



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021

Our water. Our future. Our plan.



Produced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government,
the Local Authority Waters Programme and the EPA Catchments Unit.

housing.gov.ie catchments.ie lawaters.ie

River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021

Good water quality is vital for human health. By protecting our water environment, we protect sources of water supply for households, businesses and farms. Similarly, good water quality improves recreation and well-being, thus supporting communities and industries like tourism. Therefore, clean waters are essential for our health, environment and economy.

The Government has produced a roadmap to better water quality, known as the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). This plan aims to improve water quality over the period 2018-2021, with a focus on 726 specific water bodies in 190 prioritised Areas For Action. A water body can be a river or tributary, a lake, a body of groundwater, an estuary, or a coastal area.

The plan was developed through extensive consultation with individuals, local communities, different industries and interest groups. Almost 2,000 public submissions were received during the consultation process.

This national plan represents a new way of working and everybody has a role to play. With ongoing work and support we can deliver the following:

- greater community involvement
- commitment from industry in respect to water quality to play their part
- increased investment in infrastructure by Irish Water
- enhanced supports for water measures in the agriculture sector
- greater protection and conservation of drinking water sources and supplies



How good is our water environment?

From the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which monitors water quality, we know that:

- 57% of rivers have good or high-status* water quality
- 46% of lakes have good or high-status water quality
- 49% of estuaries have good or high-status water quality
- 91% of groundwaters – waters under the ground – have good water quality
- There has been a significant loss of our high-status (pristine) water bodies. In the 1980s, there were over 500 high-status river sites. Today, there are only 21 remaining out of a total 4,829 water bodies. This is of major concern.

Certain activities affect water quality. These include:

- pollution from inadequately treated or untreated sewage
- changes to the aquatic environment
- forestry activities that are not properly managed
- certain agricultural practices
- pollution from septic tanks
- peat extraction
- invasive alien species such as Japanese knotweed (plant) and the zebra mussel (shellfish)

catchments.ie and the Catchments Newsletter - water from source to sea

catchments.ie is a website that shares science and stories about Ireland's water catchments, highlighting people's connections to their local water and the land around them. The site gives you access to water quality information on your local waters and has stories from local communities across the country. Through the website you can also sign up for the Catchments Newsletter.

catchments.ie is a collaboration between the Local Authority Waters Programme, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the EPA.

**High-status means water in pristine or almost pristine condition*



The Local Authority Waters Programme

Communities & Catchments

The Local Authority Waters Programme was established in 2016 to work with Local Authorities, public bodies, stakeholders and the public to protect water quality. The programme has two teams: the Communities Team and the Catchments Team.

Communities Team: The team consists of three Coordinators and 12 Community Water Officers working from 12 Local Authority centres. It supports communities and stakeholders in the delivery of local water quality projects and initiatives. The team also works with rivers trusts and catchment partnerships, which are emerging across the country.

During 2017, the team delivered public consultation on the Draft RBMP at a local level. The process involved gathering views and comments on water issues and concerns across the country. This led to a national conversation on the value of clean water. The team also provides a necessary link between active communities and various funding streams such as LEADER and Local Agenda 21. The new Community Water Development Fund, managed by the Programme, also supports community-led projects.

Catchments Team: Established in 2018, this team consists of scientists with a wide range of technical expertise. They are implementing measures within the 190 prioritised Areas For Action aimed at improving water quality. This involves river assessments and stream walks to understand the issues affecting water quality. Working with local communities, landowners, business owners and public bodies, this team develops relevant and workable solutions. The Programme supports the Agricultural Sustainability and Advisory Programme, working with farmers in the Areas For Action.



Community Water Development Fund

This new fund supports community-led projects and initiatives with a focus on improving water quality for the benefit of local communities. This enhances community spirit and engagement with the local water environment.

The fund is available to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• not-for-profit community and voluntary groups• rural and urban community networks• environmental non-governmental organisations• clubs, associations or other community groups
Funding is available for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• development of catchment partnerships• establishment of a river/lake trust• local projects to protect and improve water quality
The fund has three categories:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• €1,000 - €5,000• €5,000 - €10,000• €10,000 - €25,000

For more information visit: www.lawaters.ie



A local community discussing the potential of a riverside park and amenity area.

Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme

The Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme is a new initiative. It works with farmers to enhance their environmental sustainability, with a focus on knowledge transfer. This programme is supported and resourced by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government; the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine; and the dairy industry. The programme's 30 advisors offer farmers advice. The programme focuses on agriculture-related issues in the 190 prioritised Areas for Action. In addition, under the Dairy Sustainability Initiative, 18,000 dairy farmers will receive advice on sustainable farming practices through the dairy co-ops. For more information visit: <https://www.teagasc.ie/environment/water-quality/farming-for-water-quality-assap/>

Find out more or get involved

Where can I get more information about the plan?

Visit the website of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government: www.housing.gov.ie

Where can I get more information about getting involved?

If you need more information or you would like to get involved in improving water quality in your local area, contact the Local Authority Waters Programme.

T 0761 065 262

E info@lawaters.ie

W www.lawaters.ie



@watersandcommunities



@watersprogramme

Where can I get more information about water quality in my local area?

For more information on your local water quality or activities throughout the country, visit the EPA Catchments website: www.catchments.ie

Where can I get more information about the septic tanks grant scheme?

Contact your local authority or visit the website of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government: www.housing.gov.ie