



OPW

Managing Flood Risk in Ireland



gov.ie/opw

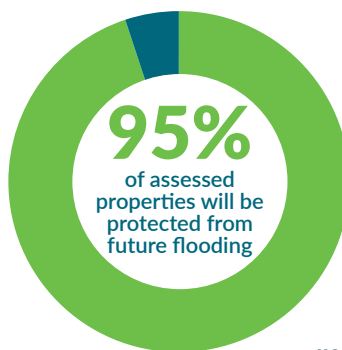
Our Role

Flooding in Ireland can have a significant impact on homes, businesses, people and communities. The flooding problem cannot be eliminated but can be managed or mitigated to reduce its likelihood, severity or impact.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is leading a proactive and whole of Government approach to managing flood risk that takes the potential impacts of climate change into account, across three strategic areas:

- **Prevention** - avoiding construction in flood-prone areas
- **Protection** - taking feasible measures to protect areas against flooding
- **Preparedness** - planning and responding to reduce the impacts of flood events

The OPW is also the national authority for the implementation of the **EU Floods Directive**.



Studying and Assessing Flood Risk

In 2018, the OPW completed the largest study of flood risk ever undertaken by the State to establish those communities that are at risk from significant flood events. This provided the roadmap for the Government's investment in flood relief schemes.



54

flood relief
schemes completed



over

12,200

properties protected

some

100

flood schemes
at design, planning
or construction

up from 33 in 2018

Investment

€1.3 billion has been committed over the lifetime of the National Development Plan to 2030 to protect approximately 23,000 properties in threatened communities from river and coastal flood risk.

Today, work by the OPW is complete or underway to deliver protection to 80% of properties assessed to be at risk, with further schemes planned. When all schemes are completed, 95% of assessed properties will be protected from future flooding.

Climate Change

One of the many effects of climate change is the likely increase in significant flooding events across Ireland. The long-term goal adopted by the OPW on climate adaptation for flooding and flood risk management is set out in the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Flood Risk Management 2019 - 2024.

All new flood relief schemes are designed to take account of climate change and plans will be developed for the adaptation of existing schemes.

In addition, the development of flood relief schemes now involves a specific requirement to assess the potential for nature-based solutions as part of the overall solution to managing flood risk for a particular community.

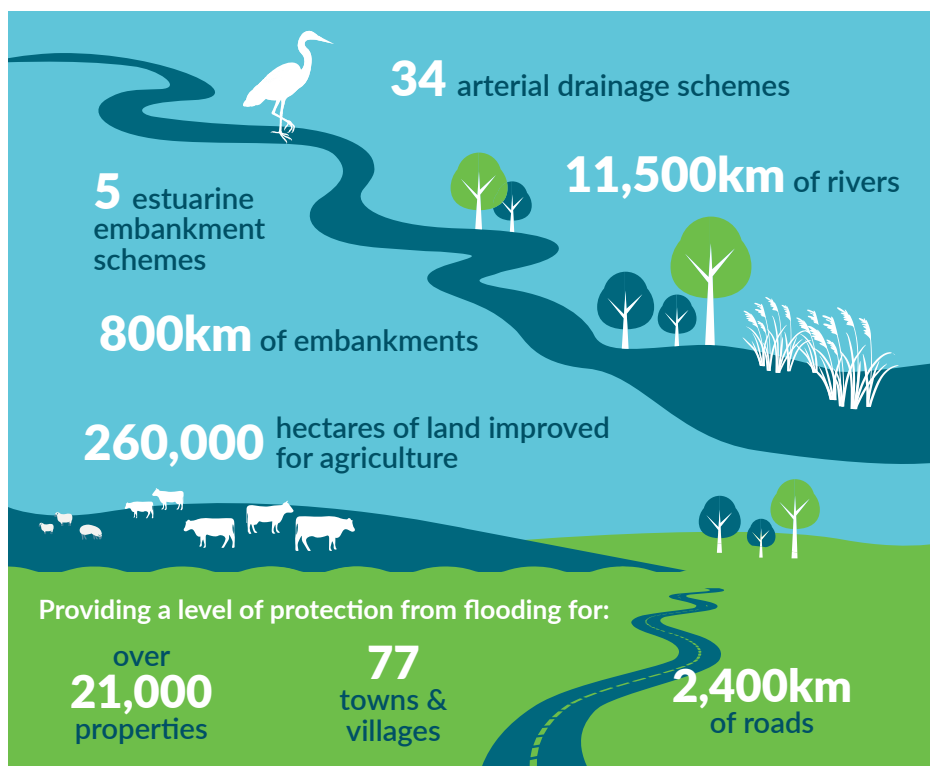
Climate change will have a significant impact on our coastal communities, economies, heritage, culture and environment. The recently published Report of the Inter-Departmental Group on Managing Coastal Change sets out a blueprint for the development of an evidence-based coastal change management strategy facilitating key decisions to be taken to address and manage the impacts of coastal change over the short, medium and longer terms.

Working with Local Authorities

The OPW works closely with Local Authorities in the design and delivery of major flood relief schemes. To complement the delivery of these major schemes, the OPW's [Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme](#) provides funding to Local Authorities to provide local flooding solutions with over 680 projects completed to November 2023, providing protection to some 7,800 properties.

Arterial Drainage Maintenance

[Arterial Drainage schemes](#) were carried out under the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945 to improve land for agriculture and to mitigate flooding. The OPW has a statutory duty to maintain these schemes in proper repair and effective condition through an ongoing programme of maintenance in line with best environmental practice.



Local Authorities are responsible for the maintenance of Drainage District schemes constructed prior to 1945.

Working with the Environment

The OPW undertakes its activities in accordance with relevant legislation, through a range of environmental assessments and supported by widespread stakeholder consultation. The OPW actively contributes through a wide range of interdepartmental working groups to help evolve and implement relevant environmental legislation and Government policy.

The [OPW Biodiversity Action Strategy 2022-2026](#) sets out opportunities where enhancement or restoration for biodiversity benefit can be used as part of the solution to flooding or drainage issues.



Public Awareness

The OPW has published guidance to assist members of the public and business owners with planning and preparing to protect their homes and businesses to mitigate the damage that can be caused by a flood event. This includes guidance on what to do after a flood has occurred.

Useful Websites

Find out more about the role of the OPW, policies and consultations at www.gov.ie/opw.

Check out our interactive website, www.floodinfo.ie, where you can:

- view a range of flood maps for a location (where they are available)
- read about the measures completed, underway and planned to manage the flood risk in that location
- find updates on schemes being delivered
- report a flood event in an area

Go to www.waterlevel.ie for real time access to data from hundreds of river, lake and tidal surface water monitoring stations.

Visit www.flooding.ie for practical guidance for homeowners and businesses who may be at risk from flooding.



OPW

Policy Unit
Flood Risk Management Services
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