

Environmental Justice Network Ireland Ltd
Company Limited by Guarantee
Unaudited Financial Statements
31 December 2022

Environmental Justice Network Ireland Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 December 2022

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Environmental Justice Network Ireland Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 31 December 2022

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Environmental Justice Network Ireland Ltd

Charity registration number NIC108291

Company registration number NI675600

Principal office and registered office Ormeau Baths
Ormeau Avenue
Belfast
BT2 8HS
Northern Ireland

The trustees

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Ms V Cirefice | (Appointed 23 February 2023) |
| Mr R Blackwood | (Resigned 23 February 2023) |
| Dr P Doran | |
| Ms B McNeill | |
| Mr J Orr | (Resigned 1 February 2022) |
| Mr S Wood | (Appointed 10 February 2022) |

Company secretary Dr Ciara Brennan

Independent examiner Finegan Gibson Ltd

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Year ended 31 December 2022

Structure, governance and management

The Environmental Justice Network Ireland Ltd ("EJNI") was launched in June 2019 to create a collaborative platform for partnership working between academics, representatives of civil society and environmental NGOs. EJNI's core goal is to address the root causes of social and environmental justice deficits on the island of Ireland. EJNI is delivering this goal through an innovative, transdisciplinary model of collaboration which draws together diverse stakeholders and decision-makers who usually operate in almost completely separate spheres to enhance knowledge exchange and facilitate more effective and strategic research, advocacy and action. EJNI now has an extensive network of members drawn from academia, lawyers, NGOs and community activists from across the island of Ireland and beyond who work together to deliver unique, cutting edge collaborative environmental justice projects.

EJNI is an independent, non-profit network, existing and acting in the public interest. The organisation currently has a Board of Trustees which provides oversight and makes core decisions. Co-ordination of its projects is led by an acting Director and Steering Group, which is comprised of voluntary representatives from academia, the NGO and legal sectors and grassroots community activism drawn from its wider network. Its primary activities centre on three key areas: (i) Research: the creation and dissemination of evidence-based, multi-media resources to help enhance knowledge about environmental and social justice issues which impact citizens on the island of Ireland and beyond; (ii) Advocacy: empowering and campaigning support activities relating to environmental injustices; (iii) Action: the provision of a unique platform for collaborative online and in-person activism and action designed to enhance cooperation between diverse stakeholders and across borders.

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Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2022

Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

Trustees and decision-making

EJNI is driven and overseen by a Board of Trustees and supported by a Steering Group that sits within a transdisciplinary, cooperative 'community of practice'. The aim is a highly structured system of distributed decision making, producing high quality outputs efficiently and democratically through a cooperative model based on (i) core operations and (ii) collaborative projects (as described below). The Board of Trustees is responsible for overall performance, governance and policy. It is comprised of 4 individuals and vacancies on the Board will be advertised via the EJNI website. Trustees will be elected and appointed by the Interim Board and Company Secretary with consideration of advice from Steering Group members. The appointed board will be representative and reflect the ethos of the organisation. In December 2022, the board is comprised of: Dean Blackwood (The Gathering, a representative community activist group), Simon Wood (Film-maker), Dr Peter Doran (QUB) and Bróna McNeill (QUB). Dr Ciara Brennan (Director, EJNI) is company secretary. The Steering Group is comprised of members of the network and EJNI staff, with a maximum of 15 participants. It meets regularly and is representative of the diverse different types of stakeholders EJNI works with.

Staff and Remuneration

During 2022 EJNI's core activities continue to be funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (grant for core funding runs from Oct 2021- September 2023) to support a small team of part-time staff to deliver its core operations and support and coordinate its collaborative projects (detailed below). EJNI staff and steering group members may hold multiple roles within the organisation (with the exception of board members who cannot be paid employees), e.g. staff members may also be involved in collaborative projects as consultants. Director: Ciara Brennan Research Officer: Caitlin McIlhennon

IT and web support: Phillip Lock and John Burns

Remuneration for these staff members in their core roles was agreed by the board on the basis of academic payscales for lecturer and research assistant (in light of the qualifications and the previous roles of the staff members) and with consideration of NJC payscales. For project consultancy work, daily rates are negotiated with funders on a project-by-project basis.

Relationships with related parties

Bróna McNeill (Trustee and member of the steering group) is sister to Ciara Brennan (Director). Phillip Lock (IT and web support) is husband to Ciara Brennan.

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Year ended 31 December 2022

Objectives and activities

EJNI'S growing network of academics, lawyers, NGOs and grassroots community activists in Northern Ireland and across the island of Ireland are working together with partners across the EU to respond to environmental and social injustice. EJNI defines 'environmental justice' as the prevention of unfairly distributed environmental harms and the establishment of procedures to ensure that concerned citizens and public interest groups can access the justice system at reasonable cost; be provided with a fair platform for the treatment of environmental issues; and obtain adequate and effective remedies for breaches of environmental law.

- EJNI will contribute to the ongoing transformation of the Northern Ireland conflict through:
 - empowering citizens to address root causes of environmental injustice - namely the de-prioritization of environmental protection and social justice during the conflict
 - contributing to peace-building efforts by providing a platform for collaboration between diverse stakeholders but also between groups and individuals from all communities in Northern Ireland
 - promoting cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland through the development of cooperative solutions to shared environmental challenges
- EJNI's core mission and operations are underpinned by the principles and values of participation, human rights and equality. Public participation is one of the central tenets of the UNECE Convention on Access to Environmental Justice. The right to a healthy environment is increasingly recognised as the basis for a wide range of legal interventions centred on environmental justice claims. Finally, equality, diversity & inclusivity considerations have informed the development of the organisation since its establishment.
- EJNI's activities are designed to encourage the development of a non-sectarian political culture which is inclusive, transparent, responsive and accountable. It will do this through supporting and equipping communities with the knowledge they need to create a vibrant, pluralist and activist civil society, responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable and able to hold the government to account for environmental and connected social justice failures.

EJNI's work will help provide a platform for voices from community activist groups which have been marginalised groups in the context of public policy-making in relation to the environment and social justice in Northern Ireland. Through joint-working between communities, NGOs, lawyers and academics to produce evidence-based resources, events and advocacy activities, EJNI will help cultivate the independence of the community and voluntary sectors. EJNI's work has already, and will continue to develop projects that promote increased participation of women in processes which will help influence political decision-making and also greater inclusivity in political decision-making and policy work.

EJNI's work will fulfil three central charitable purposes:

(i) to promote, for the benefit of the public, access to environmental justice by supporting communities, individuals and organisations that are engaged in challenging environmental injustice on the island of Ireland and providing a platform for collaboration between these groups; (ii) to promote, for the benefit of the public, the advancement of education about environmental justice concerns on the island of Ireland and how these relate to global environmental, economic and societal debates; and (iii) to carry out or assist in the carrying out of research into environmental justice and to publish or otherwise disseminate the results of such research on the island of Ireland and across the world for the benefit of the public.

EJNI will achieve its goal of enhancing environmental justice on the island of Ireland through addressing the root causes of environmental injustice through three central areas of activity:

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- Research: the creation and dissemination of evidence-based, multi-media resources to help enhance knowledge about environmental and social justice issues which impact citizens on the island of Ireland and beyond
- Advocacy: empowering and campaigning support activities relating to environmental injustices
- Action: the provision of a unique platform for collaborative online and in-person activism and action designed to enhance cooperation between diverse stakeholders and across borders.

In terms of timescale, EJNI has a range of short-, medium- and long-term goals. In the short term, the goal of the organisation is to continue to develop its network, profile, administrative and working practices and acquire additional core funding to support a growing team of staff in line with the scale of our operations - which have increased significantly during 2022. In the medium term, EJNI will focus on the development of its 4 core projects: Rights of Nature; Access to Justice; Climate Governance and Linking the Irish Environment. In the long term, EJNI will continue to develop new project streams within a broader strategy for addressed environmental and the connected social injustice on the island of Ireland. This strategy will be developed in partnership with EJNI's network of partners from the island of Ireland but also in consultation with other environmental justice networks and bodies from other jurisdictions (in particular from post-conflict societies)

Risks

- Unprecedented levels of political uncertainty in the UK & the ROI & the controversial nature of some of the issues which will be raised during projects (e.g. the extent & nature of cross-border collaboration on the environment) can render building trust between stakeholders & ensuring active participation difficult. Mechanisms that can be used to build trust in collaborative projects, such as building on existing relationships, use of intermediaries & guarantors & building trust through the project itself are employed to offset this risk. Stakeholders are always consulted about anonymity & confidentiality requirements at the outset of each EJNI project and where relevant a full ethical approval process will be completed via the academic institutions associated with each project.
- Difficulties developing a common 'language' that cross-disciplinary groups & non-academic stakeholders can engage with and dealing with disagreements between collaborative working partners are addressed in EJNI projects through the early identification of themes which draw together commonalities raised by participants.
- Duplication of efforts in an already busy and underfunded environmental sector are avoided by EJNI during careful scoping and mapping studies at the outset of each core activity or collaborative project. These efforts have typically led to new cooperative relationships with organisations or individuals engaged in complementary work.
- Difficulty securing collaborative project funding has not to date been an issue, with all of our current collaborative projects (designed to address existing knowledge/support deficits) attracting funding or in-kind support where we have applied for funding.

Achievements and performance

In 2022, EJNI has continued to develop its governance and administrative processes, as well as securing funding from the European Climate Foundation for projects in 2022/23 totalling £212,525, additional funding of €5000 from the Community Foundation Ireland/Community Foundation Northern Ireland for further development of our Manual of Environmental Justice, and additional funding of £7493.75 for our Linking the Irish Environment project.

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Year ended 31 December 2022

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

EJNI has had significant successes across all three of our central objectives:

Research: Our responsive research outputs are created to academic, peer-reviewed standards with the core goal of driving forward positive change. Our research has thus contributed to knowledge, stimulated new and emerging conversations around environmental and social justice and connected local and grassroots concerns to national and international developments. EJNI's extensive collection of collaborative, open access publications is available on our website. Highlights include:

- **Linking the Irish Environment**, details available [here](#). The aim of this project is to examine how to enable the environment sector (community campaigns and NGOs) across the island of Ireland to cooperate and engage on an all-island and cross-border basis to deal with shared environmental challenges, risks, and opportunities. The final report is scheduled to be published at a high-profile launch event co-hosted with the Irish Environmental Network and the Northern Ireland Environment Link (the two umbrella bodies for environmental NGOs on the island of Ireland) in Belfast in May 2023 to coincide with the 25th Anniversary of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement. This project has been particularly successful because it has enhanced knowledge and understanding of the environmental civil society landscape on the island, the extent of existing cross-border and peacebuilding cooperation but also where gaps, challenges and opportunities for new initiatives exist. It has also helped us expand our profile and establish an important convening role for EJNI.
- **Rights of Nature in Ireland: Towards a living island of rights-bearing communities'** EJNI Submission to the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, September 2022, available [here](#). EJNI submitted a collaborative proposal from stakeholders in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (including QUB, FOE, TUS and others) in recognition of the shared challenge to protect nature and the need for cross-border cooperation and new legal innovations. In November 2022, the Citizens Assembly voted overwhelmingly (83%) to support the proposal and included it in the committee's recommendations to the government. The submission was a culmination of a series of EJNI research outputs and convening activities relating to rights of nature, including our two films which have gained widespread, international recognition and examine the rights of nature movement from different perspectives, including cross community and emerging rights-based perspectives in Northern Ireland.

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Achievements and performance *(continued)*

Advocacy: we have engaged in wide-ranging, impactful and empowering support activities for campaigns relating to environmental justice - including the translation of research into accessible formats and new advocacy tools. Highlights include:

- Our 'Manual of Environmental Justice' - a major new web resource developed in partnership with Community Law and Mediation. We engaged in needs assessment research to identify gaps in the support and information currently available to communities facing environmental injustice on both sides of the border in Ireland to inform the design of the Manual website, addressing identified gaps through three key functionalities: (i) an expert directory - connecting environmental expertise to communities/ campaigners/organisations as a direct response to our research which indicated that 78% of participants believed a lack of accessibility to information and/or expertise was an obstacle to carrying out their work; (ii) an advocacy map - our analysis indicated fragmentation of resources and knowledge across the island of Ireland, and our map allows organisations and communities to connect and share knowledge on similar work/campaigns by pinning submissions to a virtual map where users can investigate further the work/projects being carried out by communities facing similar challenges; and (iii) a resource library - an extensive library of resources covering a broad range of environmental issues. In the three months since the website launched in November 2022, we have added over 100 subscribers to our quarterly newsletter and this number is growing as our directory, map and library expand.
- Our Environmental Justice Calendar promotes events (online, in-person and hybrid) as well as details of government consultations and opportunities for citizens to engage in public participation in environmental justice decision-making. We dedicate time to searching and adding new events and consultations to the calendar but have also created a function for communities and other organisations to add their own events - creating cross-pollination between academics, lawyers, and civil society. We have featured over 200 events or consultations since 2021.

Action: EJNI has developed into a unique convening platform for collaborative online and in-person activism and action designed to enhance cooperation between diverse stakeholders and across borders to deliver strategic, real-world impact.

- We were invited to provide Oral and written evidence to the NI Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee arguing for a robust and ambitious climate law in Northern Ireland - a collaborative effort between civil society, lawyers, academics and NGOs.
 - We have hosted online and in-person events focusing on convening key stakeholders around urgent and complex issues and developing strategic plans for overcoming environmental injustice, highlights include: 'Climate laws and the fight for 1.5 degrees'- in April 2022 we hosted 150 people at this online webinar co-organised with Climate Case Ireland and Friends of the Earth NI; 'Rights of Nature, Property and Ownership' - we hosted 120 community campaigners, journalists, NGOs and lawyers at this in-person event in Rostrevor, Co. Down in June 2022, co-organised with The Gathering and Friends of the Earth NI. EJNI convened a panel of experts and produced a bespoke set of accessible visual resources (we have also produced printed versions of these resources on request for community campaigners e.g. the Gathering). This event brought together people from across all communities in Northern Ireland and across the border for a day-long session of networking, planning, discussion and celebration of environmental justice activism; 'Rights of Nature: The Movement' - We hosted 55 local campaigners in Nov 2022 for the premiere of our 2nd rights of nature film which was followed by a panel discussion about what comes next for the grassroots environmental movement. Our open access Rights of Nature films have also been screened at community-led events (e.g. by Zero Waste North West, Newry Arts Festival).
 - EJNI has also been active in addressing the environmental justice deficits created by the collapse of the devolved government in Northern Ireland (see below in (3) for details).
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Year ended 31 December 2022

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

All of these outputs and details of our events are hosted on our website, www.ejni.net.

Financial review

EJNI continues to receive Core Funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for a total of 120,000, with the decision communicated in July 2021. The grant is front-loaded in recognition of the need for 'set-up' funds, with £70,000 awarded for Year 1 and £50,000 awarded for Year 2 of the grant period. We successfully applied for a top up grant of £7445 from JRCT in December 2022 and JRCT also awarded us an additional £10,883 to cover cost of living increases. ECF continues to be our primary project funder and we have significantly expanded the scope of our ECF-funded projects in 2022.

Reserves policy and going concern

The Trustees assess on an ongoing basis the financial requirements of the company to ensure sufficient funds to operate. Due to the fact that a significant amount of the company's funding is received periodically, the company maintains reserves to meet the ongoing cashflow of the company.

Due to the company being established in 2021 no reserves policy has been set, the Trustees will continue to monitor the finances and when they determine normal levels of activity a reserves policy will be built around this.

Plans for future periods

The two intersecting areas of activity which EJNI is engaged in relate to core operations and collaborative projects. (i) Core Operations are undertaken by the EJNI staff (all of whom are part-time) which comprise a Director (Dr Ciara Brennan), a Research and Policy Coordinator (Caitlin McIlhennon) and an IT Coordinator (Phillip Lock). (ii) Collaborative Projects are run by a semi-autonomous team of paid individuals (where required) and volunteers from the EJNI network and partner organisations, nested within the larger EJNI circles of accountability (the Steering Group and Board). Approval of projects is the responsibility of the Steering Group and the Director will provide oversight and coordination of the collaborative projects within EJNI's broader strategy. Some projects require external funding (e.g. to fund buy-out/secondment for project leads, research assistance, dissemination, project-specific events etc.) and securing this funding is the responsibility of the project team who will be supported by EJNI staff. Other projects do not require funding and are cooperative efforts between individuals working for a range of partner organisations on a project of common strategic interest. This model ensures buy in and/or in-kind support from a wide range of organisations at the cutting edge of environmental justice issues. The priorities for this year are to complete and develop the projects which have commenced and to acquire funding to support the development of those projects which are at an early stage of development or which we have not yet acquired funding for - notably the Rights of Nature project and continued funding for Linking the Irish Environment. A further priority is to ensure funding is acquired for an administrative assistant given the rapid increase in organisational activities and income and the associated increased administrative burden associated with this growth.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

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Year ended 31 December 2022

The trustees' annual report was approved on 23 June 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Wood'.

Mr S Wood
Trustee