

Uisce Álainn Biodiversity Policy

*Supporting Beautiful Waters, Community, and Nature
Through Responsible Celebration*



Introduction

The Uisce Álainn event is a celebration of beautiful waters, biodiversity and community spirit, featuring people-powered watercraft including dragon boats, kayaks, and rowboats. As organisers and participants, we are committed to safeguarding biodiversity, supporting environmental stewardship, and aligning our actions with the 'Sport 4 Nature' initiative. This policy outlines our dedication to protecting local ecosystems, promoting sustainability, and fostering collaboration with leading conservation organisations.

Scope

This biodiversity policy applies to all activities associated with Uisce Álainn, including but not limited to:

- Dragon Boat, Kayaking and Rowing participants
- Ceremonial activities involving flower petals
- Public and participant engagement zones
- Food and beverage provision and consumption
- Waste management and event material use

Environmental Protection Measures

- **People-Powered Watercraft:** participants will be taking part in human-powered boats only. In line with our Event Safety Policy, engine-powered safety boats will be shadowing participants in a manner creating minimal disturbance to aquatic habitats.
- **Flower Petal Use:** For ceremonial purposes, only natural flower petals without seeds may be used. This measure prevents the accidental introduction of invasive plant species and protects local flora and fauna.
- **Prevention of Invasive Species:** All equipment, including boats and paddles, must be cleaned before entering the water. This reduces the risk of transferring non-native species between waterways.

Education and Engagement

- **Biodiversity Awareness:** The event will feature educational displays and activities to inform participants and the public about local biodiversity, ecosystem health, and the importance of native species.
- **Citizen Science:** Attendees are encouraged to participate in simple biodiversity monitoring, such as wildlife spotting and recording, to support local conservation efforts.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Workshops and talks will promote responsible interaction with natural environments and highlight how individuals can contribute to environmental protection.
- **Collaboration with Local Environmental Organisations:** Partnerships with these organisations will help deliver expert-led education sessions, citizen science initiatives, and broader ecosystem awareness campaigns during the event.

Sport for Nature

Uisce Álainn is proud to align with the 'Sport4Nature' framework to deliver transformative, nature positive action across sports by 2030 and beyond, enabling sports to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration. By embracing this framework, we are committed to:

- Reducing our environmental footprint
- Promoting nature-positive behaviour among all participants
- Supporting protection and restoration of local waterways

Sustainable Practices: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

- **Waste Reduction:** Single-use plastics are discouraged. Event catering and refreshment areas will prioritise reusable and compostable materials.
- **Recycling and Composting:** Clearly marked bins will be provided for re-return, recyclables and organic waste. All vendors and participants are required to follow the event's waste separation guidelines.
- **Sustainable Consumption:** Food and beverage choices will prioritise local, seasonal, and sustainably sourced products. Attendees are encouraged to bring reusable bottles and cups.

Responsibilities

- Organisers: Ensure all aspects of the event comply with this policy, provide training and information, and maintain partnerships with conservation organisations.
- Participants: Follow event environmental guidelines and engage respectfully with the natural environment.
- Partners and Vendors: Support sustainable practices, participate in educational activities, and help monitor compliance.

Monitoring and Review

Compliance with this policy will be monitored throughout the event by designated environmental stewards. Feedback from participants and partners will inform an annual review of the policy, ensuring continuous improvement and adaptation to emerging nature positive actions ensuring its restoration and protection.

Conclusion

Uisce Álainn is committed to celebrating our beautiful waters in a way that respects and protects biodiversity, encourages learning, and fosters a community of environmental stewardship. Through collaboration, education, and responsible action, we aim to set a positive example for future events and contribute meaningfully to the health of our local ecosystems.

