

Session 2 : Water Quality Training Plan

Áine Mc Carthy, LASNTG & Anthony Mannix, LAWPRO

WATER QUALITY TRAINING PLAN 2026 - 2030



An Roinn Aeráide,
Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate,
Energy and the Environment



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage



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Background

- Review of the Local Authority Natural Water Functions and Resources
- Training identified as separate exercise
 - Request from Chairperson to the ESTG
 - Review current Water Quality Related Training
 - Review funding

Review of Local Authority Natural Water Functions and Resources



Mr. John McLaughlin,
Chairperson Environmental Services Training Group
Local Authority Service Training Group
Friar's Court,
Nenagh,
Co. Tipperary

12th June 2024

Re: Water Quality related training

Dear John,

Training has been identified as one of the keystone issues by the board of the above project to deliver on water quality objectives. In that regard, discussions have been opened with DHLGH, who also sit on the project board, in respect of funding an overall water quality related training programme on an ongoing basis.

DHLGH recognise the need for such a programme and are open to considering a proposal from the sector in respect of funding same. The project team have been in contact with Shane O'Dwyer with a view to developing a proposal and we would like to take this opportunity to outline DHLGH expectations in that regard, noting that Shane is moving on from the LASTG.

DHLGH require a detailed proposal from LASTG which at a minimum should include:

1. A review of current water quality related training courses and the last time they were updated and delivered.
 - i. To include review of other training programme areas with respect to reuse/suitability/modification for use in water quality area.
 - ii. To include training in enforcement methodologies.
2. Current funding and sources of funding for training in the water quality area.
3. Estimate of costs, time and proposals to update water quality related training courses.
 - i. To include integration with catchment science and management.
4. Estimate of costs to deliver the training courses.
 - i. To include a Continuing Professional Development component.
 - ii. A time frame to deliver the training programme.

For your information, I attach the section from the draft business case in relation to training. You will note that while training has been identified as a keystone issue and will form part of the overall business case, there has been agreement to commencing a parallel process with LASNTG to expedite matters. While the project team are available to assist in the development of the above proposal they are coming to the end of the project and have limited capacity to do so.

Yours Sincerely,

Emer O'Gorman
Chief Executive of Wicklow County Council
Review of LA Natural Water Functions and Resources, Project Chairperson

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Approach

(1) LASNTG under the ESTG sought support from DHLGH - Water Advisory Unit



(2) Procured Feasibility Studio to support the work of the Steering Group.



(3) Established a Steering Group



Approach

- Set the Terms of Reference
- Align with Government Policy

DHLGH Water Action Plan 2024 also identified a review of training programmes necessary for the LA natural water sector as per the Programme of Measures

Unknown 3	The Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG) will provide appropriate training programmes including on Catchment assessment, Integrated Catchment Management, and farm inspections for the staff of local authorities and all implementing bodies.				
Steps Necessary for Delivery	Proposed Output	Timeline	Lead Org	Stakeholder Support	Resources/Risks/Dependencies
Review training programme necessary for the LA natural water sector	Competency framework of training courses for LA environment section staff	Q1 2024	LAWPRO	LASNTG	Adequate resources for LAWPRO. CCMA Business case review report

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Methodology

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

National Survey
31 x Local Authorities
100% Response Rate

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

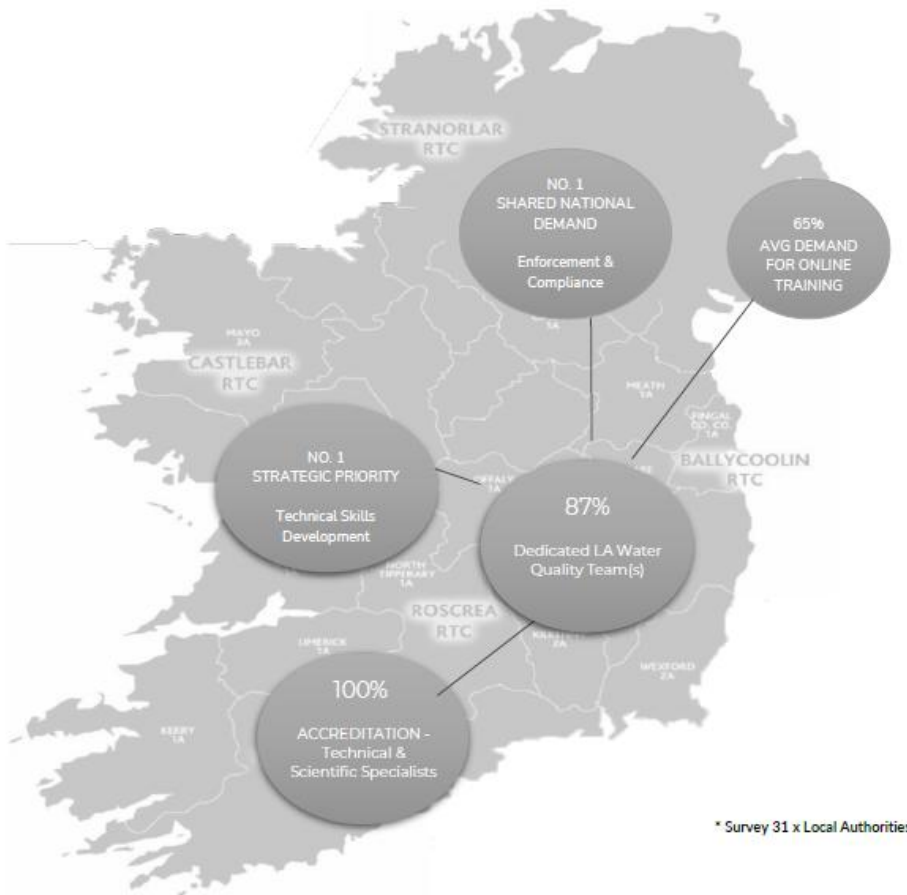
10 x Stakeholder Group Interviews
Local Authority Representatives/ Regional Training Centre(s)/ LASNTG/ LAWPRO/ Uisce Éireann/ Climate Action Regional Office/ Dept Housing, Local Government & Heritage/ ESTG / EPA/ Subject Matter Experts

DOCUMENT & POLICY REVIEW

Water Quality Reports - Attendance /Expression of Interest / Cost
Water Quality Training Folio - Training Materials
EPA – Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Performance Report 2023
Water Framework Directive (WFD) & River Basin Management Plan
Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts, 1977 and 1990.
Prosecution for Water Quality
Nitrates Action Programme/Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) Regulations

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PRIMARY RESEARCH - SUMMARY FINDINGS



Main themes

Capacity Building

Strategic Leadership & Governance

Learner Centric Design & Accessibility

Policy & Regulatory Alignment

Innovation & System Resilience

Catchment Science

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Examples of findings from Review of Water Quality Training Provision



HIGH DEMAND

Training demand is outpacing delivery capacity. Courses are oversubscribed by up to 500% in some instances.



COURSE BURN RATE

Narrow target audiences have the potential to limit the lifespan of a course. Additionally, legislative updates can make course content obsolete quickly.



ACCREDITATION

There exists limited course accreditation.



CATCHMENT SCIENCE

Existing course provision in the field of Catchment Science was deemed highly relevant scoring 87% on survey responses and noted as a quality benchmark during interviews.

Setting a vision and mission

VISION

“A future in which all Local Authorities operate with a shared standard of excellence in water quality governance—supported by a national training programme that is structured, scalable and grounded in Catchment Science”.

MISSION

To establish a nationally co-ordinated, locally responsive training system that strengthens the capacity of Local Authorities to deliver their water quality responsibilities with technical integrity, regulatory confidence and strategic alignment.

Setting goals and objectives



CATCHMENT SCIENCE

System Integrity and
Spatial Coherence



COLLABORATION

Cross Functional
Alignment, System
Partnership and
Collective
Accountability



INNOVATION

System
Responsiveness and
Forward Application



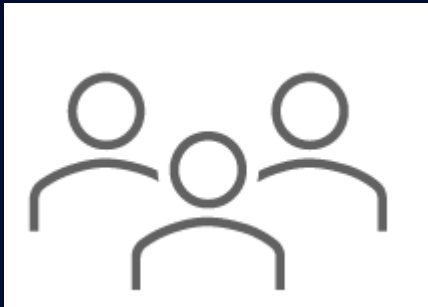
LEARNER LED ENGAGEMENT

Role Alignment,
Progression and
Participation

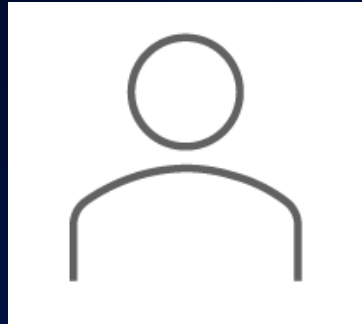
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GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT (ESTG)

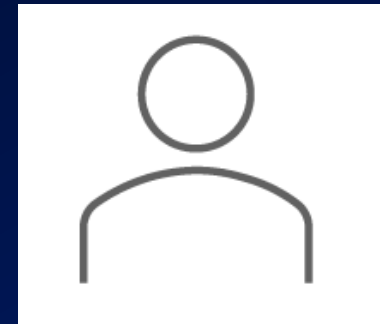
PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT
LASNTG / LAWPRO



WATER QUALITY
PROGRAMME
CO-ORDINATOR



ADMINISTRATOR



TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

To ensure effective and sustainable delivery of the programme implementation will follow a **phased approach**.

Identification of **six distinct target groups** within the sector

1. SENIOR LEADERSHIP	2. ENGINEERING & PLANNING ROLES	3. ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE OFFICERS
4. TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC SPECIALISTS	5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICERS	6. FIELD & MAINTENANCE STAFF

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

Thematic structure developed to defines the key areas through which training content will be developed and delivered

THEME	MODULE
WATER LEGISLATION & POLICY	Water Framework Directive (WFD) River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) Local Authority Enforcement Responsibilities Other EU Water Directives (Drinking Water, Bathing Water, etc.) Water Related Regulations General Legislative Framework Institutional roles (EPA, LAWPRO, Irish Water)

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

THEMATIC STRUCTURE

THEME	MODULE
ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE	Local Authority Enforcement Responsibilities Prosecution, Legal Frameworks & Court Files Section 4 Discharge Licensing (Surface Water) Environmental Inspection Discharge Licensing (Groundwater) Regulatory Monitoring & Compliance Assessment Agricultural Inspections RMCEI Training Public Reporting & Regulatory Intervention

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

THEMATIC STRUCTURE

THEME	MODULE
LAND-USE & PLANNING	Agriculture Planning Applications Nutrient Management Planning Assessment General Planning Applications Biosolid Land Spreading Applications Forestry Applications Anaerobic Digester Applications

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THEME	MODULE
WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT	Surface Water Sampling Protocols & Data Evaluation Investigating Pollution Incidents Catchment Assessment/Catchment Science Small Stream Risk Score (SSRS) Misconnections GIS & Digital Assessment Tools Online Tools - Data & Maps Urban Pressure Assessments Contaminated Land Impacts on the Water Environment Hydro-Morphology Groundwater Sampling Protocols & Data Evaluation Drinking Water Catchment Risk Assessment & Risk Management Monitoring Frameworks & Obligations Groundwater Assessment & Protection Data Analysis Pesticides & the Water Environment Landfill Impact on the Water Environment

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

THEMATIC STRUCTURE

THEME	MODULE
WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT	Catchment Management
	Emergency Pollution Response Coordination
	Drinking Water Source Protection
	Bathing Water Assessment & Management
	Mitigation Measures - Water Environment
	Cross-Agency Pollution Response Planning
	Urban Planning & Sustainable Development
	Climate-Resilient Infrastructure Planning
	Identifying & Mitigating Industrial Pollution
	Shellfish Waters Assessment & Management

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

THEMATIC STRUCTURE

THEME	MODULE
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION	Nature-Based Water Management Solutions Climate Change Impacts on Water Systems Flood Risk Management Drainage & Adaptation Planning Public-Private Collaboration for Adaptation

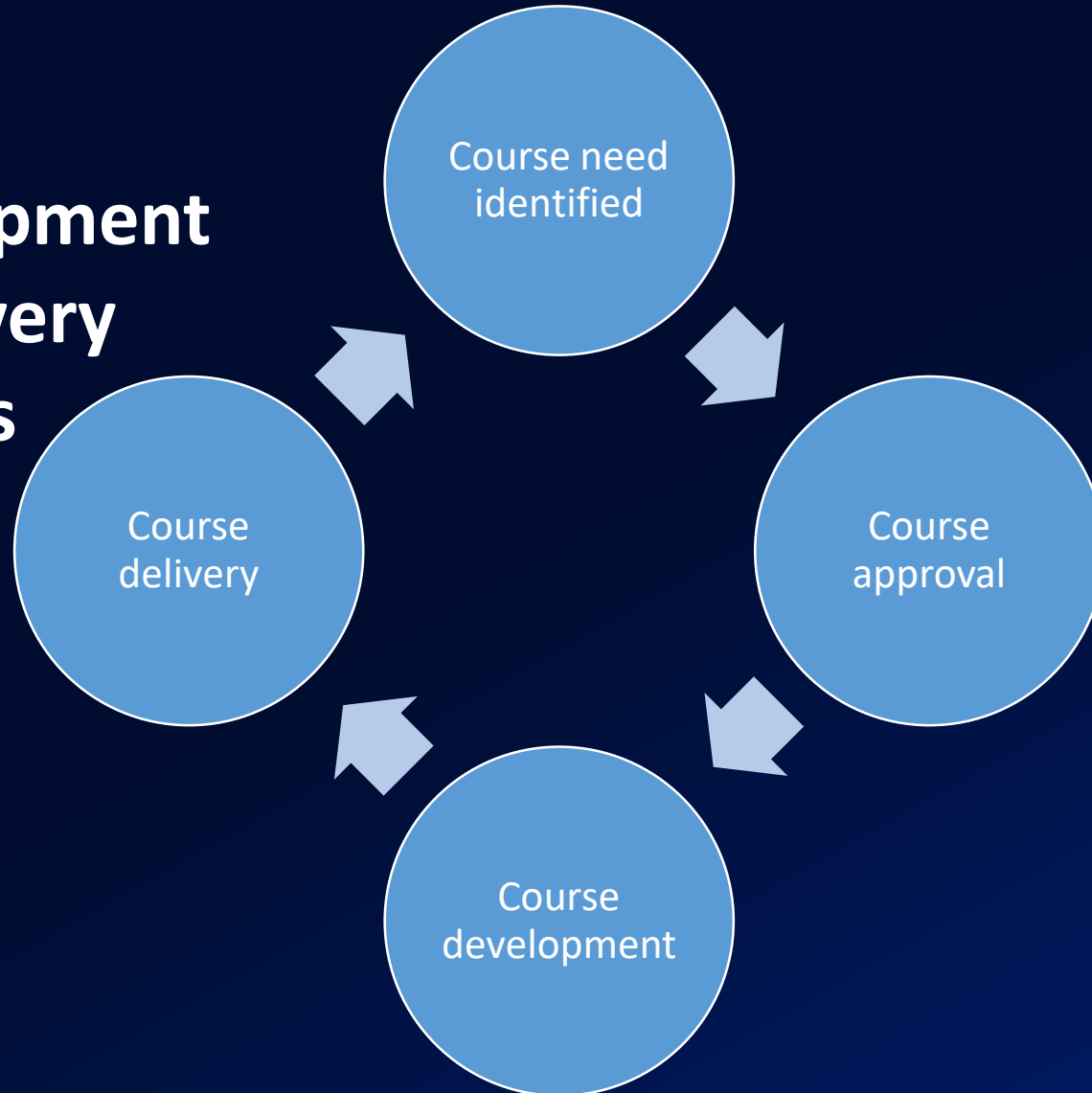
TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

THEMATIC STRUCTURE

THEME	MODULE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OTHER	Water Quality Awareness & Community Education Enhancing Public Engagement in Water & Environmental Services Water Related Health & Safety Community Emergency Preparedness & Response Resilience Training for LA Water Officers Ethical & Professional Challenges in Community Based Water Quality Roles Conflict Management & De-Escalation

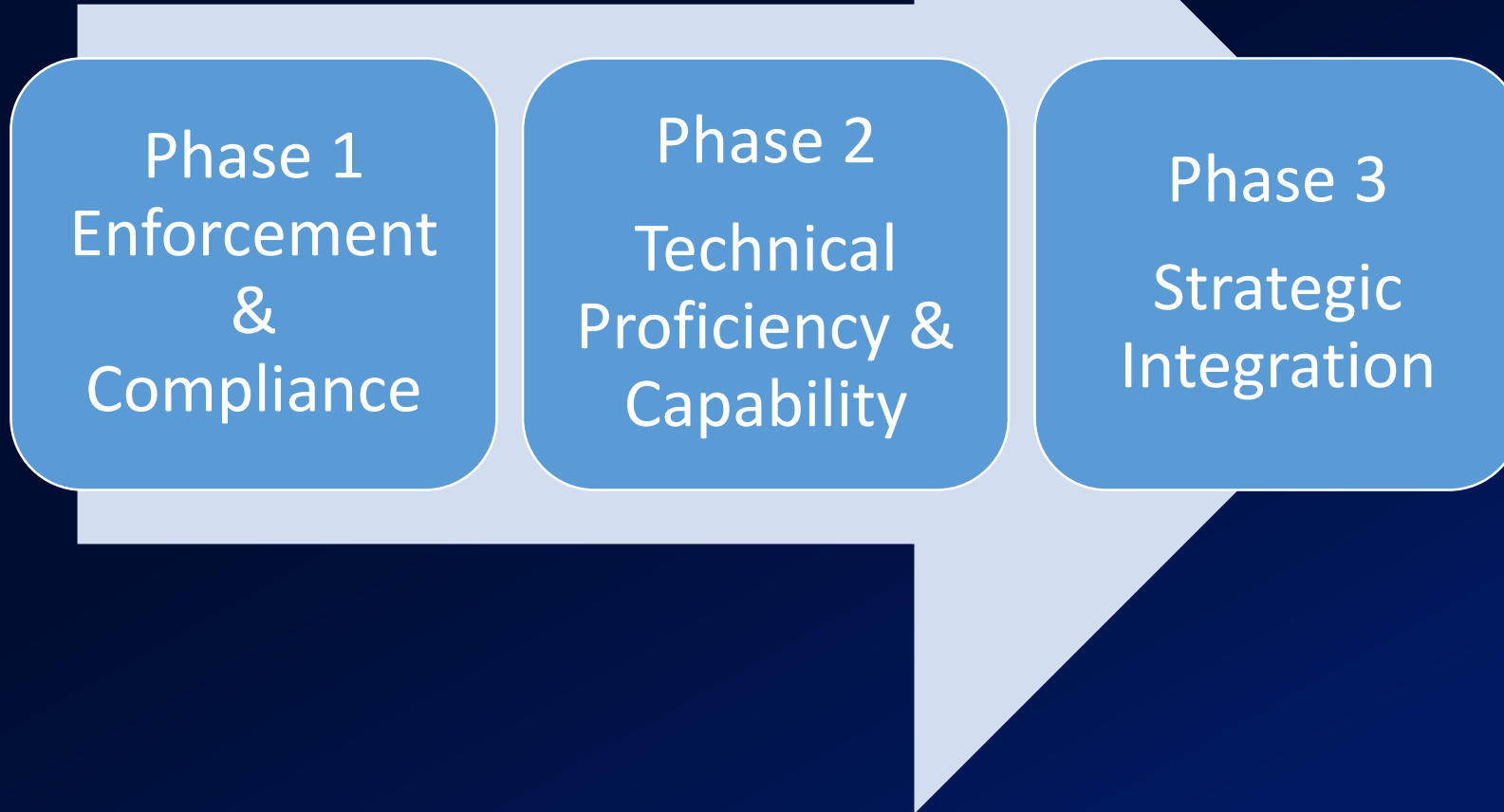
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Course development & Delivery process



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Training Implementation



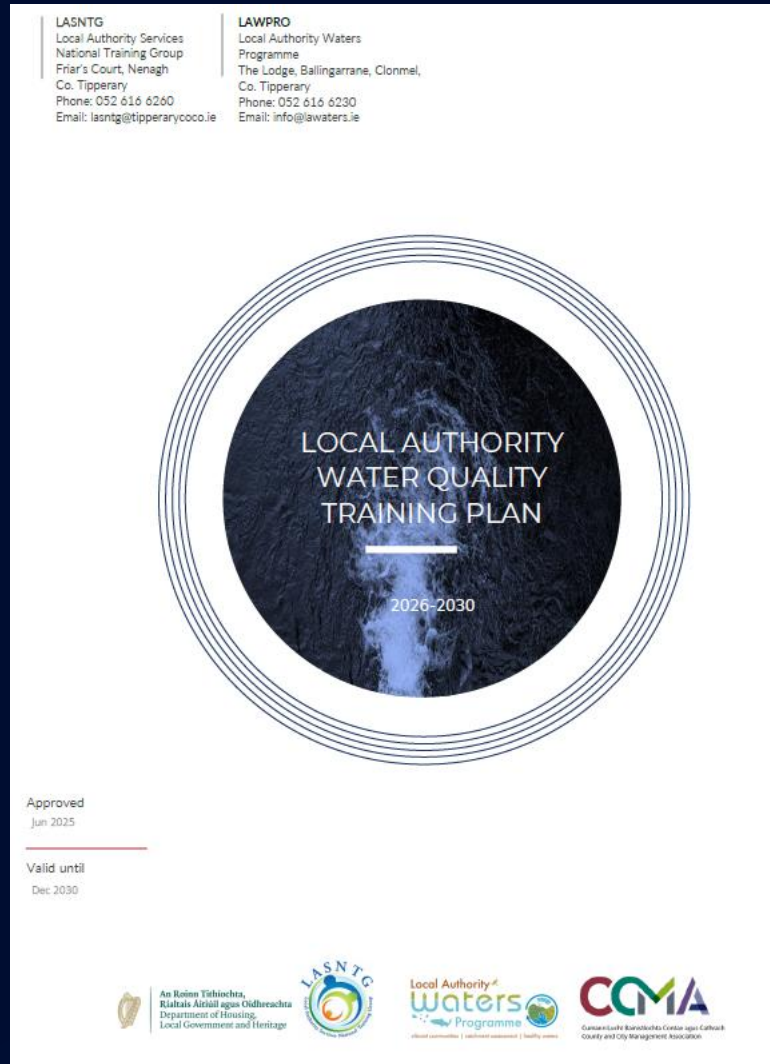
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CATCHMENT SCIENCE

- **Recognised as a recurrent training need**
- **Benchmark for technical & applied learning**
- **Foundational role in building sectoral capacity**
- **8 day course - options to modularise this**



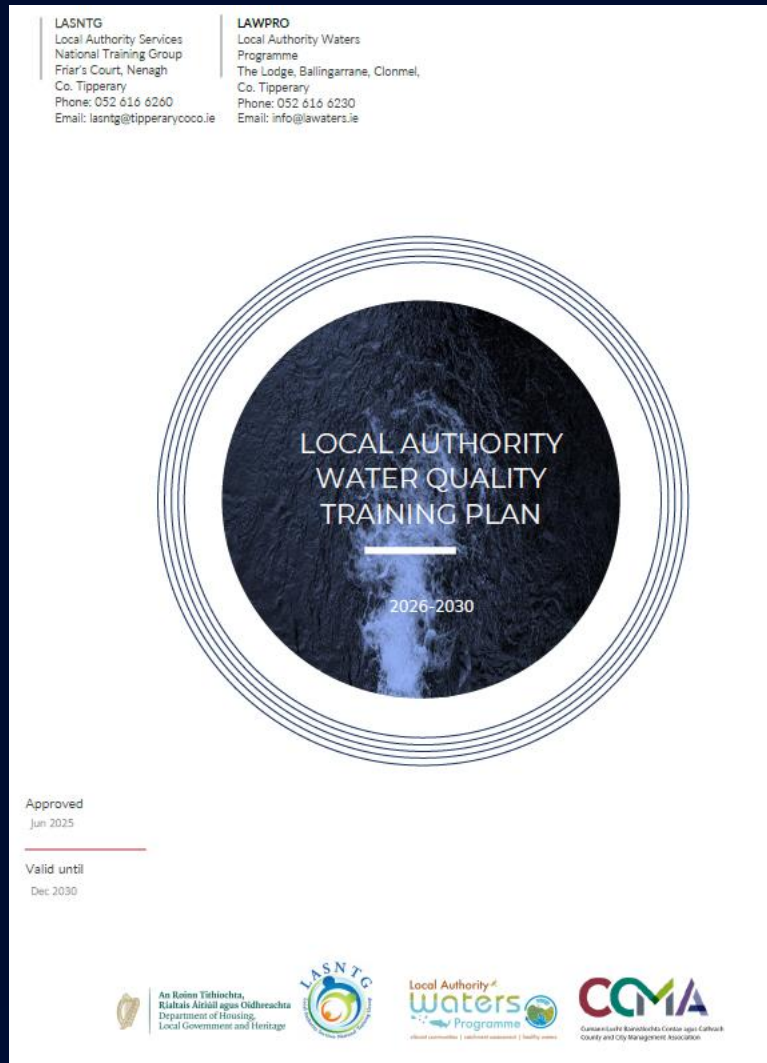
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Current Status

1. ESTG approved
2. National LASNTG Committee
3. ECCEC approved
4. Submitted to DHLGH – Water Advisory Unit as a business case for 2026 & currently under consideration - for resources (x2) and training design, development & delivery

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ACKNOWLEDGE: WORK OF THE STEERING GROUP AND EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS

Session :

Presentation title

Áine Mc Carthy &
Anthony Mannix

THANK YOU



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