

Organisational Strategy 2025 – 2028



We work with all stakeholders to
protect and restore water quality and
help deliver a sustainable future for
the benefit of all



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Foreword

I am delighted to present the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) organisational strategy for 2025-2028.



THE STRATEGY SETS OUT our mission, vision, goals and objectives as an organisation. It will reinforce our purpose as an organisation and our role within the context of local government.

Our senior management team invested a lot of time creating this strategy to define what LAWPRO does, while ensuring our core objectives align with the Water Action Plan for the years ahead.

LAWPRO's principal mission is to engage and support communities, provide scientific evidence to inform the implementation of water quality measures, and to coordinate and collaborate with local authorities, public bodies and stakeholders to protect and care for the natural waters and catchments of Ireland.

Our strategic goals and objectives direct our work programme and the outcomes we want to achieve in this strategy. Our values underpin the way we do our work, and the important role our staff play within the water quality sphere across the country.

While there is significant work and collaboration taking place as part of implementation of the Water Action Plan, we are still unfortunately facing a significant challenge to turn around the decline in our water quality in Ireland.

Our rivers and transitional waters are suffering from continued and persistent declines. Targeted action will continue to be key to addressing water quality issues. Through collaboration and targeted action, improvements in water quality can be achieved.

Thank you to the Oversight Committee for their continued guidance and support to LAWPRO.

Finally, I would like to thank all LAWPRO staff for their continued dedication and enthusiasm for the work they do to support the key ambition of achieving and maintaining good water quality in Ireland.

Anthony Coleman

Director of Services

Local Authority Waters Programme



We protect and care for
the natural waters and
catchments of Ireland

Who we are

The Local Authority Waters Programme is a national shared service for local government in Ireland, representing all 31 Local Authorities.

WE ARE FUNDED BY the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and managed jointly by Kilkenny and Tipperary County Councils. We work on behalf of local authorities to facilitate regional coordination, public participation, and support the Minister and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the development and implementation of River Basin Management Plans.

LAWPRO serves as a national Water Framework Directive office, dedicated to enhancing water management and environmental protection across the country. The Water Framework Directive is an EU framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater. It aims to prevent and reduce pollution,

promote sustainable water use, protect and improve the aquatic environment and mitigate the effects of floods and droughts.

Our primary role is to support the achievement of the Water Framework Directive objectives as set out in the River Basin Management Plans and accompanying Programmes of Measures. These plans and measures are reviewed and updated every six years and the third cycle River Basin Management Plan – Water Action Plan 2024 is currently being implemented.





Our Mission

To protect and restore the natural waters of Ireland through co-ordinating and collaborating with local authorities, other public bodies and stakeholders, engaging and supporting communities and providing scientific evidence to inform the implementation of water quality measures.



Our Vision

A country where all rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, ground, and coastal waters, are of the highest quality supported by a healthy ecosystem and managed through a programme of measures implemented by all.

Our Values



Stewardship

Respecting the importance of water as part of our broader environmental ecosystem



Collaboration

Working with all stakeholders to protect and restore water quality and help deliver a sustainable future



Innovation

Pioneering advancements in science and capacity building within communities to create innovative opportunities to improve water management



Trustworthiness

Ensuring that professionalism and transparency are the cornerstones of everything we do as an organisation



Development

Supporting and developing our staff, enabling them to deliver their roles to the highest standard while fostering their professional growth



Sustainability

Aligning our work with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to contribute to global sustainability objectives

Strategic Goals

- Goal 1** →  **LEAD** in the management and delivery of LAWPRO actions under the Water Action Plan
- Goal 2** →  **ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE** in our work through communications, collaboration and coordination
- Goal 3** →  **BUILD CAPACITY** within communities to increase participation in water quality management
- Goal 4** →  **GATHER AND DISSEMINATE** catchment science data to support targeted implementation of measures
- Goal 5** →  **DELIVER INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS** to overcome identified challenges

What we do

LAWPRO’s work programme combines to deliver on our strategic goals and the actions assigned under the Water Action Plan 2024.

THE WATER ACTION PLAN defines our remit, which informs our work programme and directs how we work. LAWPRO is uniquely placed to work with all stakeholders to deliver on the overall objective of improved and protected water quality.

Figure 1: What we do (Remit), How we do it (Impact) and Why we do it (Water Quality Outcomes)

<p>What we provide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAWPRO work programme aligned with the Water Action Plan • Shared service to local authorities • Efficient and effective service delivery • Expertise • Capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data management • Catchment characterisation • Scientific innovation • Development of resources and tools • Guidance and training • LAWPRO supported initiatives
<p>What we impact directly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Committees • Relationship with Local Authorities and other implementing bodies • Training delivery • Guidance and direction of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Community Funding schemes • National Technical Implementation Group • Specific initiatives
<p>What we impact indirectly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work programmes of implementing bodies • Sectoral Action Work Plans and Catchment Management Work Plans • Local Authority Action Plans • Catchment Community Fora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Actions • Climate Action Plans • Biodiversity Action Plans • Water relevant policies at local and national levels
<p>The outcomes we seek</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality improvement • Increased and wider understanding of water quality issues • Increased collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased public participation • Increased integration with climate and biodiversity actions



We are committed to increasing
community participation in water
quality initiatives

Organisational Structure of LAWPRO

Our senior management team comprises of a Director of Service, five Regional Coordinators and the Farming for Water European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Project Lead.

THIS TEAM IS responsible for strategic direction and overall programme delivery. The Regional Coordinators are also responsible for the regional management of the catchments and communities' teams and coordination of the five Water Framework Directive Regional Committees.

The senior management team is supported by a wider administration team to deliver the programme. This team is based in our head office in Ballingarrane, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary and consists of staff who provide financial operations support, public communications, human resources, health and safety, and IS management.

Figure 2: Local Authority Waters Programme Organisational Reporting Structure

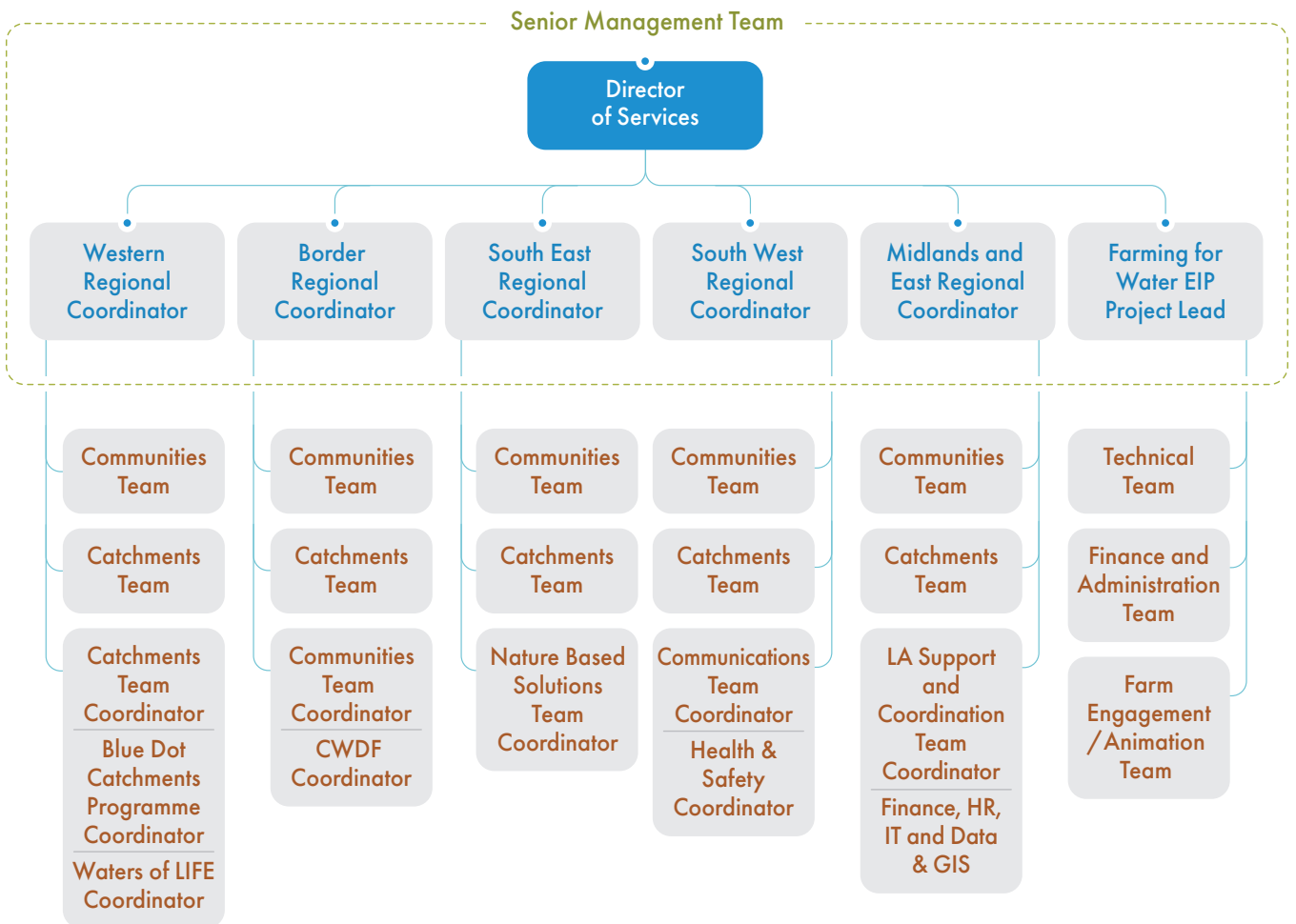
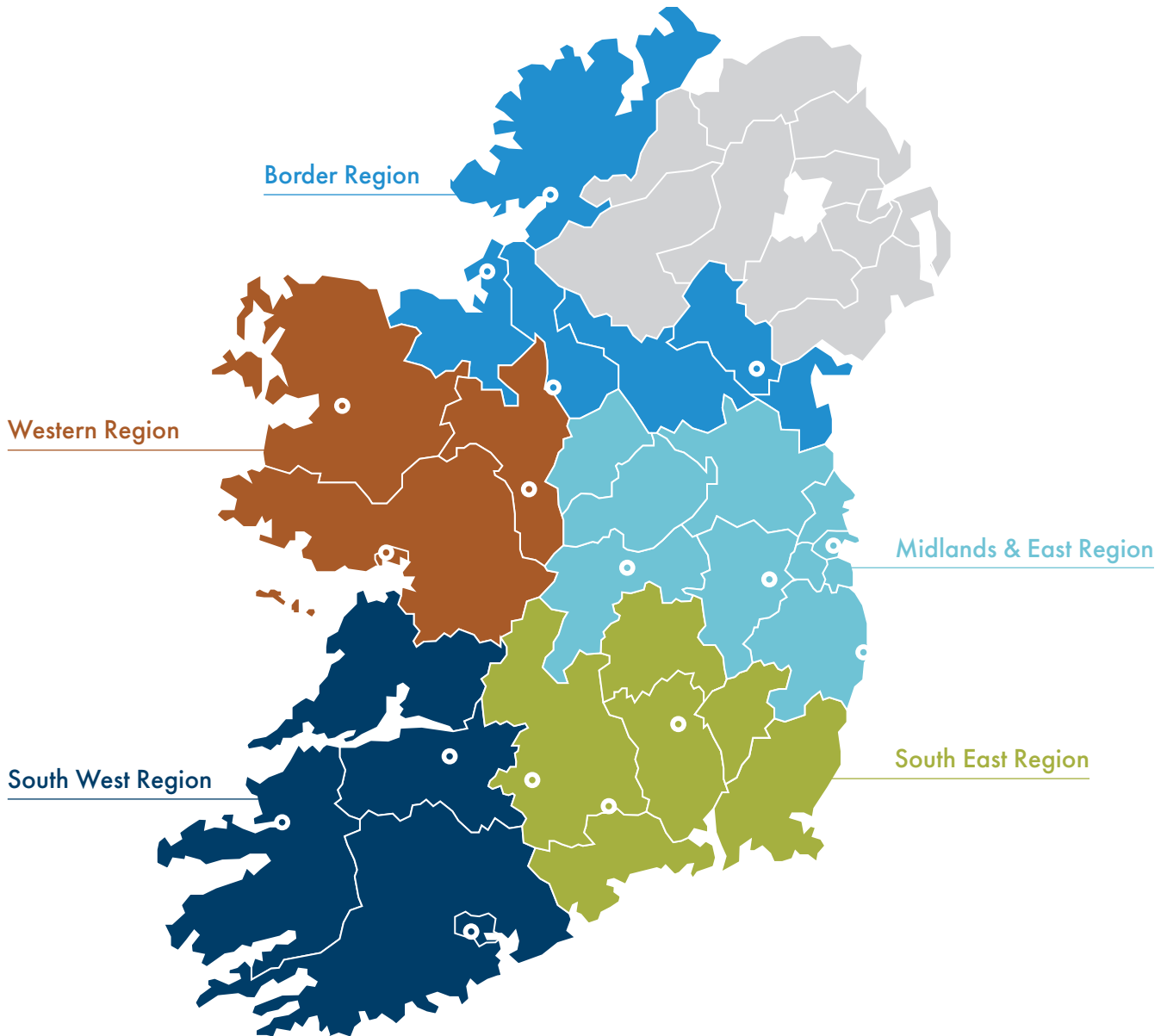


Figure 3: LAWPRO regional structure and office locations



LAWPRO offices are currently located as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Cork – Inniscarra | Leitrim – Carrick-on-Shannon | Tipperary (HQ) – Clonmel and Tipperary town |
| Donegal – Donegal town | Limerick – Croom | Wicklow – Wicklow town |
| Dublin – Dublin 8 | Mayo – Castlebar | |
| Galway City – Liosbán Estate | Monaghan – Carrickmacross | |
| Kerry – Tralee | Offaly – Tullamore | |
| Kildare – Naas | Sligo – Sligo town | |
| Kilkenny – Kilkenny city | Roscommon – Roscommon town | |

The Catchments Team comprises of Catchment Managers, Technical Leads and Catchment Scientists. The team has a range of scientific disciplines, including environmental science, agricultural science, aquatic ecology, and hydrogeology.

The Blue Dot Catchments Programme is supported by an Executive Scientist and Assistant Scientist, reporting to a Regional Coordinator. The Blue Dot Catchments Programme is a collaborative programme being delivered by a range of agencies to protect and restore our high-status objective waters.

The LAWPRO Communities Team comprises of Senior Community Water Officers and Community Water Officers who operate at a local level across the country. Community Water Officers focus on community engagement, capacity building of catchment groups, supporting the development of water quality projects and enabling delivery, as well as awareness raising activities.

In 2023, LAWPRO was awarded the Farming for Water EIP along with its project partners, Teagasc, Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) and Dairy Industry Ireland. This is a €60 million agri-environmental project providing grant funding for farmers to implement targeted actions to reduce losses of nutrients,

sediment and pesticides from agricultural lands. Working with the Project Lead, the team comprises of a Project Advisory Team, Administration and Finance roles, IS Management, Communications Lead and Community Animators.

LAWPRO has also expanded its functions in the areas of nature-based solutions and now has a team of two Senior Executive Engineers to support the implementation of the Nature-Based Solutions Strategy. Nature-based solutions mimic natural drainage processes to reduce the effect on the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff from surfaces and provide amenity and biodiversity benefits. Nature-based solutions are therefore capable of achieving all four pillars of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (water quantity, water quality, amenity and biodiversity).

In 2024, LAWPRO established a team to provide support and coordination to local authorities in their implementation of the River Basin Management Plan, including their increased agriculture inspections activity, and to support the Local Authority Services National Training Group and their provision of training to Local Authorities. This team comprises a Senior Executive Scientist and two Executive Scientists, with administrative support.

We coordinate delivery of the national Water Framework Directive initiatives and ensure efficient and effective implementation

Strategic Objectives and Outcomes

Goal 1

LEAD in the management and delivery of LAWPRO actions under the Water Action Plan 2024 (WAP)

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
Delivering LAWPRO's work programme as set out in the Water Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of annual work programmes incorporating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Actions where LAWPRO is assigned as the lead agency. – Actions where LAWPRO has been assigned a supporting role. Targets and deliverables set out in the work programme and by the LAWPRO Oversight Committee are achieved.
Ensure efficient and effective delivery of LAWPRO's work programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A well-resourced LAWPRO staff, leading to high performance, achievement of targets and the successful delivery of the programme, through improved governance, strategic direction and communication within the organisation. Enhanced budget management and financial controls enabling greater resource efficiency, providing value for money for the state. Strengthened administrative support allowing implementation of smoother operational processes. Compliance with health and safety regulations providing a safe working environment for staff. Reliable IT infrastructure and effective data management.
Facilitate five Regional Water and Environment Management Committees and five Regional Operational Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced regional and national discussions and actions through active participation in meetings and committees. Robust Regional Committee structures fulfilling their functions under the Water Action Plan.

Strategic Objectives

Outcomes

Act as a central conduit for all stakeholders to facilitate the flow of information within the Water Action Plan governance structures

- Provide support, guidance and information to key stakeholders in all three tiers of the governance structures through representation and participation on national committees and associated sub-committees by:
 - Highlighting and proposing solutions to key issues with Water Action Plan implementation
 - Developing comprehensive and actionable guidance to address issues effectively
 - Contributing to the development of water policy objectives
 - Achieving greater integration with biodiversity and climate programmes to avoid duplications of actions and funding in particular
- Supporting the County and City Management Association and associated structures to address issues related to the Water Action Plan.



Goal 2



ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE in work quality through communications, collaboration and coordination

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
<p>To communicate best practice in water quality management and increase the visibility of the work of LAWPRO through comprehensive public engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders provided with timely, relevant, and accessible communication and engagement resources, including accessible information on water policy, science and funding opportunities. Increased community participation in water quality initiatives through provision of supports and resources. Enhanced public understanding of water management issues through the delivery of awareness-raising digital and traditional campaigns, regularly reporting on activities through press releases, newsletters and annual reports. LAWPRO established as a trusted and reliable authority in water quality management through increased presence of expert spokespeople in all forms of media.
<p>Collaborate on projects that complement Water Action Plan implementation and LAWPRO's strategic objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved integration between climate, biodiversity, and water objectives through ongoing collaboration between Local Authorities, CAROs, EPA, IFI, OPW, NPWS, etc. resulting in integrated work programmes. Enhanced Water Action Plan implementation through new and existing LAWPRO-led collaborations with state agencies, third level institutions and others on national and international projects.
<p>Coordination of national Water Framework Directive initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catchment Management Work Plans are developed and implemented, with LAWPRO taking a leading role. Sectoral Action Work Plans are developed in collaboration with all sectoral leads supported by LAWPRO. A framework is established for the formation and development of local forums within catchments to build community capacity and improve Water Action Plan implementation, i.e. Catchment Community Fora. The implementation of a national water focused Citizen Science Strategy for the monitoring of water quality.

Strategic Objectives

Outcomes

The Local Authority Support and Coordination Team assists local authorities to deliver on their Water Framework Directive commitments

- Improved local authority implementation of assigned WFD objectives by:
 - Local Authority Water Action Plan template developed with assistance from LAWPRO.
 - Coordination of the local authority Water Framework Directive water sampling program.
 - Supporting the delivery of the National Agricultural Inspection Programme including the coordination of data sharing between Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and local authorities.
 - Supporting development and timely delivery of focussed water related training programmes.
- Local authorities positively engaging on policy, technical, and operational issues at regional liaison meetings, to develop solutions to address identified needs and opportunities.



Goal 3



BUILD CAPACITY within communities to increase participation in water quality management

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
<p>To empower communities to care for and manage their local water resources effectively supporting the implementation of the Water Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities actively involved in the management of their local waterbodies, supported by LAWPRO’s network of Community Water Officers. • Effective cooperation between other stakeholders and community groups ensuring the successful delivery of community-led water related initiatives and projects. • Informed and resilient communities that are aware of the importance of protecting and restoring water quality through the provision of mentoring and knowledge exchange. • Implementation of the public participation aspects of the Water Action Plan.
<p>To give communities a voice in water quality matters and a mechanism through which they can influence policy, strategies and programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LAWPRO-led local engagements, meetings, and events resulting in greater engagement and awareness of water quality matters at local authority Municipal District level. • Stronger community interaction with implementing partners through the development and adoption of a Framework for Public Participation in Water Management through the establishment of Community Catchment Fora. • Community groups actively engaging in water quality management at a sub-catchment level through the development of LAWPRO-led citizen science guidance, support and initiatives.
<p>Ensuring communities have appropriate funding streams to create awareness, build capacity, and deliver projects with water quality outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of LAWPRO community funding programmes through effective promotion, delivery and administration of all funding streams. • Delivery of projects at scale that have multiple environmental benefits through the Community Water Development Fund, Catchment Support Fund and Small Scale and Events fund. • Enhanced delivery of community water projects supported by alternative funding sources, such as LEADER, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Heritage Council, Climate and Nature Fund, LIFE, EIPs, Climate Action Fund, etc.

Goal 4



GATHER AND DISSEMINATE catchment science data to support targeted implementation of measures

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
<p>Further characterisation of waterbodies in Priority Areas for Action to establish the scientific evidence enabling implementing bodies to target activities which restore and protect natural waters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local catchment assessments completed in Priority Areas for Action by LAWPRO's catchment scientists and shared with relevant implementing bodies and the public. New significant pressures in Priority Areas for Action confirmed by carrying out detailed scientific investigation. Innovative catchment characterisation processes developed to assist the targeting of appropriate measures e.g. nitrate loadings assessments etc. LAWPRO and local authority staff are fully trained in catchment science and management. Scientific support provided to other bodies leading in areas for action under the Water Action Plan e.g. drinking water source protection.
<p>Work with implementing bodies and stakeholders to implement appropriate mitigation measures or protection plans in Areas for Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing bodies' work programmes are informed and guided by LAWPRO's catchment science leading to the establishment of robust Sectoral Action Work Plans and Catchment Management Work Plans. Participation in working groups to support the implementation of the Water Framework Directive e.g. National Agricultural Inspection Programme, Agriculture and Water Working Group, ASSAP Co-ordination Group, Farming for Water EIP Steering Group, ACRES Co-operation Projects Local Steering Groups etc.
<p>Assist the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme in the targeting of agricultural specific measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of an agreed Memorandum of Understanding between the DHLGH, DAFM, LAWPRO, Teagasc, and Dairy Industry Ireland. Local catchment assessments completed in Priority Areas for Action by LAWPRO's catchment scientists and shared with ASSAP to assist with the implementation of targeted measures on agricultural lands. Support and oversight of ASSAP through the established structures.

Goal 5



DELIVER INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS to overcome identified challenges

Strategic Objectives	Outcomes
<p>To advance the integration and implementation of Nature-based Solutions across Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive National Nature-based Solutions Implementation Strategy is developed by the DHLGH with LAWPRO taking a leading role with support and contributions from other stakeholders. • Increased awareness and adoption of Nature-based Solutions by local authorities, planners, and others in both rural and urban environments, including sustainable drainage and wastewater systems. • Local authorities and stakeholders receive support, training and information to ensure the effective adoption and implementation of Nature-based Solutions. • Pilot projects for urban runoff successfully delivered with project learnings used to inform future national planning policies and guidelines.
<p>Implementation of best practice measures in water management by the agricultural sector through the Farming for Water European Innovation Partnership (EIP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 15,000 farmers availing of Farming for Water EIP funded water quality improvement measures. • Members of the farming community recruited to the project by a team of Community Animators working with engaged stakeholders and community groups. • Best practice in water management is communicated to the agricultural sector to understand the impact of agriculture pressures on water quality. • Project learnings are used to inform future water-related policies and practices in agriculture.
<p>The coordination of the Blue Dot Catchments Programme focusing on the protection and restoration of our high-status objective waters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with the Waters of LIFE Integrated Project, a Blue Dot Catchment Programme work plan is developed and implemented. • LAWPRO supports the successful delivery of the Waters of LIFE Integrated Project. • Engagement in collaborative projects with Local Authorities and other agencies such as IFI's National Barriers Programme, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's ACRES Co-operation Project, resulting in key stakeholders having a greater awareness of Ireland's Blue Dot waters. • Significant pressures on Blue Dot waterbodies identified and addressed through Sectoral Action and Catchment Management Work plans.

A person wearing a dark wetsuit, a cap, and boots stands in a shallow stream, holding a net. The stream flows through a stone archway, surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The water is clear, reflecting the surrounding environment. The stone archway is made of large, weathered blocks.

We work with implementing bodies and stakeholders to implement appropriate mitigation measures or protection plans in Areas for Action

Structures that Support the Implementation of our Strategy

Water Framework Directive Governance Structures

Ireland has established a three-tier governance structure to implement the Water Framework Directive river basin planning process.

Figure 3: Three-tier governance structure as published in the Water Action Plan 2024

Tier 1

National Management and Oversight



Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage



Policy, necessary legislation and resourcing the Plan. Supported by the Water Policy Advisory Committee which has been established to assist the Minister.

Tier 2

Technical implementation and reporting



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



The catchment characterisation process, overseeing the national monitoring programme, chairing the National Technical Implementation Group and assisting and advising the Minister.

Tier 3

Regional implementation



Local Authorities / LAWPRO

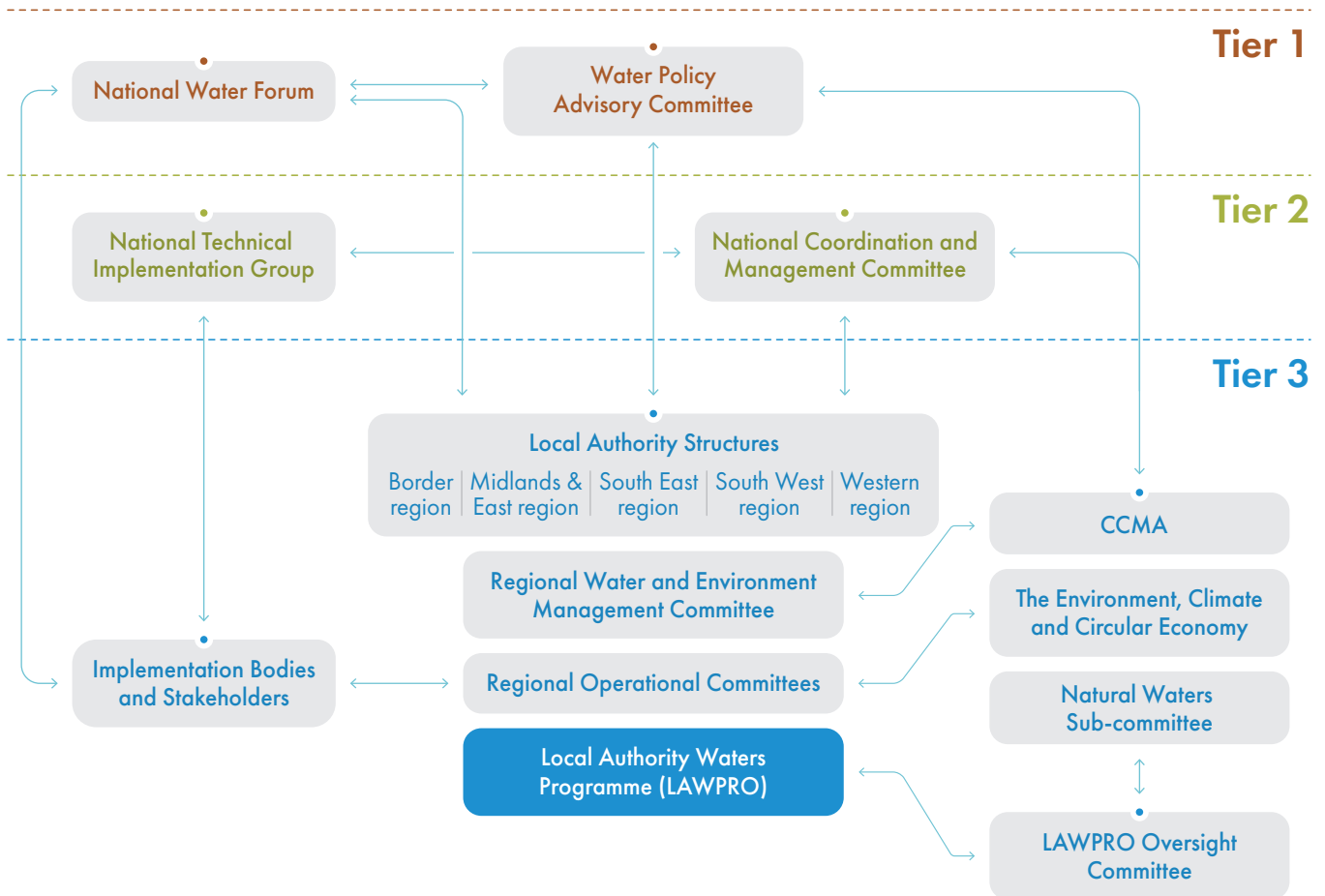


Coordinating the implementation of measures on the ground, and the local knowledge required for successful delivery of many potential measures.

The relationships between the three tiers are further elaborated in Ireland’s Water Action Plan 2024. LAWPRO plays an important supporting role within Tier 1 and Tier 2

of the structure, while leading the coordination of Tier 3. The relationship between the three tiers and the local authority sector is outlined in the graphic below.

Figure 4: Relationship between the three tiers outlined in the Water Action Plan 2024



At Tier 3 level, five Regional Water and Environment Management Committees are established in line with LAWPRO’s regional structure. These committees oversee the implementation of the Water Action Plan at regional level. Each committee is chaired by a Local Authority Chief Executive and is made up of Directors of Service and senior representatives from each Local Authority in the region, with active participation and technical advice from the EPA.

Each Regional Water and Environment Management committee is supported by a Regional Operational Committee with a membership comprised of operational staff from all relevant WFD implementing bodies and stakeholders (see figure 5 below) and is chaired at

Director of Service level. LAWPRO plays an important coordination role in the management and facilitation of these committees.

LAWPRO has an Oversight Committee comprising of representatives from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, local authorities, An Foras Uisce and the EPA, which oversees leadership, policy direction and prioritises resources to support the delivery of LAWPRO’s strategy and work programme. It also ensures good governance and accountability in the implementation of the programme and compliance with relevant public policies, procedures and processes.

The Regional Committees and the Oversight Committee work closely with the County and City Management Association and its structures to embed Water Framework Directive work within the overall management focus of local authorities at the most senior level.

The relationship between the Oversight Committee and the Water Framework Directive Governance structures is displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 5: Bodies represented on the Regional Operational Committees





We work with communities
to give them a voice in their
local water quality matters



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