



CORPORATE PLAN

2017-2019



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Foreword by the Chief Executive

It gives me great pleasure to share our Corporate Plan 2017-2019, where we set out our vision, priorities and key actions that will help us deliver our remit in the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

This plan presents demanding challenges to Loughs Agency in times of global financial constraints, including the uncertainty caused by the result of the UK Referendum on EU membership, and the effects it may have on the Agency. That said, I am confident that the organisation will endeavour to maintain the delivery of a high quality service to our customers and stakeholders.

By building and consolidating upon our past successes, we will continue to develop the work of the Agency through partnership with local government agencies, other Government Departments and local communities. The Agency recognises the importance of continuing to work in partnership to create better local environments which enhance peoples' lives, supports sustainable development and protects the natural environment and resources under our care.

The Foyle and Carlingford Areas offer a diverse environment, providing visitors and locals with a place to escape, relax and spend time with friends and family through many forms of recreation. It is my commitment that we will successfully deliver our remit over the lifetime of this Plan and secure the future of the loughs and rivers of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas for generations to come. Through this Plan, we will continue to develop a sustainable cycle for the protection, conservation, promotion and development of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

The successful delivery of the Agency's goals and objectives is testament to the hard work and commitment of our people. I greatly appreciate the contribution that our staff has made to date and I am confident that the organisation will meet the challenges of the next 3 years.

I am grateful for the continuing support, encouragement and commitment given to the Agency by our Board and Sponsor Departments.

John Pollock
Chief Executive

Introduction

WHO WE ARE

Loughs Agency was established by the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC), a North/South Implementation Body, and inherited the functions and responsibilities of the Foyle Fisheries Commission with regard to the conservation, protection, management and improvement of the fisheries of the cross border Foyle Area.

The FCILC is legislated by the North South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 and the British Irish Agreement Acts 1999 and 2002. The Board of the FCILC reports to the North South Ministerial Council and our Government Sponsor Departments, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in the North and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) in the South.

WHAT WE DO

Loughs Agency aims to provide sustainable social, economic and environmental benefits through the effective conservation, management, promotion and development of the fisheries and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

The statutory functions of the Agency are set out in North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (NI) Order 1999, the British-Irish Agreement Acts 1999 and 2002, the Foyle Fisheries Act (NI) 1952 (as amended) and the Foyle Fisheries Act 1952 (as amended).

These functions are as follows:

- Promotion of development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters;
- Management, conservation, protection, improvement and development of the inland fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas;
- Development and licensing of aquaculture and shellfisheries; and
- Development of Marine Tourism.

HOW WE OPERATE

Our Headquarters are located in Derry~Londonderry, with a regional office in Carlingford, County Louth. The Agency currently employs 53 staff across a diverse range of functions including fishery protection, scientific research, development, marketing and administration support. Resources are focused on delivery responsibilities, with the Agency working to ensure staff have the necessary skills, training and motivation. HR policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose and comply with the current legislation in each jurisdiction.

The Agency is fully committed to its statutory obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations Duties and continues to meet its Equality Scheme commitments and the targets in its Audit of Inequalities.

As a North South Body we operate under the policy direction of the North South Ministerial Council and the two Governments, and are accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas. At an administrative level, we report to our Sponsor Departments.

FUNDING THE CORPORATE PLAN

Loughs Agency receives grants from money voted by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas. The Agency is funded 50:50 by the Assembly in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government. The Agency is fully committed to enhancing its focus on finding and securing funding from alternative sources to supplement core public funding in our programmes over the course of this Plan.

Additional saving opportunities will be realised by continuing to work with other Government Agencies and Public Bodies to share resources where feasible, and through transfer of knowledge and systems between organisations. The Agency continues to comply with corporate governance standards, as defined in the Agency's Financial Memorandum, which is under review by both Finance Departments.

This Corporate Plan will be subject to budgetary considerations by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas.

Executive Summary

The Corporate Plan 2017-2019 aims to provide a clear and strategic pathway which will underpin our work programmes over the next three years. It also identifies key areas of challenge and opportunity and prioritises those areas of activity on which we will focus our attention over the period of the Plan.

Fundamental to our vision for the future is the continued development and implementation of our conservation and protection duties, while pursuing recreational and environmental opportunities that link people and nature, providing both local communities and visitors with many reasons to spend more time in the Foyle and Carlingford Areas.

This Plan will help us to continue to put the Foyle and Carlingford Areas at the centre of community life and provide a valuable resource. It will encourage regeneration opportunities to transform communities through conservation, environmental, recreational and commercial activities.

It also recognises the importance of continuing to work in partnership with Local Authorities, Government Departments and communities by pooling our resources and therefore realising shared aspirations. Together, we can help create better local environments which will enhance peoples' lives and support sustainable growth in the local economy.

This Corporate Plan prioritises our actions but continues to keep our ambitions high, in such a challenging financial environment. Our work programme has been planned and influenced against our expected funding position for the next three years. Throughout the period of this Plan, the Agency will rethink and refocus on how it operates due to the prevailing budget constraints in both jurisdictions.

To ensure our organisation is fit to deliver the Plan and indeed future plans, we are dependent on the continued dedication and professionalism of the people working in Loughs Agency. Throughout the life of this Plan and beyond, we will continue to develop a skilled and diverse workforce which is flexible and able to adapt to the changes and challenges ahead.

Our Plan has been developed in the context of the policy priorities of our Sponsor Departments and the priorities of other Government Departments and agencies which have cross cutting responsibilities with those of Loughs Agency. It also reflects the ethos of the Programme for Government Framework 2016 - 2021 in Northern Ireland and the Programme for Government 2016 in Ireland. Although

both Programmes are different, they each contain a number of key elements which will provide guiding principles by which the Agency can continue to maximise the impact of its work through this Plan and into the future.

The common theme of both Programmes is working together to create and drive economic growth, improving health and well-being and providing a more equal and fair society.

Loughs Agency is uniquely placed as a North South Body to directly contribute to and co-ordinate with stakeholders and other relevant organisations to achieve the outcomes that both Programmes aim to deliver. The Areas under our remit can help enrich peoples' lives through our conservation, protection, environmental, recreational programmes and educational initiatives.

The Foyle and Carlingford Areas can provide the catalyst to develop commercial opportunities which will encourage economic growth and create energetic and sustainable environments. These Areas also help educate and empower people to live and work sustainably to respect, protect and conserve their natural environment. The Areas attract many visitors and promote health and social wellbeing through the many recreational opportunities they can offer.

In all of our work, we will continue to engage with local communities and will provide opportunities that are inclusive and accessible to everyone. In everything we do we are committed to the promotion of equality and diversity.

The Agency is fully committed to ensuring that all financial decisions and work processes are underpinned by good governance and value for money, while providing our customers and stakeholders with satisfying experiences, together with the need to continue to achieve operational efficiencies.

To ensure maximum efficiencies are achieved, we have taken account of the efficiency savings guidance issued by the two Departments of Finance.

Our Mission

To sustainably develop the fisheries and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas through excellence in managing, conserving, protecting, researching and promoting for the benefit of all.

Our Vision

To sustain, develop and enhance the richness of our internationally significant fishery resources and provide recreational, community and commercial benefits for future generations.

Our Values

Valuing Individuals

We will continue to employ talented people. As a good employer we will equip, encourage and develop them to their full potential. We will acknowledge an individual's contribution to a job well done.

Communication

We will meet the communication needs of our internal and external stakeholders by developing a better understanding of their requirements and using the most appropriate tools and resources to deliver timely, accurate and consistent messages.

Working Together

We will work together, listen to and support each other, share relevant information and respect different views. We will provide opportunities for everyone to contribute to corporate objectives and to work co-operatively with colleagues at all levels to achieve them. We will value contributions from communities and stakeholders and make decisions based on the public good and sustainability.

Professionalism

We will adopt and comply with the best professional standards, practices and methodology and consistently deliver work of the highest quality. We will search for continuous improvements in the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of our work.

Integrity

We will observe the highest ethical and personal standards and be honest, objective and transparent in our work.

Equality

We will treat each other equally, fairly and justly. We will be unbiased in our work and in our dealings with suppliers of goods and services.

Adaptability

We will embrace change through a proactive, flexible and innovative approach to our work as individuals and corporately.

2014 - 2016 Corporate Plan

OUR SUCCESSES

Throughout the last corporate planning period, the Agency continued to develop and grow, while building on the many successes achieved in previous years. We continued to firmly establish our commitment to delivery of our remit, and to the development and promotion of the organisation and its staff.

During the period of the 2014 - 2016 Plan, the Agency:

- Secured in excess of €15m under INTERREG IVA;
- Continued delivery of our Angling Academy;
- Reallocated a selection of seized rods back into the community;
- Riverwatch continued to offer unique experiences through our Visitor Centre and outreach and education programmes;
- Hosted and attended events locally, nationally and internationally;
- Continued to develop our Foyle Ambassadors Programme;
- Delivered, through external funding, Environmental Life Programmes in partnership with local community groups;
- Continued to promote and deliver our community and business based investment programme;
- Continued to carry out enforcement duties and developed appropriate Regulations to deliver statutory obligations on conservation and protection;
- Commenced a programme of Sea Trout Floy Tagging on the River Faughan;
- Undertook a wide range of scientific studies, including a genetic study on the Atlantic salmon broodstock of the Whitewater River hatchery; Water Quality Monitoring; a chemical and biological survey of small streams in the Carlingford catchment; Freshwater Environmental Monitoring and Telemetry Programme; and Stillwater status reports;
- Completed work on the Carrying Capacity Modelling for Lough Foyle, which was presented at the World Aquaculture Society Conference in Las Vegas in February 2016;
- Implemented a number of efficiency saving initiatives, including a new infrastructure wide telecommunications system and a number of IT hardware reductions through virtualisation;
- Continued to develop and review good governance procedures and processes including a review of financial systems and procedures;
- Continued maintenance and advancement of our Fish Counter programme technology infrastructure; and
- Introduced a Student Bursary Programme.

Our Strategic Priorities 2017-2019

To enable delivery of our statutory functions we have developed 5 Strategic Priorities for the Corporate Plan 2017 – 2019.

- Provide effective scientific data, research, monitoring and advice which will underpin Loughs Agency policy and management decisions.
- Develop and implement effective legislation which will deliver the business needs.
- Develop, promote, and sustain the natural resources of the catchment area under our statutory remit.
- Lead the Agency by instilling pride in our people, creating value for our stakeholders and promoting a sense of belonging through shared responsibility.
- Provide a high quality North South public service that is fit for the future.

These strategic priorities will underpin our annual Business Plans and operational work programmes for the next three years.

Strategic Priority 1

Provide effective scientific data, research, monitoring and advice which will underpin Agency policy and management decisions.

During the life of this Plan, this strategic priority aims to place the Agency at the forefront of scientific excellence and to disseminate this work to the wider public.

KEY ACTIONS

- Implementation of the Loughs Agency Science Strategy.
- Develop scientific programmes which will facilitate implementation of legislative drivers, Agency policy and enable sustained informed management decisions, while also identifying knowledge gaps.
- Provide delivery mechanisms for scientific data, research, monitoring and advice.

ENABLERS TO SUCCESS

1. Undertake a range of surveys to include, habitat, electrofishing, barriers to migration and invasive species.
2. Develop and improve the use of technology such as GIS and data retrieval from counter sites/platforms for internal analysis, consolidation and reporting.
3. Development of infrastructure of counter sites and programmes through technology while ensuring value for money.
4. Undertake assessments to ensure the Agency meets its obligations on the Water Framework Directive and Habitats Directive.
5. Undertake annual surveying, monitoring and research on the status of commercial shellfish species.
6. Identification of areas suitable for reinstatement.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

1. Freshwater and Stillwater status reports published every two years.
2. GIS technologies support provided to all Directorates.
3. Delivery on Water Framework Directive monitoring and Habitats Directive obligations.
4. Report collated on 80% of identified sites per annum for water chemistry and macroinvertebrates.
5. Report on salmon produced annually in relation to compliance with management targets for each river.
6. Delivery of scientific information to enable informed sustainable management of commercial shellfish species with respect to the natural environment.
7. Continued development and conservation of the Lough Foyle Native Oyster Fishery in an environmentally sustainable manner.
8. Promotion of MSC Certification for the Lough Foyle Native Oyster Fishery.
9. Delivery and frequency of agreed data retrieval and internal/external data reporting to relevant personnel.
10. Validation of data on specific legislated counter sites.
11. Continuous information dissemination across the Agency via internal/external reporting, ensuring appropriate and accurate information is made available to the public.

Strategic Priority 2

Develop and implement effective legislation which will deliver business needs.

Legislation supporting the Agency defines the effectiveness of its operational and statutory activities. Over the life of this Plan, we will work with our Sponsor Departments to ensure that the Agency has a suite of fisheries and environmental legislation to deliver the statutory remit of the Agency.

KEY ACTIONS

- Regulate appropriately to support delivery of the Agency's objectives.
- Deliver enforcement duties.
- Develop Aquaculture Policy.
- Implement Aquaculture Licensing.

ENABLERS TO SUCCESS

1. Carry out an annual review of Regulations.
2. Ensure Agency Conservation and Protection staff respond to all incidents within our remit.
3. Ensure compliance with planning consultation and application timescales as a statutory consultee.
4. Review and update Aquaculture policies and procedures over lifetime of the Plan.
5. Liaise with Sponsor Departments and other relevant Public Bodies.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

1. Appropriate Regulations are in place.
2. Prosecutions, as necessary, leading from enforcement duties.
3. Policies and procedures developed in line with public policy framework and legislation on Aquaculture.

Strategic Priority 3

Develop, promote and sustain the natural resources of the Catchment Areas under our statutory remit.

The Agency seeks to ensure that Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough Areas are protected and conserved for future generations.

We recognise the importance of education and outreach in highlighting the environmental challenges facing the unique natural resources under the remit of the Agency.

KEY ACTIONS

- Implementation of the Loughs Agency Development Directorate Strategic Plan 2015 - 2022.
- Provide a strong and sustainable foundation on which to deliver unforgettable experiences for both visitors and the local community.
- Build on the unique strengths of the Foyle and Carlingford Areas; their angling potential; distinctive wildlife and marine/freshwater environment; the range of marine tourism activities on offer to visitors; and the distinctive marine culture, heritage, events and festivals.

ENABLERS TO SUCCESS

1. Focus on building the capacity of the marine tourism industry, angling sector and environmental education unit, in terms of facilities, skills, marketing, collaboration and sustainability.
2. Deliver a programme of community and business based investment.
3. Ensure integration of environmental, economic, cultural and social considerations into project planning and decision-making processes.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

1. Complete a programme of key infrastructure works to improve and enhance access and facilities for angling and marine tourism activities.
2. Sustainability objectives are contained within project and programme design and delivery across the Agency.
3. Delivery of marketing events, outreach and community based youth programmes.
4. Delivery of community and based investment through transparent and auditable procedures.

Strategic Priority 4

Lead the Agency by instilling pride in our people, creating value for our stakeholders and promoting a sense of belonging through shared responsibility.

As an organisation, we interact with a diverse range of stakeholders and other relevant Public Bodies and communities.

We continue, year on year, to build on our reputation as a respected and trusted strategic partner.

KEY ACTIONS

- Develop an enhanced sense of inclusiveness through shared responsibility and empowerment of our people.
- Encourage volunteers from local communities.
- Develop and maintain strong strategic partnerships.
- Provide a consistently high quality visitor experience.

ENABLERS TO SUCCESS

1. Establish Agency working groups to facilitate the implementation of cross Directorate/cross sectoral projects.
2. Develop a Volunteer Policy and Strategy which offers a wide range of useful and rewarding experiences.
3. Ensure all information is easily accessible and relevant for our customers.
4. Ensure consistently high standards of customer service.
5. Explore external funding opportunities.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

1. Deliver a high quality product and customer service to all our stakeholders.
2. Teams are informed and engaged to successfully deliver our key objectives.
3. Review the licensing system and ensure permits and lease agreements are progressed.
4. A programme in place which offers volunteers a rewarding experience.
5. External funding opportunities fully explored.

Strategic Priority 5

Provide a high quality North South public service that is fit for the future.

The key support areas which will underpin successful delivery of this Corporate Plan will be finance, human resources and technology.

A core strength and key resource of the Agency is its people.

KEY ACTIONS

- Employ and retain skilled, experienced, well trained, committed, diverse, professional and flexible people.
- Support personal development to facilitate cross-functional, multi-skilled teams.
- Provide a safe working environment.
- Utilise technological advances to ensure effective and efficient working practices and processes throughout the organisation.
- Develop and implement the organisation's corporate governance and finance policies and procedures across all activities.

ENABLERS TO SUCCESS

1. Provide a comprehensive and updated suite of Human Resource and Equality policies and procedures.
2. Develop a Human Resource Strategy and Annual Action Plan.
3. Making the safety of our employees, visitors, volunteers, stakeholders and participants in Agency organised activities our first priority.
4. Develop and communicate a clear strategic and operational direction through effective business planning, reporting processes and a value for money organisational ethos.
5. Create an environment where employees can develop both professionally and personally.
6. Ensure high standards of corporate governance are embedded throughout the Agency.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

1. Review, develop and update Human Resource policies and procedures.
2. Equality and Disability Actions Plans developed and implemented.
3. Implementation of a Human Resource Strategy and Annual Action plan.
4. Deliver a Student Bursary Programme.
5. Health & Safety policies and procedures updated and communicated to all staff.
6. Utilise effective technological support and communication systems.
7. Provide a robust system of corporate governance and financial accountability.

Efficiency Savings

The Agency will continue to strive to implement greater efficiencies in the delivery of this Corporate Plan. The Agency has an obligation to ensure that value for money considerations are embedded in all of the organisation's activities. To ensure this happens, we will continue to review organisational expenditure to ensure maximum efficiencies are obtained and review our business processes to provide improved customer and stakeholder services.

Monitoring & Evaluation of the Plan and its Delivery

The monitoring, evaluation and delivery of the Corporate Plan will be undertaken at various levels throughout the Organisation, its Sponsor Departments and the North South Ministerial Council.

The Agency will report on the outcomes of the activities it has undertaken against the objectives set out in this Plan.

- **DIRECTORATES**

Each Directorate and its management unit will employ a structured, shared approach towards the delivery of the Corporate and Business Plan objectives. Performance will be assessed through the presentation of monthly outturn against target reports, based on Business Plan objectives. Financial performance will also be assessed on a monthly basis through budgetary control processes and management reports.

- **SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

The Senior Management Team (SMT) will review the management reports with regard to each strategic objective identified in this Plan and their contributing targets which are detailed in the annual Business Plan.

The SMT will evaluate these reports against the efficient operation of the Agency with regards to the resources, staff and budget available to them. Where possible, it will identify further efficiencies and will reallocate resources between Directorates, if necessary, to ensure that, as far as possible, the Agency's Strategic Objectives are met.

- **THE BOARD**

The SMT will report to the Board at each of its meetings (six per annum) and to the meeting of each Board Sub-Committee, as appropriate. The Board will review the performance of the Agency, as reported by the Chief Executive. The approved minutes of the Board meetings will be published on the Agency's website.

- **THE NORTH SOUTH MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

The Chair, Vice Chair and Chief Executive, supported, where appropriate, by other Agency colleagues, will provide a progress report on the Agency's activities to each Aquaculture and Marine Sectoral meeting of the North South Ministerial Council. The Agency will address any issues, recommendations or instruction raised or made by the Council.

- **THE ADVISORY FORUM**

The Agency will provide updates on its work to the Advisory Forum and will also engage with the Forum's Focus Groups, as appropriate.

- **STAKEHOLDERS**

Where appropriate, the Agency will seek the opportunity to consult and discuss issues with stakeholder groups or representatives. Requests for meetings, reports or consultations will be responded to.

Communicating the Plan

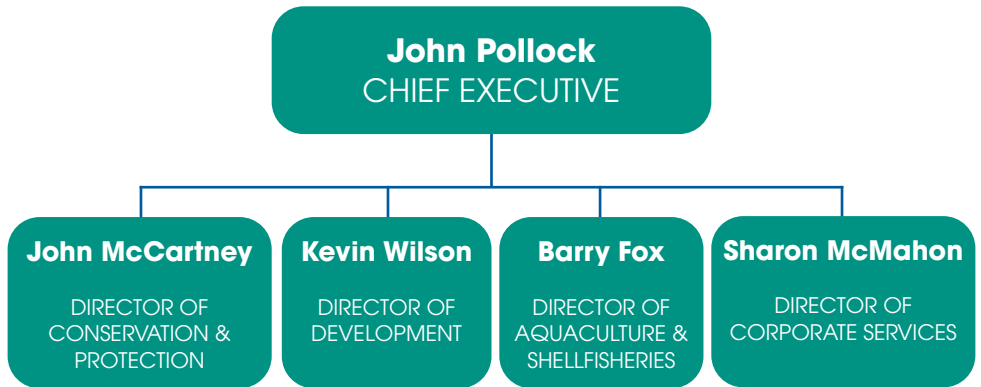
Loughs Agency recognises that the Strategic Business Objectives set out in this Corporate Plan can only be achieved through the shared ownership and commitment of our staff. We encourage and foster good two-way communication, both in the development of the Corporate Plan, and by creating awareness of the actions Loughs Agency needs to deliver during the period of the Plan. We will promote the opportunity for all staff to be part of the implementation process and use feedback mechanisms to improve how we work together to deliver the Plan. The Corporate Plan will be communicated to all employees through team meetings so that everyone is aware of their individual and team responsibilities to achieve delivery and successful outcomes.

The Corporate Plan will also be available to download on the Loughs Agency website www.loughs-agency.org.

Organisational Chart

Loughs Agency has four Directorates under which we deliver our remit.

We have an approved staffing complement of 53.



ANNEX B Proposed 2017 Budget Allocation & Indicative Budget Allocations for 2018 and 2019

North South Body	Approved Budget 2016			Budget 2017 £			Budget 2018 £			Budget 2019 £			
	Total £	Resource	Capital	Total	Resource	Capital	Total	Resource	Capital	Total	Resource	Capital	Total
Programme P&E	150,000	0	152,000	152,000	0	603,438	603,438	0	226,733	226,733	0	66,328	66,328
Salmon & Inland Fisheries	160,000	25,000	115,000	140,000	66,828	48,760	115,588	0	0	0	25,341	0	25,341
Aquaculture & Shellfisheries	105,000	25,000	115,000	140,000	47,655	0	47665	0	199,805	199,805	0	0	0
Fish Counters													
Marine Tourism & Development of Recreational Fisheries	190,000	25,000	115,000	140,000	95,861	54,802	150,663	6,366	68,785	75,151			
SDF	78,000	0	0	0									
NI only (Flood in NW)					50,140	0	50,140	76,623		76,623			76,623
Total Programme Expenditure	683,000	75,000	497,000	572,000	260,484	707,000	967,484	108,330	561,651	669,981			669,981
Pay Costs	2,057,000	2,262,000	0	2,262,000	2,128,000	0	2,128,000	2,195,833		2,195,833			2,195,833
Non Pay Administration Costs	919,376	950,000	0	950,000	953,000	0	953,000	1,044,498		1,044,498			1,044,498
Total Administration Costs (excl. pension costs)	2,976,376	3,212,000	0	3,212,000	3,081,000	0	3,081,000	3,240,331		3,240,331			3,240,331
Income	-100,000	-132,000	-32,000	-164,000	-111,000	0	-111,000	-140,000		-140,000			-140,000
Overall Total Expenditure (Programme, Admin & Income excl. pension costs)	3,559,376	3,155,000	465,000	3,620,000	3,230,484	707,000	3,937,484	3,108,661	561,651	3,770,312			3,770,312
NI share representing 50% + 100% flood	1,779,688	1,577,500	232,500	1,810,000	1,640,312	353,500	1,993,812	1,642,642	280,825	1,923,467			1,923,467
IRL share representing 50%	1,779,688	1,577,500	232,500	1,810,000	1,590,172	333,500	1,943,672	1,566,019	280,825	1,846,844			1,846,844
Pension costs - NI	135,000	259,375	0	259,375	238,000	0	238,000	177,185		177,185			177,185
Pension costs - IRL	135,000	155,625	0	155,625	238,000	0	238,000	177,185		177,185			177,185
Overall Total Expenditure for approval (inc. pension costs)	3,829,376	3,570,000	465,000	4,035,000	3,706,484	707,000	4,413,484	3,563,031	561,651	4,124,682			4,124,682
Total NI share, including pension costs	1,914,688	1,836,875	232,500	2,069,375	1,878,312	353,500	2,231,812	1,819,827	280,825	2,100,652			2,100,652
Total IRL share, including pension costs	1,914,688	1,733,125	232,500	1,965,625	1,828,172	353,500	2,181,672	1,743,204	280,825	2,024,029			2,024,029
Projected Staff Nos	53	53			53			53		53			53



Loughs Agency

Gníomhaireacht na Lochanna
Factrie für Loughs

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