below table and identify actions proposed in your application:

Outcome	Possible Actions
<p>The funded organisation will be more resilient.</p> <p>We want our funding to help your organisation strengthen its ability to respond to challenges and opportunities in order to secure its long-term future and financial sustainability.</p>	<p>The kinds of things that could help you do this include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing your governance to ensure that you have the right mix of skills to help your organisation thrive. • Exploring new operating models • Updating and developing business plans / strategic plans in relation to current conditions. • Developing advocates and / or 'local catchment champions' to support your organisation and its work • Decreasing your costs • Creating efficiencies in how you work • Forging sustainable partnerships and mutually beneficial collaborations to share resources • Leveraging funding from other sources.
<p>A wider range of people will be involved in water quality.</p> <p>We want our funding to help you make your organisation more inclusive through co-creation and by removing barriers that have previously excluded certain groups and people.</p>	<p>The kinds of things that could help you do this include, but are not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to understand your audience demographics and who is currently underrepresented in what you do. • Work to understand and remove barriers to participation in your water quality activities. • The development of co-creation as your organisation's way of operating. • Collaboration with community groups and agencies working with excluded groups.

Outcome	Possible Actions
<p>Water Quality Awareness.</p>	<p>We want LAWPRO funding to help you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of Water Quality and the collective goal of improving water quality under the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. • Generate greater understanding of the objectives of the draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 –27. • Increase awareness of biosecurity in the water environment for all users.
<p>The funded organisation will be more skilled, confident and diverse.</p>	<p>We want LAWPRO funding to help you to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and diversify your workforce (which includes both paid staff and volunteers and board members or trustee) so that you are better equipped to address the challenges and opportunities that your organisation encounters. • Collaborate with other natural heritage and non- sector organisations to share skills and knowledge.

How we Assess your Application

Once your application is submitted, we will check it first to make sure your organisation meets the criteria for eligibility and that all supporting information has been provided. Applications that do not pass this stage will not be assessed further.

Applications that pass the initial checking stage proceed through the following stages:

- a) An internal review and shortlisting. Applications must score at least 10 marks under each heading to pass.
- b) Senior management approval of recommended applications.

This is a competitive process and funding will be allocated to applications that score highest against the four Criteria listed in the table below.

Criteria	Marks
Relevance of work plan to support the delivery of the draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027, the delivery of SDGs and the work of LAWPRO	25
Organisational capacity, including track record of delivery to date and the feasibility to deliver work plan	25
Financial, value for money and governance information	25
Impact of funding, measurable against water quality actions and Article 14 Water Framework Directive	25

Assessors will consider applications using their professional judgment based on the information you provide within the application, knowledge of the previous work of your organisation, and the competitive context in which all applications are evaluated.

Each criterion will be scored 1 - 25. The scores are indicative and are based on the contents of the application.

1. **Poor (0-5):** The information provided lacks the detail and content to allow an assessment against the criteria to take place.
2. **Not Sufficient (6-10):** While the application answers the criteria at a minimum level, there are areas where detail is missing, or the information is unclear.
3. **Sufficient (11-15):** The application has addressed most of the criteria. There are some gaps.
4. **Good (16-20):** The application addresses the criteria very well. Any gaps are minor, and not material to addressing criteria.
5. **Excellent (21-25):** Indicates the application addresses all relevant aspects of the Criteria. There are no gaps, all concerns are addressed.

Criteria 1: Relevance of work plan to support the delivery of the draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027 and delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

We will assess:

- The outcomes of your proposal to support the objectives of the draft River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027.
- How your organisation integrates SDGs into your work plan.

We will consider:

- The kind of work your organisation does. This will include the catchment context in which your organisation operates and the track record of delivery to date.
- The expected outputs of your work programme. This will include what measures and actions your organisation plans to take in 2024 in relation to water quality and integrated catchment management.

In assessing applications, LAWPRO needs to ensure that an appropriate range and balance of work is supported by the LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund.

Criteria 2: Organisational Capacity and Feasibility to deliver work plan

We will assess:

- The track record of your organisation. We will review the feasibility of the 2024 work plan.
- The quality and availability of your organisation team and other resources to achieve the actions as set out in the 2024 work plan.
- We will ensure that you have the necessary permissions and authorisations required for your 2024 workplan.

Criteria 3: Financial, value for money and governance information

We will assess:

- The feasibility of your budget to the outputs detailed in your workplan.
- The financial resilience of the organisation (including financial controls, financial planning and any planned developments for 2024).
- The quality and completeness of the financial information you provide.
- Consideration will be given to whether your organisation is more able to support the activity from your own reserves than other applicants that are

applying, or whether you have more funding avenues open to you than other applicants.

- Whether the work plan represents reasonable value for money in terms of the amount of funding requested when compared with the outputs and results it will achieve.

Criteria 4: Impact of Funding

We will consider:

- Your planned actions and measurable outcomes.
- The overall positive environmental impact of your work plan.
- The delivery of an in-person awareness raising event.
- Water literacy in your local area/catchment.

Supporting Documents

Please refer to the checklist on Page 16 to ensure all required supporting documents are included in the application. Failure to provide the required supporting documents will negatively impact your application or may result in your application being ineligible. Supporting documents cannot be submitted once the closing date has passed.

Funding Decision

We will contact all applicants in writing in early May 2024 to advise them of the outcome of applications. If your application is successful, you will be asked to sign a grant agreement agreeing to LAWPRO Terms & Conditions. Please note that all successful applicant organisations must commit to activities relating to public engagement and project promotion.

Awareness Raising Events

All organisations offered funding by LAWPRO (Strand 2) must undertake at least one awareness raising or public engagement activity to promote their work during the duration of the funding. Events can be run during National Heritage Week, National Biodiversity Week or anytime outside of these weeks. Organisations offered funding by LAWPRO (Strand 1) are not obliged but are encouraged to undertake at least one event.

Project Promotion and Acknowledging Funding

All organisations offered funding must include appropriate acknowledgment of the LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund in 2024, and comply with our guidelines. Recipients of LAWPRO funding must acknowledge LAWPRO when speaking about their project and in any printed or online publicity for example social media, digital resources, radio or tv interviews, and any type of printed materials. If successful, you will receive a communications plan with your grant letter of offer.

Reporting and Funding

If the application is successful, the applicant organisation will be responsible for all costs related to the application submitted. The applicant is responsible for the submission of a detailed final report and evidence of expenditure to LAWPRO before the deadline of 15th November 2024.

Applicants must confirm commencement of their work, in writing to LAWPRO in a timely manner and must work closely with LAWPRO during the funding period.

How we pay the Grant

You will receive your grant after we have assessed the final report and found it to be satisfactory. However, you can choose to have two interim grant payments.

Grant payment(s) will be based on:

- submission of detailed activity report
- evidence of expenditure relating to the grant offer

Under Department of Finance rules, we are obliged to seek proof of payment from grantees before releasing grant monies. However, we will be seeking approval to make payments based on evidence of expenditure. Successful applicants will be advised of any changes in requirements.

Please note: If your organisation does not have charitable tax exemption from Revenue you will have to have current Tax Clearance verification in place to receive grant payments of €10,000 and over.

Canvassing

Canvassing by TDs, Senators, or City/County Councilors on behalf of an applicant will automatically disqualify an application. This does not preclude applicants from seeking advice or letters of support from their Local Authority Heritage/Biodiversity/Climate Officers or any other relevant body.

Applications are subject to Freedom of Information Acts.

Appeals Process

LAWPRO is committed to providing open, accountable, and accessible systems and procedures in all areas of its work. Applicants may appeal against a funding decision. Please email funding@lawaters.ie if you wish to make an appeal.

Closing date for Applications

We must receive your online application along with supporting documents by:
Tuesday 16th April 2024 at 5 pm.

We wish you the best with your application.

Checklist

Use this checklist to review your application materials. If you have uploaded all the items on the checklist and have completed all the questions on the online application form you are ready to submit your application.

Supporting documents **must** be uploaded with your application:

No	Document Type	Strand 1 Requirement	Strand 2 Requirement
1.	The Constitution of your organisation	✓	✓
2.	Most recent audited or accountant verified accounts/financial statement		✓
3.	Most Recent Bank Statement	✓	✓
4.	Background information on your organisation such as your most recent Annual Report, Strategic Plan, partnership agreements, etc.	✓	✓
5.	A costed work plan		✓
6.	A minimum of two letters of support from key stakeholders or other organisations you work closely with.		✓
7.	A list of outcomes and actions that will be achieved from your workplan		✓
8.	For applications that include the hiring of new staff, you must provide a clear job description for the post		✓
9.	Evidence of Tax Clearance from Revenue for application > €10,000		✓



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