

# Reimagining Our Waterways

Draft 10 Year Long-Term Plan

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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE FOREWORD



When I joined Waterways Ireland in 2019, I was immediately focused on stabilising the organisation which had suffered from inadequate funding post-economic crisis and a severely under-resourced, stretched, and stressed body of staff. There were many vacancies and many, in a term I was not overly familiar with, acting-up roles. Stabilising the organisation became one of three Strategic Challenges back then:

- (i) Leadership & Organisation Capacity.
- (ii) Improved Governance.
- (iii) Long term plan development.

Since 2019 I have reported in Business Plans and Annual Accounts our progress on the journey. As I regularly state 'we are making slow but steady progress'. We have built a reputation for project delivery which has created a small virtuous circle of increased capital funding allocation, staff recruitment, and improved governance. It has taken longer than I anticipated, and we are not where I want us to be. That is a prompt for our third Strategic Challenge – long term plan development.

In my immediate analysis of our position in 2019 the other obvious gap was the absence of any longer-term planning other than the mandatory

3-year corporate plan. This hit a discordant or incongruous note for me as our assets have long economic lifecycles and we clearly did not have a directional pathway.

Our ability to see beyond the immediate was impaired and consequently we operated reactively. Clearly there was a need for a strategic vision for the organisation. Yet it has taken time to crystallise to reach this point. Much of the delay has occurred for three reasons:

- (i) COVID19 pandemic impeded progress as the nature of this work is normally best delivered through in-person group engagement sessions.
- (ii) A deliberate choice in 2021 to prioritise project delivery with much success.
- (iii) Ensuring the chosen strategic priorities had a realistic chance of achievement given the complexities of the structure we operate within as a cross border Body.

We are now presented with a significant milestone in our planning cycle as this is the first opportunity for the Body to integrate short (Business Plan 2023), medium (Corporate Plan 2023-2025), and long-term plans (10-year Long Term Plan).

Having been formed as part of the British Irish Agreement in 1999 we are now in young adulthood traversing the organic lifecycle changes of infancy, childhood, through teenage years to the present. It has not been a straightforward journey punctuated by the cumulative absence of a North South Ministerial Council, an economic crisis, Brexit and laterally COVID19. It almost feels like a success being here.

Today as a young adult we want to look to the future. We want to consider our potential. What is it we can aspire to achieve? The external and

internal environments we operate within are now very different from the time of our formation. The mindset of small, incremental change is past us. We are ambitious and aspire to bigger things led by a transformative culture.

**Welcome to our 10-year Plan – our directional pathway. It sets out our strategic vision, our purpose, and our values.**

It points to an ambitious value creation goal. We will grow our annual economic, social, and environmental well-being value for the public good in Both Jurisdictions from its current €600 million annually to €1 billion annually.

To achieve our objectives we must successfully operate across business and consumer channels.

**OUR CURRENT APPROACH IS ENCAPSULATED WITHIN THREE KEY THEMES - CUSTODIANSHIP, COLLABORATION AND RE-IMAGINING.**

Waterways Ireland is committed to developing a brand strategy as part of a broader marketing strategy for the Body.



**CUSTODIANSHIP**

We want to leave a legacy, a gift for future generations.



**COLLABORATION**

Our secret sauce evidenced across many successful project deliveries with strategic partners and councils across the island of Ireland.



**RE-IMAGINING**

Being creative and innovative, not just in design capability with our built and natural assets but in the way we think and work.

We will do this by creating inspirational inland navigations and waterways experiences through conservation and sustainable development for the benefit of all. Participation by all will be at the heart of policy and decision-making within our organisation ensuring we deliver services that are accessible and inclusive. Waterways Ireland is also committed to the provision of a safe workplace, through safe work practices for all our employees and a safe environment for waterways users. We will do this by adhering to legislation and industry best practice as well as striving to continuously improve.

**AT THE CORE OF OUR 10-YEAR PLAN IS OUR CAREFULLY CONSIDERED SET OF SIX STRATEGIC PRIORITIES. THESE ARE:**

- Organisation Development & Governance.
- Sustainable Funding Model.
- Asset Portfolio Management.
- Reputation & Brand Equity.
- Development.
- Climate Action, Environment and Heritage.

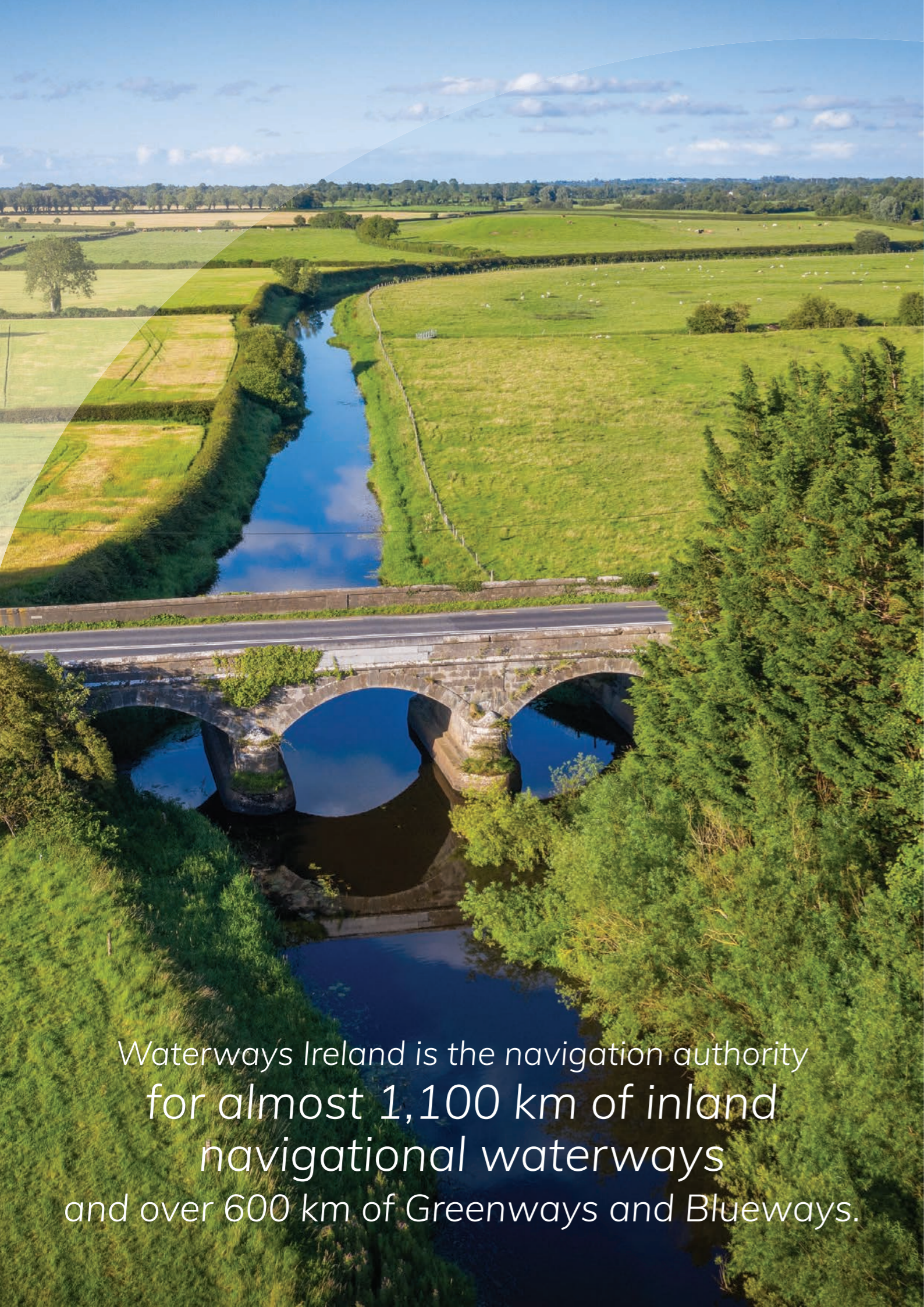
Each has a distinct success statement and a set of key outputs of what is it we wish to achieve. Underpinning the long-term plan and our Strategic Priorities will be the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The UN SDGs will provide a blueprint for the sustainable management and development of our waterways and we are committed to communicating the alignment of our works to the Goals.

Earlier I mentioned we are at a significant milestone in our planning cycle with the integration of short, medium, and long-term plans. Each has a purpose and a level of detail consistent with its purpose. In simple words, the long-term plan by its nature is a high-level directional pathway. The medium and short-term plans are operational and more detailed on key outputs and main activities.

It is our intention to present this Plan for public consultation. I encourage and welcome all engagement and consultation on this inaugural plan.

**John McDonagh**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Waterways Ireland





Waterways Ireland is the navigation authority for almost 1,100 km of inland navigational waterways and over 600 km of Greenways and Blueways.

## ABOUT WATERWAYS IRELAND

### WHO WE ARE

Waterways Ireland is a cross-border Body, the largest of six North/South Implementation Bodies established under the British Irish Agreement of 10 April 1998. This Agreement was given domestic effect by means of the North/South Co-Operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order, 1999 and the British-Irish Agreement Act, 1999 respectively.

It is the cross-border navigational authority responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of almost 1,100 km of inland navigational waterways and over 600 km of Greenways and Blueways, principally for recreational purposes.

Waterways Ireland Headquarters is in Enniskillen Co. Fermanagh, with regional offices in Dublin, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, and Scarriff, Co. Clare.

The Body employs 350 permanent staff located at offices and sites close to the inland waterways who are assisted by a team of seasonally recruited staff reflecting the seasonality of the organisations remit.

Waterways Ireland creates social, economic, and environmental well-being value of €600m annually.

### WHAT WE DO

“... statutory function is to manage, maintain, develop and restore specified inland navigable waterways, principally for recreational purposes.”

Waterways Ireland is the navigation authority responsible for the following navigable inland waterways;

- Lower Bann Navigation
- Erne System
- Shannon-Erne Waterway
- Shannon Navigation
- Royal Canal
- Grand Canal
- Barrow Navigation
- Ulster Canal

In July 2007, it was agreed by the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) to include responsibility for the restoration of the Ulster Canal from Upper Lough Erne to Clones, and following restoration, its management, maintenance, and development, principally for recreational purposes, to Waterways Ireland's remit.

At an operational level, Waterways Ireland is responsible for a vast range of infrastructure assets including navigation channels, embankments, towpaths, adjoining lands, harbours, jetties, fishing stands, bridges, culverts, aqueducts, overflows, locks, sluices and lock houses along with buildings and archives. The current valuation of the rebuild costs of this infrastructure is estimated at €1.5 billion.

Waterways Ireland's work programmes are critical to providing a safe and high-quality recreational environment for customers, whilst preserving the industrial and environmental heritage of the waterways for future generations.

# IRELAND'S WATERWAYS

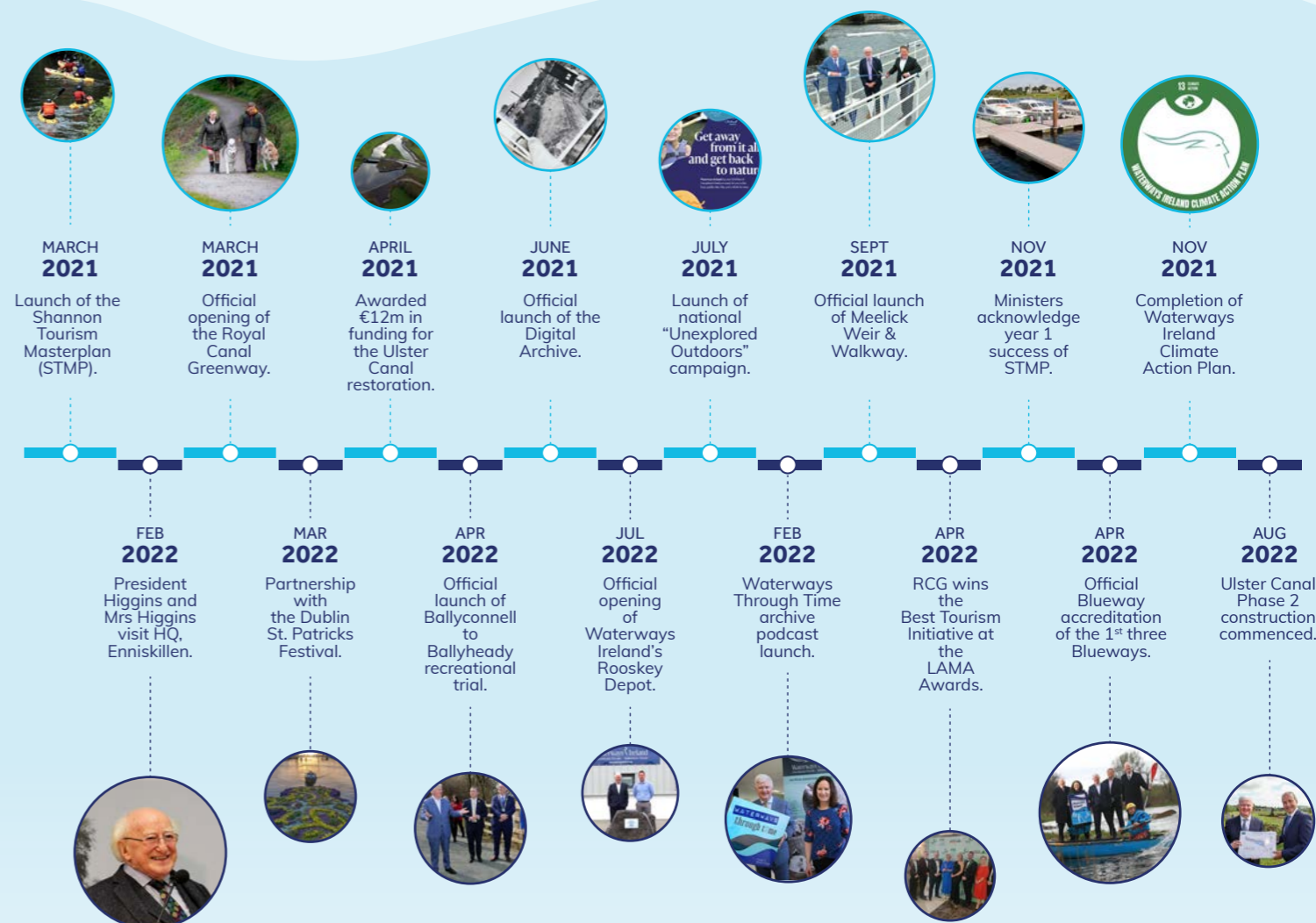
- 1 LOWER BANN NAVIGATION
- 2 ERNE SYSTEM
- 3 SHANNON-ERNE WATERWAY
- 4 SHANNON NAVIGATION
- 5 ROYAL CANAL
- 6 GRAND CANAL
- 7 BARROW NAVIGATION
- 8 ULSTER CANAL



## HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION

### KEY MILESTONES

- 2001** Official opening of the Limerick Navigation Project.
- 2007** Waterways Ireland remit extended to inc. restoration of the Ulster Canal.
- 2008** Works complete on Waterways Ireland new HQ in Enniskillen.
- 2011** The Royal Canal is officially opened.
- 2014** 20th Anniversary of the opening of the Shannon Erne waterway.
- 2016** Official launch of Waterways Ireland 10yr Heritage Plan.
- 2017** Official opening of Acres Lake floating boardwalk.
- 2018** Waterways Ireland host the World Canals Conference.



## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

As a cross-border Body, Waterways Ireland operates under the policy direction of the North/South Ministerial Council and the two Governments and is accountable to the NI Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas. At an administrative level, the Body reports to Sponsor Departments, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in NI and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in Ireland.

Funding is provided by grants from money voted by the NI Assembly and the Houses of the Oireachtas. 15% of recurrent or resource funding is provided by the NI Assembly, and 85% by the Irish Government, this reflecting the current distribution of waterways in each jurisdiction. Capital infrastructure repair programmes are funded separately by the jurisdiction where the works are carried out.

Operational performance targets are agreed with both Sponsoring Departments and are reported in Quarterly Monitoring meetings.

Waterways Ireland's Annual Report and Accounts are audited externally by the Comptrollers and Auditor Generals who are heads of the NI Audit Office and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General in Ireland. These external audits provide independent assurance on the regularity and propriety of Waterways Ireland's accounts and our processes in relation to expenditure, revenue and assets.

Waterways Ireland also has an Audit Committee, consisting of independent non-executive members, whose remit is to advise the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer, on whether an appropriate system of internal control is in operation.



we want to leave a legacy  
a gift for future generations

# METHODOLOGY

The approach taken to develop Waterways Ireland's 10-Year Long Term Plan had five distinct stages. Each stage had their own unique activities and deliverables, aimed at delivering a robust long-term strategy to support the organisation in meeting current and future needs.

THE KEY ACTIVITIES COMPLETED FOR EACH STAGE OF THE PROJECT ARE DETAILED BELOW.



providing a safe and high-quality recreational environment



# STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Strategic Review stage delivered a detailed diagnosis of the internal and external environments influencing Waterways Ireland. From an internal perspective, it focused on a review of the mission, vision, values; and understanding the supporting organisational arrangements including structures, people, process, policies, competencies and activities. From an external perspective, the review examined the wider transactional and macro-environmental factors.

The review was conducted using a range of strategic tools including:

- Internal and external desktop research
- Extensive Stakeholder consultations
- Completion of:
  - SWOT
  - PESTEL
  - Six Forces Analysis
  - Marketing Sizing “As is”
  - Quantitative Bench Marking.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Extensive early engagement with Key Stakeholders was crucial to the development of the 10-Year Long Term Plan. Over 500 Key Stakeholders including Sponsor Department Representatives, elected political representatives, strategic partners, waterways users, special interest groups, business owners, Senior Management Team, and Extended Leadership Group members and many more were invited to engage through one-to-one interviews, targeted focus groups and an online survey.

Engagement with internal and external stakeholders was high, ensuring that a holistic analysis of the organisational and external factors was considered in the development of this strategic plan.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	
INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
1:1 INTERVIEWS: 13	1:1 INTERVIEWS: 34
FOCUS GROUP: 10	FOCUS GROUP: 1
SURVEY: 300	SURVEY: 168
TOTAL: 323	TOTAL: 203







bring the waterways to life  
enriching people's lives

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The outputs of the strategic review acted as a prism for the development of the future direction of the organisation, enabling the Purpose, Vision and Values to be defined.

### PURPOSE



Our Purpose is to be the **custodian** of the inland navigations and **collaborate to reimagine**, maintain, develop and promote them to sustain communities, environment and heritage.

### VISION



Creating **inspirational** inland navigations and waterways **experiences** through conservation and **sustainable** development for the **benefit of all**.

### VALUES



#### PASSIONATE

We are **passionate, enthusiastic** and **dedicated** to the work and services we deliver. We listen to our stakeholder needs and **strive to exceed expectation**.

#### COLLABORATIVE

We **work collaboratively internally** and **externally** to achieve objectives, whilst **helping** and **supporting each other** for our collective goal.

#### ACCOUNTABLE

We **deliver the best and hold ourselves accountable** for the results. We are **responsible**, act with **respect** and operate in a **safe** and **sustainable** manner.

#### INNOVATIVE

We strive to **continuously improve** in the delivery of quality services and infrastructure. We aim to promote a **culture of quality, creativity, diversity and excellence**.



ensuring the island of Ireland  
is a better place to live,  
work and visit

# FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

During the development of Waterways Ireland's 10-year Long Term Plan, several policies, plans, international benchmarks, and relevant reports and trends from both jurisdictions/UK government were considered. Collectively they point to a plethora of opportunities for the Body. Waterways Ireland can play a significant role in ensuring both jurisdictions is a better place to live, work and visit.

<p><b>NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2040</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>HEALTHY IRELAND FRAMEWORK 2019-2025</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>NEW DECADE, NEW APPROACH</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>SHARING THE VISION 2020-2030</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>
<p>Of the 10 national strategic outcomes identified, Waterways Ireland can positively contribute to making progress on four. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, Enhanced Amenity and Heritage, Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society and Sustainable Management of Water, Waste, and other Environmental resources.</p>	<p>There are parallels between Waterways Ireland's work and the goals of the Healthy Ireland Framework. Alignment could act as a catalyst for enhanced physical and mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>Waterways Ireland's ongoing restoration of the Ulster Canal was supported by this initiative. Given one of the key themes is "Connectivity and infrastructure" additional support may be provided for future projects.</p>	<p>Specific elements of the policy which align with Waterways Ireland work include developing a community-based approach to mental health care. In this regard there is scope for us to work in tandem with third parties to develop integrated facilities and activities on and along the waterways to promote positive mental health in waterside communities.</p>
<p><b>UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>BIODIVERSITY</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>POPULATION GROWTH</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>	<p><b>CONNECTING WITH NATURE</b></p> <p><b>OPPORTUNITY</b></p>
<p>Waterways Ireland is committed to the achievement of the UNSDGs and will strive to increase its relevance and make a meaningful input to national and international priorities.</p>	<p>As part of Waterways Ireland's commitment to reversing biodiversity loss, it will introduce a Biodiversity/Habitats Strategy.</p>	<p>Anticipated increase in usage of Waterways Ireland's amenities and waterways.</p>	<p>Waterways Ireland is well-placed to deliver on the important outcomes of this research giving the environment in which it operates.</p>

SCALE OF AMBITION

- Waterways Ireland Scale of Ambition is to be recognised as having enabled the creation of inspirational inland navigations and waterways experiences, through conservation and sustainable development for the common good.
- It is estimated the future potential monetary valuation that Waterways Ireland could generate, in terms of the social and economic contribution to the local and national economy to be €1 billion annually by 2032.
- The Market Sizing process estimated the anticipated individual market sizes, taking into consideration organic growth i.e. growth experienced via macroeconomic forces (consumption trends, tourism forecasts, boat ownership trends and population growth) and potential inorganic growth if Waterways Ireland realises it's potential.

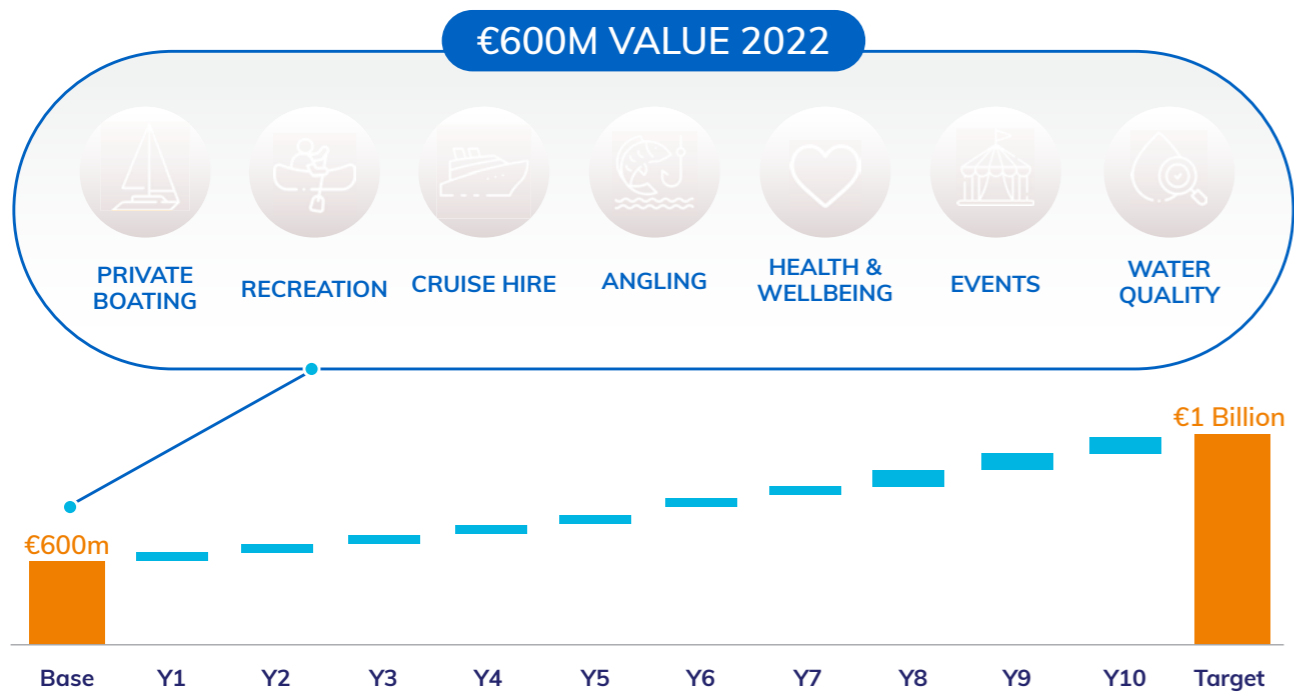
MACRO INTERVENTIONS



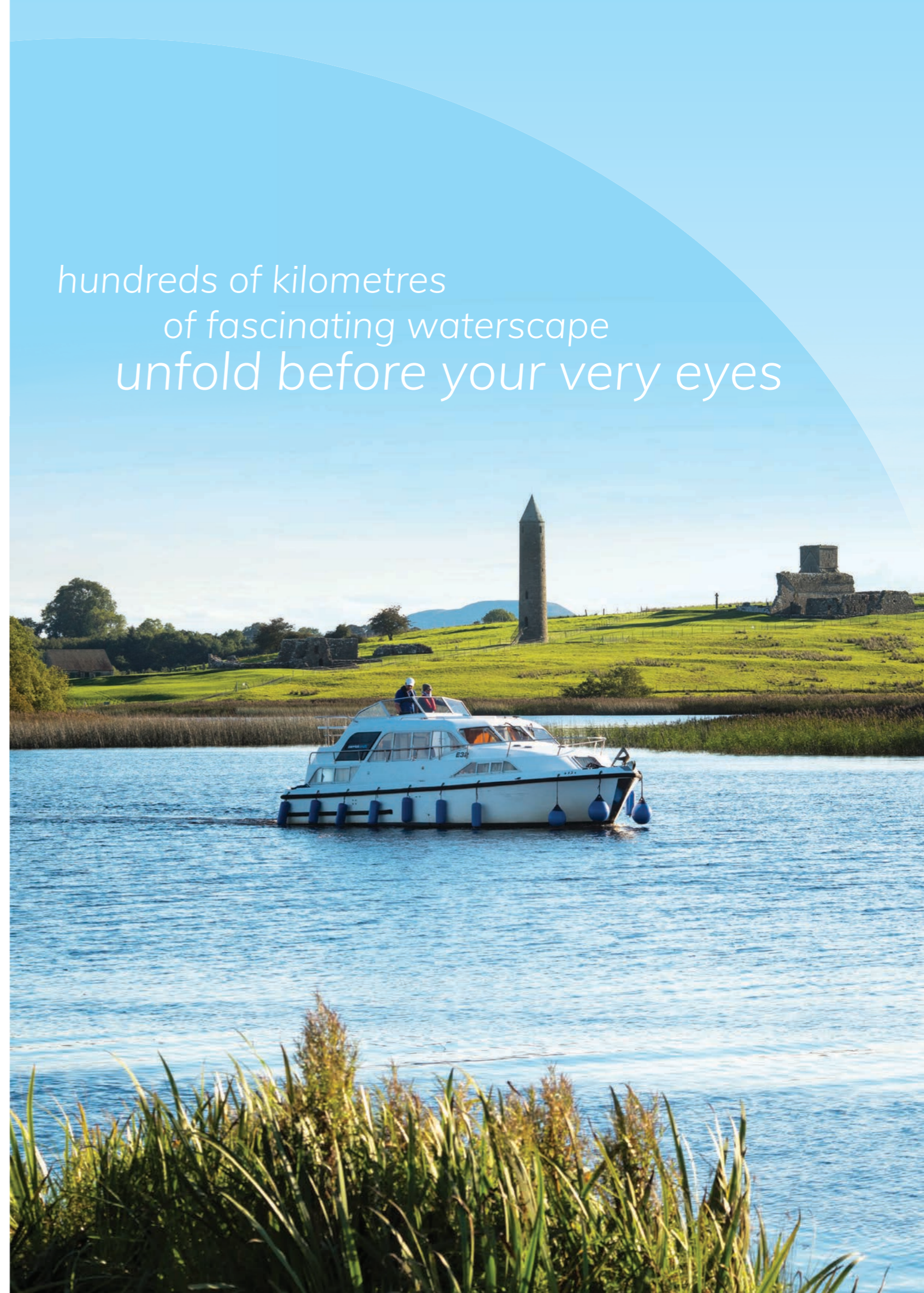
WATERWAYS IRELAND TARGETED INTERVENTIONS



€1 Billion Waterways Ireland estimated market size by 2032



hundreds of kilometres of fascinating waterscape unfold before your very eyes



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Waterways Irelands strategic priorities are the long-term aspirational priorities for the organisation over the next 10 years.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

### BACKGROUND

The Body has endured many years of under-resourcing with consequent gaps in capacity and capabilities as the external environment has changed immeasurably.

The Environment in which the Body now operates has changed dramatically over the last 20 plus years. Customer expectations, Health & Safety and Environmental legislation as well as technological advances necessitate a different structure and new approach to resource allocation. The Organisation Structure agreed for the Body in 2000 is no longer fit for purpose.

There is no history of a people strategy incorporating developmental or succession planning. Technology systems are legacy-based with a financial management package approaching end of life.

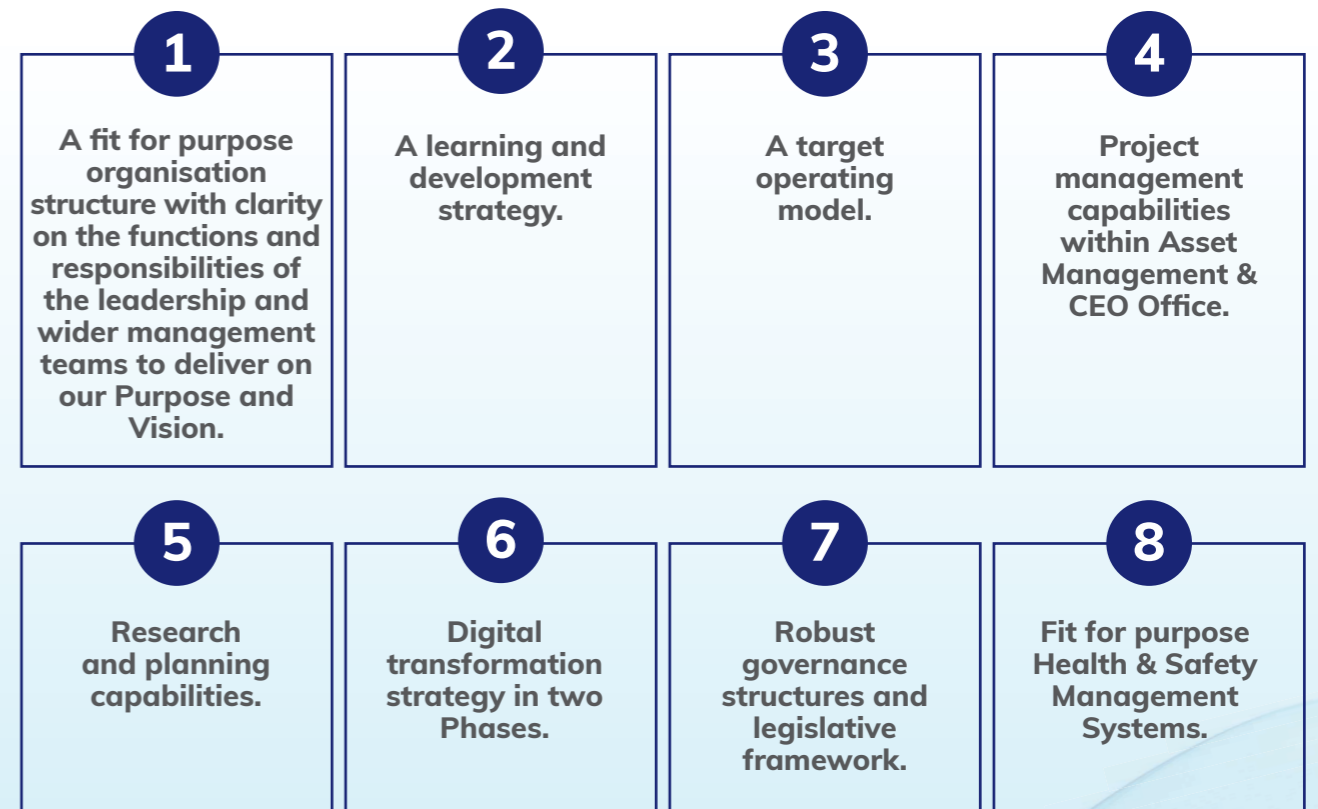
Key people and organisational principles are prescribed from formation in 2000 resulting in inflexibility, limiting organisational and people developmental opportunities.

Waterways Ireland works within robust governance structures and legislative frameworks. One example of this is the enforcement of the Canal Bye Laws and Shannon Navigation Bye Laws. The changing use of the waterways alongside amendments to the primary legislation has resulted in outdated Bye Laws. It is our intention to proceed with a planned revision of the current Bye Laws.

### SUCCESS STATEMENT

**Waterways Ireland is a fit for purpose organisation with appropriate governance systems, digitally enabled with capabilities and capacity, aligned to the ambition and challenges of the strategy. Measured on a balanced scorecard with a People First focus and evidenced through Well Being and 'Great Places to Work' initiatives.**

### KEY OUTPUTS



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 SUSTAINABLE FUNDING MODEL

### BACKGROUND

The funding model is based on an annual disbursement of grants for use for current (resource) and capital purposes. The grant of current funding from Ireland follows publication of the annual Budget and is then matched by the NI Executive in 85:15 apportionment. Capital funding is allocated based on project works within each jurisdiction. There is no multi-year budgetary planning. An Estimates process occurs in Ireland in early summer and the Body seeks 'to do better' in a future funding year.

In Ireland pension costs are included in the allocation of current (resource) funding in any given year. As pension costs continue to rise on foot of an ageing workforce (average age 52) the current (resource) funding will decline in relative terms. This is not an issue in NI as pension costs are granted separately from the current (resource) allocation.

Similarly, provision for liability claims is included in current (resource) funding but if high value claims cannot be covered a funding request from our Sponsor Departments is sought.

Our analysis indicates we need to address four specific challenges:

- (i) Rising pension costs and the impact on current (resource) funding.
- (ii) Proportionality of current and capital funding – adequate capital funding drives more projects and more activities which leads to scaling-up or capacity issues if current (resource) funding is inadequate.
- (iii) From an international perspective we lag significantly behind other navigation authorities in terms of total expenditure and number of employees per kilometre. We need to position our longer-term funding requirements closer to international comparators rather than rely on a 'do better' future year.
- (iv) Internationally, we also lag other navigation authorities in generating income to support our expenditure profile and needs. We need to develop alternative and new sources of income to improve the financial sustainability of the Body.

### SUCCESS STATEMENT

**Waterways Ireland is appropriately funded with both the investment and working capital required to effectively execute the strategy.**

### KEY OUTPUTS



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 ASSET PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

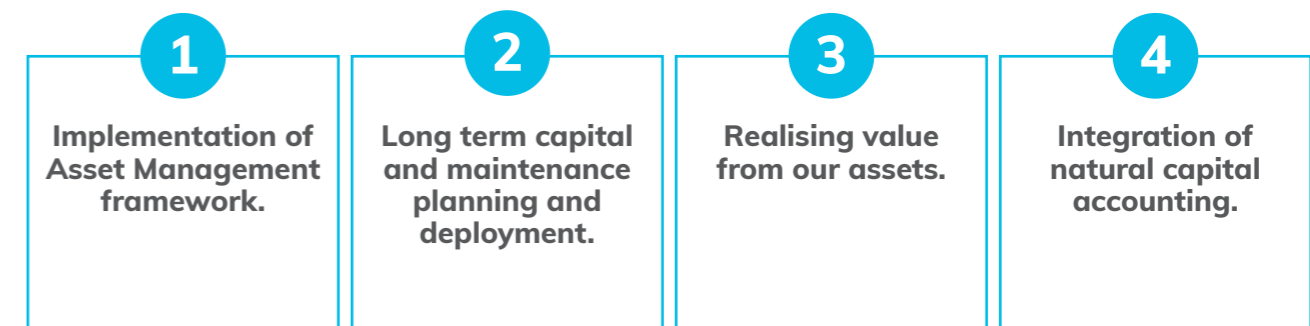
### BACKGROUND

Waterways Ireland initiated an Asset Management Strategy review in late 2019 to address gaps in our long-term capital planning and deployment. A strategy was defined in 2020 and an Asset Management Improvement Plan (AMIP) was launched. There has been good progress and the AMIP is on target to provide insights and inform ongoing, and future, investment decisions across our 18 principal asset categories.

### SUCCESS STATEMENT

**Waterways Ireland has a portfolio of valued assets in both Jurisdictions that are sustainably maintained, developed, restored, and managed to maximise the navigability, accessibility, and value of the network for users, local communities, and visitors.**

### KEY OUTPUTS



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 CORPORATE REPUTATION & BRAND EQUITY

### BACKGROUND

In 2020 Waterways Ireland conducted a major research project across both Jurisdictions. One of the goals of the research project was to determine awareness from the representative sample of 1,300 respondents of who we are and what we do. In addition to this quantitative survey, we also conducted qualitative research with a stakeholder audience active in complementary activities. Spontaneous and promoted brand awareness from Waterways Ireland was low. Prompted brand awareness was 38%.

48% of adults across the island of Ireland are interested in finding out more about Waterways Ireland, and 50% are interested in visiting and exploring Waterways. There is an immediate opportunity to develop the Waterways Ireland brand among circa 2.6 million adults.

Following the research findings Waterways Ireland committed to developing a brand strategy as part of a broader marketing strategy for the Body.

Separately, there has been an absence, historically, of good reputation management. Lack of planning and consideration of the importance of a good reputation has led, on occasions, to reactivity and increased reputational risk. We have, over time, acquired through experience the understanding that a good reputation is easily lost and hard to restore.

### SUCCESS STATEMENT

**Waterways Ireland has strengthened its corporate reputation and stakeholder relationships, and enhanced participation and brand awareness amongst citizens of Ireland and Northern Ireland.**

### KEY OUTPUTS



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 DEVELOPMENT

### BACKGROUND

Development has been a much-debated word within Waterways Ireland over many years. It is understandable that is the case. In its infancy stage the Body was engineering-led with a focus on navigations and critical infrastructure. It was a start-up entity amalgamating staff from several designated bodies to a portfolio of assets historically lacking in investment. Proposals to invest in ancillary infrastructure or activities were generally perceived as diverting funding away from the core needs. There was little understanding of the concept of attracting different types of users to the on-water and off-water navigational portfolio.

Post-economic crisis the Body was also severely underfunded with both current (resource) and capital funding declining to 40-50 percentiles versus year 2010. To survive, the organisation cut costs and availed of funding available from new government schemes. Funding was unavailable for the operational-necessity critical infrastructure on our navigations, but funding became available for trails, greenways, and blueways. So began the internal debate 'are we a waterway or a walkway'. It is not a binary debate. They can be mutually inclusive.

What is Development?

In its simplest infrastructural interpretation, it is anything outside of our 18 principal asset categories referenced. It includes the restoration of the Ulster Canal; regeneration of Tullamore Harbour with our council stakeholder; and a transformation of our Dublin canal and docklands assets. Importantly, development is also 'soft' projects such as product development, place naming, interpretation, VEDPs (visitor experience development plans), feasibility studies, and much more.

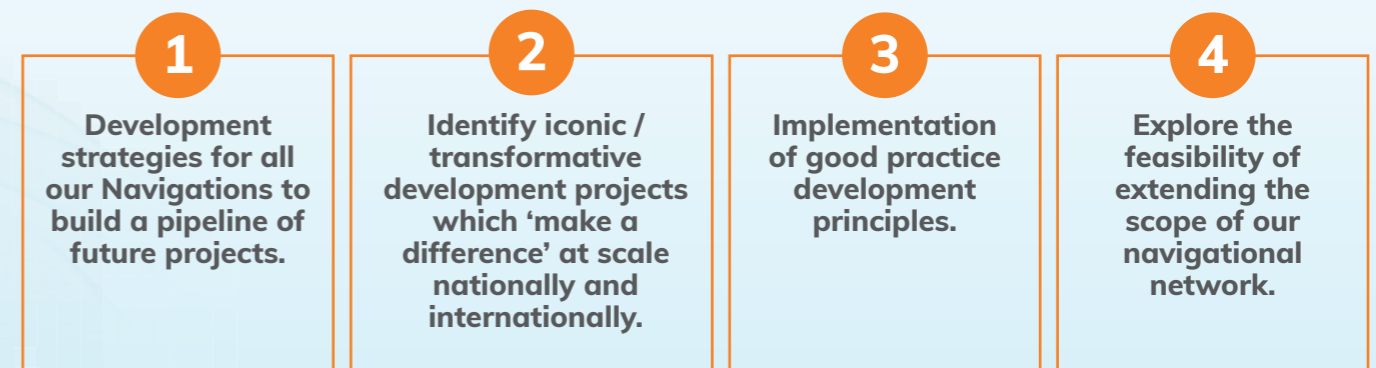
Development includes a shift in mindset to realise we also have a unique, intangible asset – our core inherent competency working in and along our waterways. This competency will enable us, over time, explore the feasibility of extending the scope of our navigational network and to acquire new navigations across both Jurisdictions. We refer to this as New Markets.

A key output from this strategic priority is the creation of development plans for all our navigations. Each navigation has its uniqueness, and it should be central to the developmental planning for the future. Finally there is a need to understand, and manage, the impact of development on our climate action, environment, and heritage objectives. Achieving our objectives in harmony, rather than conflict, is our goal.

### SUCCESS STATEMENT

**Waterways Ireland has collaborated with all our stakeholders on the development and delivery of existing and future waterway development projects that meet the emerging needs and expectations of local communities and users throughout the navigational network.**

### KEY OUTPUTS



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6**  
CLIMATE ACTION, ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE

**BACKGROUND**

Throughout this and our other planning documents, there are a multitude of references to the importance of our role of 'custodianship', within our purpose 'to sustain communities, environment, and heritage', and within our vision 'through conservation and sustainable development'. Our policy framework is influenced by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Our governments have pledged to 'match our collective ambition for nature, climate and people with the scale of the crisis at hand'. Covid-19 has made many people re-evaluate their relationship with the natural world.

Consequently, we will reflect a shift in emphasis in our financial and human resource allocation on policies supporting sustainability, climate action, biodiversity, and heritage over the duration of Corporate Plan 2023-2025. Importantly, we are in 2023 starting with a fully formed, post-public consultation Climate Action Plan.

We have also revisited first principles and considered how we should manage the most precious resource in our portfolio – water. Our revisited water management strategy will be finalised in 2023 and as with our climate action plans will move to implementation phases with supporting funding.

We strongly believe, despite our relatively small size, we can become exemplars within the public sector and build further on our accomplishments of recent years.

**SUCCESS STATEMENT**

**Waterways Ireland has fulfilled its duty to be custodians of our inland waterways for future generations by ensuring our activities protect and conserve the natural, built, and cultural heritage of the waterways.**

**We strive to be an exemplar among public bodies in meeting, and where possible exceeding, targets relating to the environment, sustainability, climate action and biodiversity.**

**KEY OUTPUTS**



# IMPLEMENTATION



The 10-Year Long Term Plan forms the basis for the future development of Waterways Ireland. It sets the direction for more detailed plans that will be implemented by the organisation over the next ten years. Its success can only be achieved through collaboration with key stakeholders, adequate resourcing, and an increase in awareness and participation by the public and local communities along the waterways.

Waterways Ireland's ability to deliver this strategy is also dependent on the commitment and expertise of its staff working together. Over the lifetime of this plan, Waterways Ireland will need to adapt and change as the organisation grows, as user needs evolve, and as new processes and technologies are deployed. The contribution from staff and stakeholders is vital to the delivery of the strategic priorities and for achieving the vision

of "creating inspirational inland navigations and waterways experiences for the benefit of all".

The implementation of the 10-Year Long Term Plan will be overseen by Waterways Ireland's Senior Management Team under the direction of the Chief Executive. Effective management of the implementation plan will be required to ensure that both ongoing operational activities and major development projects deliver the required benefits, in the agreed timescales and within budget. In phase one, Waterways Ireland will establish a Project Management Office (PMO) to plan and monitor performance across capital and maintenance programmes and ultimately will monitor performance across strategic priorities and key objectives.



## GOVERNANCE APPROACH

The 10-Year Long Term Plan sets out ambitious but achievable goals. Implementing this strategy will require a substantial change programme to deliver the strategic priorities over the next ten years. This programme will require clear governance and structures to ensure delivery.

### Establish Strategic Oversight Group

This Oversight Group will be established to monitor, track and communicate progress of the Waterways Ireland 10-Year Long Term Plan. This group will be responsible for holding the PMO and Steering Groups to account for progress against the detailed implementation plan. Part of the role will be reviewing all inputs from the PMO, any new business cases, and inputs from the established steering groups.

This group will have a holistic view of all strategic programmes of work and ensure that Waterways Ireland remain on track for the delivery of our vision for 2032. This group will also be responsible for the ongoing communication of progress to a wider stakeholder group.

### Establish Steering Groups

Projects will be aligned into programmes of work with corresponding steering groups. These steering groups will be responsible for ensuring the fulfilment of the strategic objectives.

### Establish a Project Management Office (PMO)

A PMO will be established to help and ensure a disciplined and programmatic approach to managing a wide range of projects spanning all of the six strategic priority areas. A review will be conducted to ensure any existing programmes of work outside of the scope of this strategy are considered to ensure there is a holistic approach to prioritisation, resourcing and funding allocation. In introducing a PMO to the organisation it will ensure rigor and best practices are brought to the planning process which is required as part of programme and project commencement.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE 10 YEAR LONG TERM PLAN





STRATEGIC PRIORITY	KEY OUTPUTS	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030				2031				2032							
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
<b>SP1</b> Organisation Development & Governance	A fit for purpose organisation structure with clarity on the functions and responsibilities of the leadership and wider management teams to deliver on our Purpose and Vision.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●																																		
	A learning and development strategy.			●	●	●	●	●																																					
	A target operating model.					●	●			●	●																																		
	Project management capabilities within Asset Management & CEO Office.	●	●			●	●																																						
	Research and planning capabilities.		●	●																																									
	Digital transformation strategy in two Phases.		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●																																
	Robust governance structures and legislative framework.					●	●																																						
Fit for purpose Health & Safety Management Systems.		●	●																																										
<b>SP2</b> Sustainable Funding Model	Long term funding plan with clarity on capital expenditure and working capital needs.	●	●	●	●																																								
	Additional sustainable income streams developed through active management of our existing asset portfolio and identification and/or creation of new opportunities to grow income for further investment.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Explore opportunities to align our funding with international comparators to support the achievement of the objectives set out in our asset management strategy, and deliver social, economic, and environmental benefit									●	●	●	●																																
	A robust framework to measure the social, economic, and environmental capital delivered by the organisation.		●	●	●																																								
<b>SP3</b> Asset Portfolio Management	Implementation of Asset Management Strategy.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Long term capital and maintenance planning and deployment.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Realising value from our assets.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Integrate of natural capital accounting					●	●	●	●	●	●																																		
<b>SP4</b> Corporate Reputation & Brand Equity	A Marketing Strategy incorporating brand and identity, customer, and commercial strategies.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	A Corporate Affairs function to deliver the Body's reputation and stakeholder management objectives to its target segments.			●	●	●	●							●	●							●	●																						
	In our foundation years programmes to match our competencies and capabilities as we build expertise and insights.			●	●	●	●																																						
<b>SP5</b> Development	Development strategies for all our Navigations to build a pipeline of future projects.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Identify iconic / transformative development projects which 'make a difference' at scale nationally and internationally.											●	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●																				
	Implementation of good practice development principles.	●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●			●	●						
<b>SP6</b> Climate Action, Environment & Heritage	Explore the feasibility of extending the scope of our navigational network.	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	An Environmental Management System.																																												
	A sustainable Water Management Strategy.			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	Embed the UN Sustainable Development Goals.																																												
DELIVERING VALUE	Implement Waterways Ireland's 10-year Climate Action Plan.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				
	A new Heritage Plan 2030.	●	●	●	●																																								

# CLOSURE

Documenting this Plan introduced several dilemmas.

How much detail should it contain? Our approach has been to pitch it at a high level, strategic, directional pathway. We were influenced by the knowledge we also have created Corporate Plan 2023-25 and Business Plan 2023. Each of the latter documents expand, as you would expect, on the level of granularity.

How much detail do we have to share? A fully formed capital programme stretching over 10 years requires two major inputs – a development plan for each navigation and an asset management improvement plan for each navigation. The former is a key output and will, based on our implementation roadmap, not be

completed until end 2025. The latter will be ready in 2023. In the absence of these data the formulation of a long-term financial plan over the 10 years is not presently possible. That is a gap we acknowledge.

We also asked ourselves what is crucial in the execution of the Plan? In a nutshell there are two crucial components of success. Firstly, we need to undertake and deliver an organisation review which addresses the inherent, prescriptive limitations within our organisation structure. There is complexity as there are many stakeholders including, most importantly, the institutional bodies such as North South Ministerial Council and a plethora of government departments.

We must also recognise the importance of engagement with staff trade unions in a process which has not occurred within the Body as an ongoing organisational norm. Secondly, we need support to reset the funding landscape and move beyond small incremental, annual gains in a 'seek to do better in a future year' mindset. We acknowledge that support needs to be earned, and Waterways Ireland must add 'skin in the game' itself through a transformative self-generated income programme both for current (resource) and capital growth.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to a small group of advisors and counsellors who helped us in our journey. My thanks to our three external mentors – Gary Joyce, Managing Partner, Genesis; Jerry Grant, Chair, Dublin Port Company;

and Jonathan McKee, Director, Rivers Agency. Additionally, my thanks to Elaine Daly and her team in Grant Thornton. Within Waterways Ireland I would highlight the roles played by Andrew Nixon-King, Éanna Rowe, Joe McMahon, Paula Treacy, Sinead Mallon, Bernadette O'Shea, and Yvonne McKenna. And a final thank you to our Sponsor Departments for their support throughout the process.

I hope you find our Plan informative and insightful. Your feedback in the public consultation process is most welcome.

*Colm McDonogh*





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