

Energy for generations

Sustainable Rivers

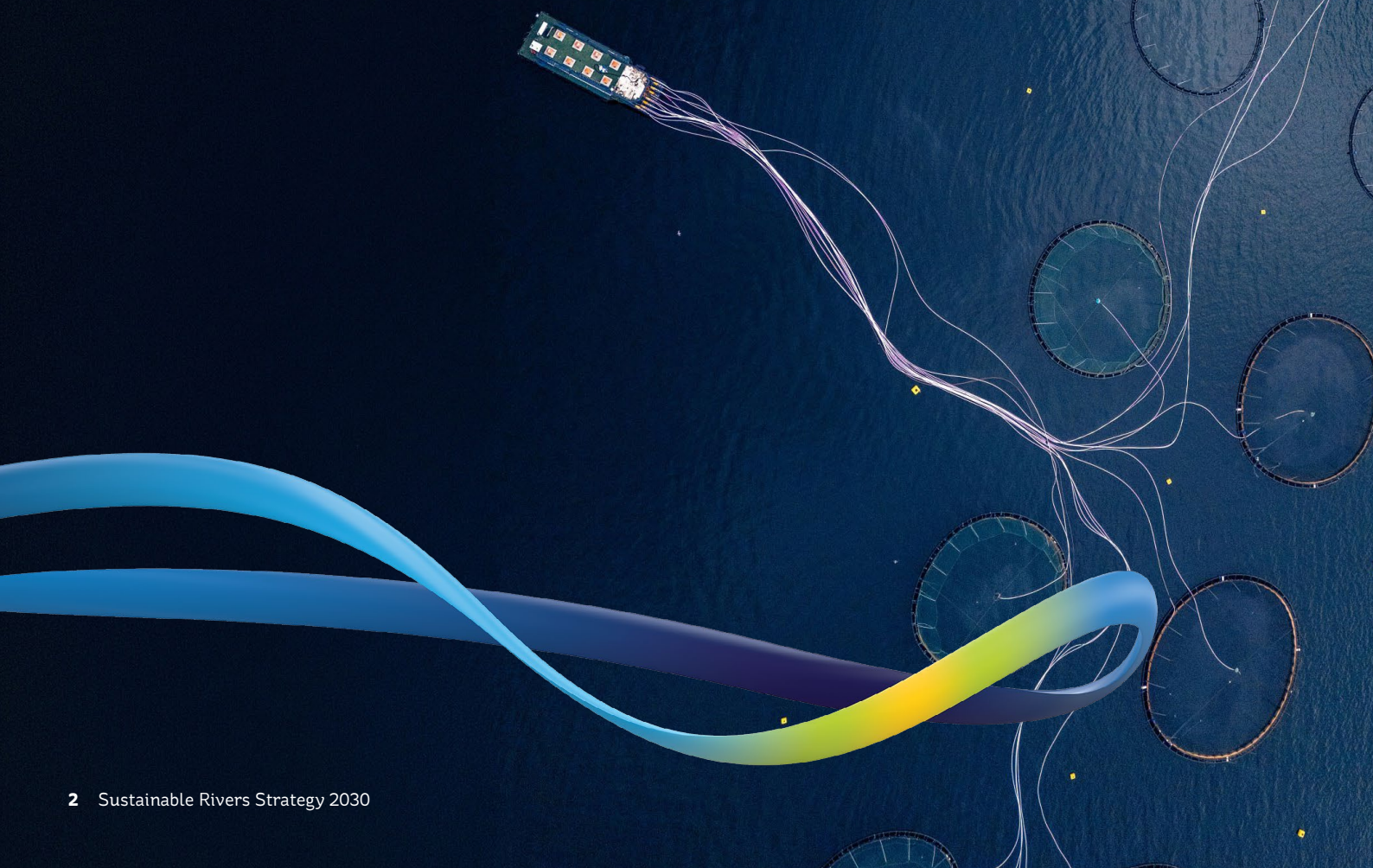
Strategy 2030

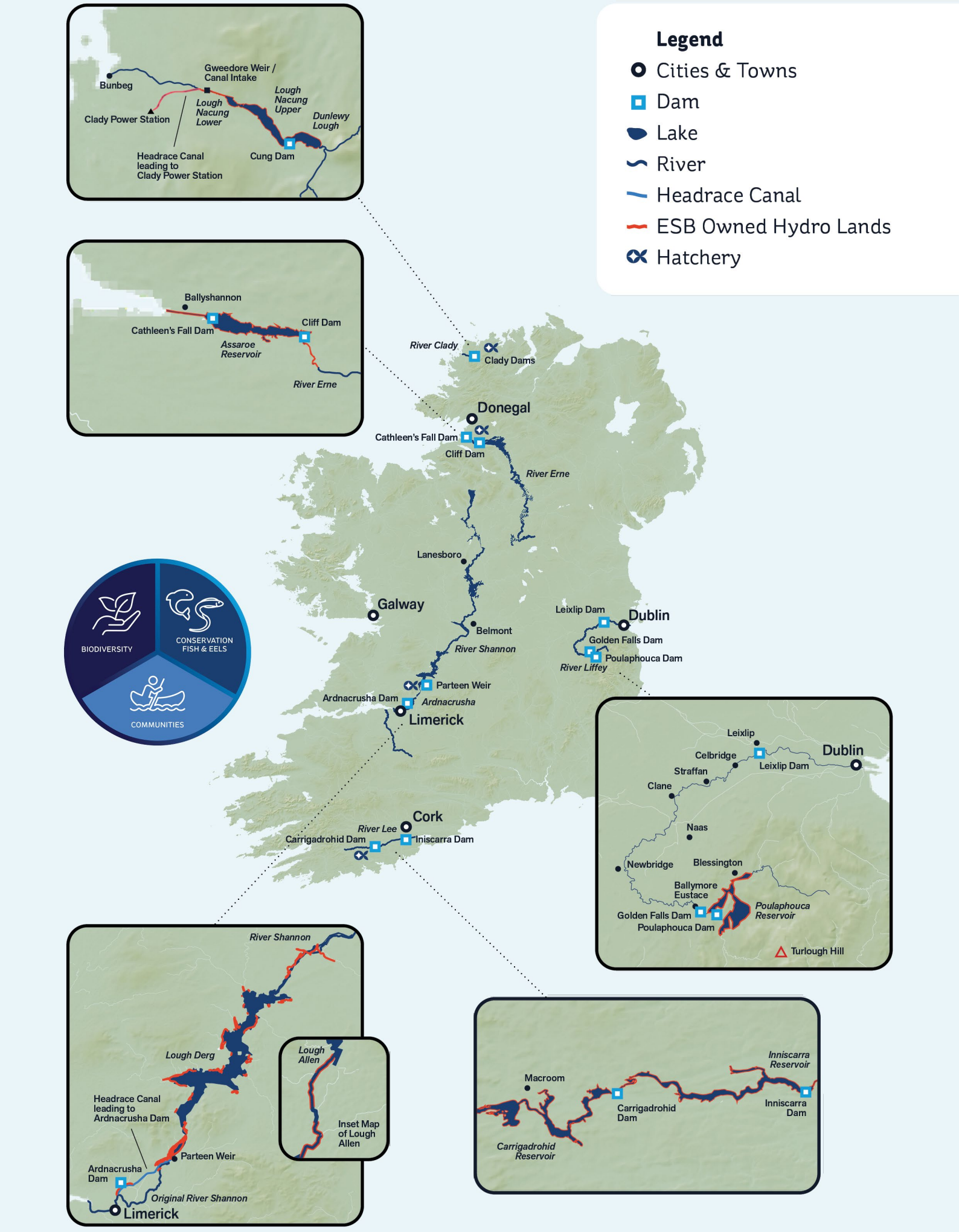
Introduction

ESB has a legal duty to manage, protect and preserve the fisheries on the rivers where we generate hydroelectric power.

Our Sustainable Rivers Strategy 2030 is a long-term framework for managing the rivers and lakes associated with hydroelectric operations in the River Shannon, Erne, Liffey, Lee and Clady/Crolly, and is aligned with our Net Zero by 2040 strategy and relevant EU regulations.

This Sustainable Rivers Strategy will improve river connectivity, support native fish populations, enhance habitats near our hydro sites and benefit local communities.




Legend
Cities & Towns
Dam
Lake
River
Headrace Canal
ESB Owned Hydro Lands
Hatchery
Bunbeg
Gweedore Weir / Canal Intake
Lough Nacung Upper
Lough Nacung Lower
Clady Power Station
Dunlewy Lough
Headrace Canal leading to Clady Power Station
Cung Dam
Ballyshannon
Cathleen's Fall Dam
Cliff Dam
Assaroe Reservoir
River Erne
River Clady
Clady Dams
Donegal
Cathleen's Fall Dam
Cliff Dam
River Erne
Lanesboro
Galway
Belmont
River Shannon
Leixlip Dam
Dublin
Golden Falls Dam
Poulaphouca Dam
River Liffey
Parteen Weir
Ardnacrusha Dam
Ardnacrusha
Limerick
BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION FISH & EELS
COMMUNITIES
Leixlip
Celbridge
Leixlip Dam
Dublin
Straffan
Clane
Naas
Newbridge
Blessington
Ballymore Eustace
Golden Falls Dam
Poulaphouca Dam
Poulaphouca Reservoir
Turlough Hill
Cork
River Lee
Carrigadrohid Dam
Inniscarra Dam
River Shannon
Lough Derg
Lough Allen
Inset Map of Lough Allen
Headrace Canal leading to Ardnacrusha Dam
Parteen Weir
Ardnacrusha Dam
Original River Shannon
Limerick
Macroom
Inniscarra Reservoir
Carrigadrohid Dam
Inniscarra Dam
Carrigadrohid Reservoir

Key Principles

ESB's Sustainable Rivers Strategy 2030 is founded on four key principles:

1. Stepping forward on social and environmental responsibility:

While ESB has made a big impact through its works so far, this new strategy aims to build on those activities and increase our focus on protecting fish populations.

2. Dam Safety:

We need to monitor, inspect and maintain the concrete and embankment dams on these rivers. This keeps dam safety risks under control and protects local communities. Dam safety comes first. This strategy introduces fresh ways to conserve fish and more, without compromising that safety.

3. Water Management:

The reservoirs serve long-standing community needs, like drinking water, recreation and navigation. They also help ease flooding during storms. While they can't stop flooding, the storage in the reservoirs can help reduce flows in the river downstream. Smart water management is key to dam safety and running ESB's hydro schemes.

4. Legal And Statutory Obligations:

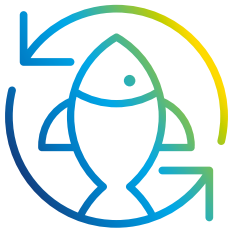
ESB have obligations to conserve fisheries, but this new strategy goes even further. It sets a target for a nature positive approach on lands and rivers where we operate.

The development and implementation of actions under each of these high-level goals will be based on:

- The application of scientific and other technical expert advice
- The outcome of trials and feasibility studies, and,
- Consultations with key stakeholders

Strategic Goals

ESB has identified three strategic goals which are core to the delivery of our Sustainable Rivers Strategy.



Strategic Goal 1:

To shift the balance between fish conservation and renewable energy based on scientific evidence.

Eel Trap and Transport Programme
Trialling a longer season of our Eel Trap and Transport programme, how we move young and adult eels safely, to see if this improves eel conservation.

- 2024 update - 2 tonnes of young eels, 62 tonnes of adult eels
- 2025 update - 2 tonnes of young eels, 87 tonnes of adult eels

Connectivity Projects

- Studying potential improvements to fisheries infrastructure
- Studying fish migration and environmental impact on the Erne and Clady Rivers, to see if existing fish passes can be upgraded or if a new pass is needed.
- Actively involved in the Lower Shannon Fish Passage Improvement Group led by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. External technical experts are being appointed to take forward an agreed roadmap. A series of feasibility studies is planned and ESB has committed to co-fund these studies.

Generation Protocols
Trialling revised operating protocols at one hydro station to see how the changes in how we work impact fish conservation.

Based on the outcome of trials, studies and scientific advice, ESB will roll out further projects and initiatives to implement the Sustainable Rivers Strategy.



Strategic Goal 2:

Deliver a nature positive approach along 30% of ESB owned river or lakeside habitats by 2030.

Gearagh Management Plan

ESB and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are currently finalising a Management Plan for The Gearagh, a protected area (SPA & SAC) on the river Lee. It focuses on improving the ecological value of this floodplain and alluvial forest through more surveys of plants, animals and bird counts, as well as plans to tackle invasive species like sycamore and Himalayan Balsam.

Green Leases

ESB is looking at adding nature positive measures for lands next to our rivers and reservoirs.

River Enhancement Work

This includes restoring habitats with river bank buffer planting and wet grassland improvements, more survey and monitoring activities and closer collaboration with agencies and local communities.

This is a long term, wide ranging approach that we'll keep reviewing for results.



Strategic Goal 3:

Deliver a clear net benefit of ESB's contribution to our communities through sustainability efforts.

Community Access

ESB will continue to support safe and suitable public access to our riverside and reservoir lands,

Consultations

ESB will work with community groups, local councils, Waterways Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland and others, to create safe walkways and greenways.

Angling Groups

ESB will partner with angling clubs on in-river projects to improve fish habitats. Combined with our fishing and boating permits, this gives anglers better access to rivers and reservoirs.

Energy for generations

ESB Head Office
27 Fitzwilliam Street Lower
Dublin 2
D02 KT92
Ireland

T: +353 1 676 5831
E: info@esb
www.esb.ie

Sustainable Rivers Strategy 2030
First published March 2026