Site Visit Report

Under the *European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations 2023*, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the supervisory authority in relation to Uisce Éireann and its role in the provision of public drinking water supplies. This audit was carried out to assess the performance of Uisce Éireann in providing clean and wholesome water to the public water supply named below.

The audit process is a sample of the performance of a water treatment plant and public water supply on a given date.

Water Supply Zone

Name of Installation	Rosses Regional PUB
Organisation	Uisce Éireann
Scheme Code	0600PUB1060
County	Donegal
Site Visit Reference No.	SV35739

Report Detail

Issue Date	30/10/2026
Prepared By	Veronica Boland

Site Visit Detail

Date Of Inspection	18/08/2026	**Announced**	No
Time In	15:20	**Time Out**	17:20
EPA Inspector(s) **Additional Visitors**	Veronica Boland Mary Grimes		
Company Personnel	Uisce Éireann: John V O'Donnell, Geraldine Friel, Adrian Gillespie, Columba Heena.		

Summary of Key Findings

1. An upgrade of the sludge treatment facilities at Crolly Water Treatment Plant is proposed to enhance the capacity and performance of the existing sludge management infrastructure. Uisce Éireann advised during the site visit that plans are in place to upgrade the sludge treatment system at the Crolly WTP within the next 12 months.

Uisce Éireann should submit a report to the EPA on or before 30/11/2026 detailing the actions taken and planned, with timescales, to close out the two recommendations in this audit report.

Introduction

The Rosses Regional Public Water Supply (PWS) is supplied by Crolly water treatment plant (WTP) which produces approximately 5040 m3/day of treated water (EDEN figure), and serves a population of approximately 9,419 people (EDEN figure 2026). The raw water source is Lough Keel.

Treatment at the WTP consists of pre-treatment pH correction, coagulation, flocculation, clarification, rapid gravity filtration, post treatment pH correction, chlorination and orthophosphate treatment. Sludge management at Crolly WTP consists of three sludge settlement lagoons.

The site visit was conducted with regard to sludge management at the Crolly WTP.

Supply Zones Areas Inspected

The sludge lagoons, discharge point from sludge lagoons located at the site and the associated discharge point to Keel Lough Stream. Upstream and downstream of the Crolly WTP and raw water source located at Keel Lough.

1. Sludge Management

		Answer
1.1	Is sludge arising from the treatment processes adequately managed?	No

Comment

1. Discharges from Crolly WTP have been identified as a significant pressure on the Keel Lough Stream_010 waterbody.
2. Sludge generated from the clarifier system and filter backwash processes is directed to three interconnected concrete sludge lagoons located at the WTP, approximately 100 metres from Lough Keel Stream.
3. During the inspection the EPA inspectors observed:

- clarifier sludge bleeds entering the lagoons every two minutes and one backwash during the inspection.
- a partially collapsed tarpaulin installed across lagoon no. 1. Uisce Éireann stated at the audit that the tarpaulin was installed in August 2025 to act as a 'baffle' to try to improve solids settlement.
- two unidentified pipes projecting from above the bankwall of lagoon no.1. There was no flow observed from these pipes. Uisce Éireann representatives were unable to confirm the source of these pipes or whether they were in use.

4. Uisce Éireann advised that approximately 30 m³ of sludge/supernatant is removed three to four times weekly from the lagoons. This was in line with records from 2021 to 2026 viewed during the inspection, with records for the day before the audit i.e., 17/08/2026 indicating 60m3 pumped from lagoon no.1, 60m3 from lagoon no.2 and 30m3 from lagoon no.3.

5. The EPA inspectors observed a continuous discharge from the outlet of the interconnected sludge lagoons which ultimately discharges via an underground pipe into Keel Lough stream. This discharge did not appear to be discoloured. The EPA Inspectors noted that the waters upstream and downstream of the discharge pipe, exhibited a natural brown coloration, such as associated with peat-influenced upland catchment conditions.

6. At the site visit Uisce Éireann advised that:

- Monitoring of the water quality upstream and downstream of the discharge point had commenced in November 2025;
- There was no flow or turbidity monitors associated with the discharge pipe from the lagoon system;
- A sludge-thickening treatment system is planned for installation at the Crolly WTP within the next 12 months, and that a contractor had recently visited the site in relation to the proposed works.

Recommendations:

1. Submit details of the proposed action plan and associated timeframes for upgrades to the sludge treatment facilities at Crolly WTP. This should include: (i) proposed measures for monitoring discharges from the sludge treatment system, including flow and turbidity monitoring, prior to discharge to the Keel Lough Stream; and (ii) interim management measures for the existing sludge lagoons and any plans for their future decommissioning.

2. Submit results of the water quality monitoring carried out up and down stream of the WTP discharge to Keel Lough stream since November 2025.

Recommendations

Actions required by Uisce Éireann

During the audit, Uisce Éireann representatives were advised of the audit findings and that action must be taken by Uisce Éireann to address the issues raised.

Uisce Éireann is responsible for ensuring a clean and wholesome supply of drinking water and should implement the recommendations raised in this report without delay.

Response to Audit Report

Uisce Éireann should submit a report to the EPA on or before the date specified in the Summary of Key Findings detailing the actions taken and planned, with timescales, to close out the recommendations in this audit report.

The EPA advises that the findings and recommendations from this report should, where relevant, be addressed at other public water supplies.

Publication of Reports

Audit reports are published to the EPA's website, www.epa.ie, typically 1 month after the audit report is issued to Uisce Éireann.