Irish Water

A transformation project delivering tactical wins while addressing the need for sustained and strategic capability growth.

Services

project & programme management

programme delivery

technical advisory

system solution design

the challenge

Irish Water (IW) is the largest utility company in Ireland. It manages thousands of active projects as part of its multi-billion-euro strategic investment plan. Although IW and its remit are large, the organisation is relatively young, having been established in 2013.

Like many asset-intensive organisations, a long period of evolution followed the initial set up. As IW's teams found their stride, they started to refine their technology needs and supporting processes. Upon completion of the latest revenue control period (a five-year cycle in which government funds are agreed for the highest priority projects), IW identified the following opportunity areas in which to increase capability across its entire *'Investment to Outcome'* lifecycle:

- **governance and change management**
- **estimation, uncertainty and contingency**
- **systems, data and reporting**

Given the breadth and interoperability of these core business processes, senior management decided to launch Project Clarity, a business transformation project delivering tactical wins while addressing the need for sustained and strategic capability growth. Several environmental factors added complexity to its delivery. A key one was IW's imminent split from Ervia group (which also contains Gas Networks Ireland and Aurora Telecoms), which would see significant staff and technology changes and a shifting landscape of priorities.

It was clear from the start that this would need to be a holistic endeavour with representation from each functional area, such as investment, planning, operations and delivery, and a broad set of support areas.

the investment to outcome wheel

Irish Water
are managing
c.15bn
strategic
envestment
plan

th3rdcurve®

We've provided data driven KPIs that show how effective each of the new processes are.

the solution

Th3rdcurve was brought in to advise and structure Project Clarity and to deliver specific specialist elements including:

• **Programme management**
• **System advisory and solution design**
• **Assurance**
• **Cost management**
• **Project branding and identity (a crucial part of creating advocacy for a change)**

We partnered with other external experts, delivering a 'one team' approach for IW. As with all major change programme, we weren't the only consultancy...We work well with others...all delivered as a team regardless of which consultancy...found a way to make it work
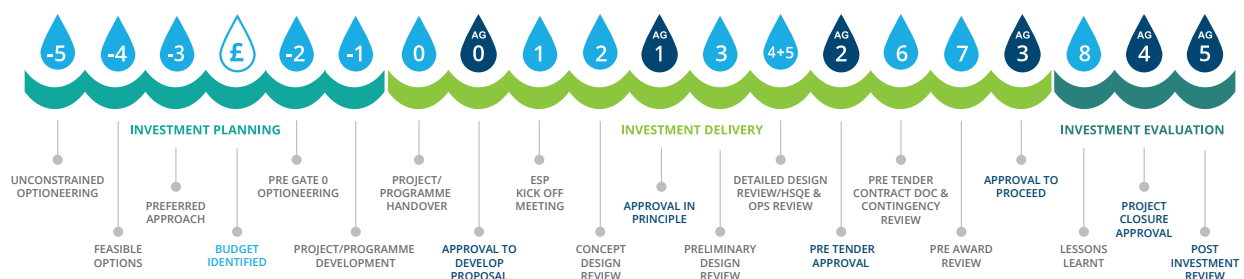
A critical key success factor was a 'staff first' approach, with a belief that 'the people closest to the problems are closest to the solution'. We created a project structure that leveraged staff experience and a small amount of targeted external expertise to cross-functional assurance. The project was steered by senior management from all parts of the business and was split into four workstreams:

1. **Governance & change management**
2. **Estimation, uncertainty & contingency**
3. **Visibility (systems, data & reporting)**
4. **Communications, learning, rollout & assurance**

This covered the core challenges and recognised the importance of good communications, training and assurance to drive sustained new ways of working into a bustling business.

A project PMO was set up to monitor and report on progress, risks and issues, and to support the ongoing integration of working groups. Some of the key deliverables that we delivered for the project were new processes, procedures and training for the following:

• **Risk and contingency management**
• **Estimating**
• **P3 governance**
• **Change management**
• **Cost management**
• **Rationalised project reporting**
• **Data alignment and optimisation**

-5	-4	-3	£	-2	-1	0	AG 0	1	2	AG 1	3	4+5	AG 2	6	7	AG 3	8	AG 4	AG 5

INVESTMENT PLANNING **INVESTMENT DELIVERY** **INVESTMENT EVALUATION**

UNCONSTRAINED OPTIONEERING — PREFERRED APPROACH — FEASIBLE OPTIONS — BUDGET IDENTIFIED — PRE GATE 0 OPTIONEERING — PROJECT/PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT — PROJECT/ PROGRAMME HANDOVER — APPROVAL TO DEVELOP PROPOSAL — ESP KICK OFF MEETING — CONCEPT DESIGN REVIEW — APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE — PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW — DETAILED DESIGN REVIEW/HSQE & OPS REVIEW — PRE TENDER APPROVAL — PRE TENDER CONTRACT DOC & CONTINGENCY REVIEW — PRE AWARD REVIEW — APPROVAL TO PROCEED — LESSONS LEARNT — PROJECT CLOSURE APPROVAL — POST INVESTMENT REVIEW

the new investment to outcome lifecycle

Together we've streamlined the way projects are managed with integrated governance and change management, optimised the way decisions are made with a focus on data quality.

the impact

Project Clarity has been a genuinely outstanding example of business transformation done well. The significant knowledge, insight and energy of IW staff, coupled with the specialist skills of the th3rdcurve and the wider support team, brought natural energy and a feeling of positive change to the project. This de-risked organisational buy-in to the new processes and has driven an appetite for further innovation.

• **Programme management**
• **System advisory & solution design**
• **Assurance**
• **Cost management**
• **Project branding & identity**

Together we've streamlined the way projects are managed with integrated governance and change management, optimised the way decisions are made with a focus on data quality, which is consistent across all projects and paved the way for the next phase with a fully integrated system solution design.

We've provided data driven KPIs that show how effective each of the new processes are such as financial forecasting accuracy, consistency of Project, Programme & Portfolio data across multiple business critical reports and data alignment between source systems and the data warehouse (a single repository where assured business data is stored and retrieved).

The next step is complete enterprise-wide digitalisation of the new operating model with the Investment to Outcome (I2O) Digital programme.

The project has also set up an enduring Community of Practice to monitor the performance of the new processes and act as custodians of continuous improvement. The CoP will ensure that processes stay relevant and that the benefits grow as IW evolves and delivers value for Irish citizens.

want to know more about our projects & how we can help?