
Request for Tender on
*Identifying Knowledge Gaps Within An
Fóram Uisce's Key Thematic Areas*

Closing Date: Wednesday 16 October 2019

Queries to be addressed to:

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1. INTRODUCTION TO AN FÓRAM UISCE

An Fóram Uisce (the Water Forum) was established in June 2018 in accordance with the provisions of Part 5 of the Water Services Act 2017. An Fóram is the only statutory body representative of all stakeholders with an interest in the quality of Ireland's water bodies. An Fóram consists of 28 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations with direct connection to issues relating to water quality and also public water consumers. Approximately 50 different organisations were involved in the nomination of members.

The Water Services Act 2017 provides the statutory basis for An Fóram. An Fóram has advisory roles in relation to the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, Irish Water, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and also the Water Policy Advisory Committee. The Act also provided for the dissolution of the Public Water Forum and the National Rural Water Services Committee with their functions being incorporated into An Fóram.

An Fóram provides an opportunity for stakeholders to debate and analyse a range of issues with regard to water quality, rural water concerns, issues affecting customers of Irish Water and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021. An Fóram is an independent entity and has discretion to determine its own work programme and means of communicating its views and analysis. To this end, it has adopted its Strategic Plan for 2018-2021.

Dr Tom Collins, who had been the chair of the Public Water Forum and a former Chair of the National Rural Water Monitoring Committee, is the Chairperson and Ms Sharon Kennedy is Senior Executive Officer. An Fóram is headquartered in Nenagh, County Tipperary.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

In accordance with the provisions of the Water Services Act 2017, An Fóram is required to advise the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government in relation to water services and the water environment. To this end, An Fóram is in the process of identifying priority actions and other initiatives to advance thinking and policy development with regard to the key thematic areas as set out in An Fóram's [Strategic Plan](#).

An Fóram is committed to working with stakeholders to undertake actions to fill knowledge gaps and inform policy regarding the thematic areas, as well as other priority topics as necessary to achieve the delivery of its Strategic Plan.

An Fóram is seeking tenders to identify key knowledge gaps and research questions for four of the five thematic areas as shown in Table 1. Currently, no tender is currently being sought under the 'Physical alterations to waterbodies' theme.

As well as receiving tenders from academic institutions; An Fóram will be engaging and collaborating with relevant agencies to gain an integrated perspective on the five thematic areas.

Table 1: Key thematic areas of An Fóram Uisce’s Strategic Plan included in this tender.

Key Thematic Area	Included in this research call?
Drinking water source protection	Yes
Invasive species	Yes
High status objective waterbodies	Yes
Nutrient pollution	Yes
Physical alterations to waterbodies	No

Institutions may make submissions for more than one theme; however, an individual submission is required for each theme.

One project will be awarded per theme, totalling a **maximum of four** tenders to be awarded under this Request for Tender.

3. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each submission shall comprise:

1. A literature review summarising the current body of knowledge and work being undertaken for that theme focussing on the Irish context but including international best practice as appropriate.
2. Identification of current knowledge gaps for that theme in Ireland.
3. The association of each knowledge gap with current national and international legislation and policy.
4. Identification of key research questions for each knowledge gap.
5. A list of previous and current scientific projects being undertaken within the Republic of Ireland associated with the subject theme of the submission.

Knowledge gaps and key research questions may be identified through several avenues such as expert group review; online survey; semi-structured interviews, for example.

In addition to the above five points, and given the time constraints for delivery of the tender, each submission is required to:

- Outline the process to be undertaken to identify knowledge gaps and research questions.
- Identify the organisations/agencies it will engage with as part of the stated process.

Specific content required for each of the thematic areas in addition to the above points is provided below.

3.1 Drinking water source protection

Drinking water source protection is a multi-barrier approach to preventing or reducing the contamination of drinking water from source to tap. Key approaches to improving the quality of drinking water in the Republic of Ireland include the development of Drinking Water Safety Plans, the National Source Protection Pilot Project (NSPPP), The National Federation of Group Water

Schemes (NFGWS) Strategy on Drinking Water Source Protection, and the recent NFGWS Framework for Drinking Water Source Protection.

In addition to the submission requirements listed under Section 3, project submissions should:

- Cover both groundwater *and* surface water source protection.
- Outline the key components which impact the quality of both groundwater and surface water sources.
- Summarise the approaches to drinking water source protection undertaken by Irish Water, the EPA and the National Federation of Group Water Schemes.

3.2 Invasive species

The introduction of non-native, invasive species to Ireland, either intentionally or unintentionally, can result in negative impacts on native species, threatening Ireland's native biodiversity. In addition, invasive species can adversely impact on recreational activities and the delivery of ecosystem services. Their impact and control can have significant economic implications.

Submissions should focus solely on aquatic invasive species and those invasive flora species that occur in association with water, such as Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

In addition to the submission requirements listed under Section 3, project submissions should:

- Describe the distribution of each invasive species.
- Describe the impacts of each invasive species.
- Describe the control/mitigation options for each invasive species.
- Address any emerging invasive species issues.

3.3 High status objective waterbodies

Protecting and enhancing high status objective waterbodies is a main focus of Ireland's second River Basin Management Plan as the proportion of waterbodies classified as high status has continued to decline across Ireland. Of a total of 384 waterbodies with a high-status objective, 141 waterbodies are classified as being at risk of not achieving this objective or are currently 'in review'.

In addition to the submission requirements listed under Section 3, project submissions should:

- Summarise the overarching pressures acting on high status objective waterbodies including, but not limited to, forestry, hydromorphology and agriculture.
- Outline the existing measures aimed at protecting and enhancing high status objective waters.

3.4 Nutrient pollution

Diffuse runoff and point source pollution from agriculture and wastewater (urban and domestic wastewater) have been identified as significant pressures acting on Ireland's water resources. Nutrient pollution can have extreme detrimental effects on aquatic ecology, drinking water quality and human health.

In addition to the submission requirements listed under Section 3, project submissions should:

- Summarise the impacts of diffuse and point source nutrient pollution on aquatic ecology, drinking water quality and human health.

- Outline actions undertaken to improve point source nutrient pollution, for example from urban wastewater treatment plants and onsite domestic wastewater treatment systems.
- Outline actions undertaken through the Nitrates Regulations and Nitrates Action Programme to mitigate nutrient pollution.
- Discuss the implications of FoodWise 2025 and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy on nutrient pollution of waterbodies.

4. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables are required for **all** awarded tenders:

- Final report, encompassing all requirements listed under Section 3.
- A two-page Policy Relevance document identifying the key policy recommendations for Ireland associated with the thematic area of the tender submission.

5. BUDGET

The currency and invoices in which all prices and rates shall be quoted, and which payments under the contract will be paid, shall be Euros (€).

The **maximum budget per project is €20,000**, inclusive of VAT and overheads where applicable.

Individuals/Institutions may make a project submission for more than one theme, but each submission must be made individually, with a maximum budget of €20,000 for each individual project submission.

5.1 Payment Schedules

An upfront payment of 50% of the total agreed budget will be made upon receipt of invoice from the contracted service provider's institution following the initiation of the project.

A final payment of the remaining 50% of the total agreed budget will be made on project completion within the timeframes stated within Section 5.

6. TIMELINES

It is a mandatory requirement that this body of work is **completed on or before 31 January 2020** as per the timeframe outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: *Timeframe for project delivery*

Publication of tender	1 October 2019
Deadline for tender submissions	16 October 2019
Award of tender and start of project	25 October 2019
Project initiation meeting	On or before 8 November 2019
Draft report submitted	On or before 15 January 2020
Project completion	31 January 2020

7. MARKING SCHEME

All submissions will be assessed by a panel of suitably qualified persons.

Marks will be awarded (maximum 100 marks) based solely on the information provided in the submission, as follows:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the subject matter of the brief and the requirements of the project (40 marks).
- Project management arrangements (10 marks).
- Details of budget and timeline, including compliance within the stated budget and specified timelines (20 marks). A GANTT chart outlining the timeline for project actions and deliverables is mandatory.
- Demonstrated relevant research track record of team appropriate to the subject matter, including previous/ongoing projects delivered and scientific publications (30 marks).

8. SUBMISSION OF TENDERS

Applications must be submitted no later than **4 pm on Wednesday 16 October 2019** via email to Dr Alec Rolston, Research Lead, An Fóram Uisce: alec@nationalwaterforum.ie.

Submissions must include:

- A completed application form.
- A CV (max 4 pages) of the lead investigator to whom the tender will be awarded.

An acknowledgement of receipt of applications will be issued within 48 hours of the submission deadline.

9. AWARD OF TENDERS

Applicants will be notified of the success of their submissions no later than **Friday 25 October 2019**.

Bodies of work may be initiated immediately from the date of award, with an initial project meeting to take place on or before 8 November 2019.

10. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- All applications must be made using the official application form and will only be accepted from Academic Institutions/Research Institutes/Research Centres. Applications must come from academic / research staff members with contracts which extend to the full duration of the proposed project.
- Applications may be received from consortiums of individuals from different institutions. Such applications must identify the **lead investigator** to whom the tender may be awarded. All other members of the consortium will be sub-contracted by the lead researcher. The maximum total budget of €20,000 (inclusive of VAT and overheads) is applicable to single service provider applications and consortium applications respectively.

- An Fóram Uisce will disqualify incomplete applications, applications not using the application form provided and any application received after closing time/date. Compliance with the word limitation contained on the Application Form is a requirement of the application process.
- It is mandatory that all projects will be completed by 31 January 2019, as set out in Section 6, above.
- It is a necessary requirement of the application process that the successful applicant must provide a copy of their University/Institution's current Tax Clearance Certificate.
- Failure to address within the final report each of the items included under Section 3 and the relevant thematic area will result in the withholding of final payment until all requirements are met.
- All proposed projects must be in line with the respondents' relevant institutional guidelines on research ethics. Where applicable, formal approval of project activities should be received from the relevant institutional research ethics committee(s) prior to any such work being undertaken.
- An Fóram Uisce will have copyright ownership of any material developed for use by An Fóram Uisce under the terms of this tender. The service provider may have a non-exclusive licence to use such material but only for its own purposes (to be agreed with the successful service provider).
- The principles of Ireland's National IP Protocol 2019 will be applied where there is any potential for commercial exploitation of project outputs resulting from this tender.
- An Fóram Uisce encourages an open access publication policy. Publications arising from tender awards funded by An Fóram Uisce should, as a minimum, ensure open access via Green methods (depositing the peer-reviewed manuscript in an online repository before, at the same time, or after publication). All reports will be uploaded to, and publicly accessible via, the An Fóram website: www.nationalwaterforum.ie.
- Any publications arising from tender awards funded by An Fóram Uisce must acknowledge An Fóram Uisce|The Water Forum as the source of funding.
- Projects funded by An Fóram Uisce must uphold the highest standards of research integrity and An Fóram Uisce expects all tender awardees to abide by the guidelines outlined in the National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland; and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information – When an application is received by An Fóram, a record is created in the name of the applicant. This information will be stored by the office of An Fóram Uisce, 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, 2014.
The information we record is used for the following purposes:
 - Processing and assessing of applications;
 - Payment arrangements;
 - Auditing requirements;
 - Informing and advising An Fóram in relation to the Project and using same as a basis for further consideration by An Fóram including research projects and policy analysis and recommendations;
 - Publication of the Project Outcomes.

End/