**Background** Round Ireland Finswim Expedition (*finswim2020-21*) is one of the most inspiring, unique and challenging marine projects ever attempted in Irish Coastal Waters or in The Wild Atlantic. Expedition Leader and Finswimmer Henry O’Donnell ( *Anrí Ó Domhnaill)* from Carrickfin in the Donegal Gaeltacht, Ireland is the architect and creator of this pioneering project. The idea and concept of solo swimming around the Irish coast was conceived by Henry as far back as 1990. He recovered from a life threatening sports accident (which left him paralysed for some time) in 1992 and went on to complete a number of challenging land based expeditions and sea swims to raise funds for charities and other worthy causes. He loves sport in general, healthy living and has a close affinity with the sea and nature. He successfully completed demanding expeditions around the world in recent years including lowest to highest points on four continents; Africa, Europe, America and Australia – he is certain that finswim2020-21 will be equal or more challenging than many expeditions and adventures previously undertaken. The event was scheduled to start in June 2021. However, due to the covid crisis, work situation and other factors it was necessary to reorganise. Henry decided to bring the expedition forward to 2020. As a result, the sponsorship plan had to be changed. He is appealing to Individuals, Businesses and the corporate sector to get behind the charity focused expedition to help from a sponsorship / financial perspective.

**Description and notes -** Round Ireland Finswim Expedition 2020-21

**Round Ireland** The event will start and finish on Carrickfin Blue Flag Beach, Donegal, Ireland around mid-September 2020 (subject to Covid 19 Situation and Weather and Crew / Swimmer Safety Considerations) and will progress clockwise around the coast of Ireland - towards Tory Island and Malin Head.

**Finswim** What is a Finswim or Finswimming? Fast becoming a popular around the world, it is a sport activity involving swimming with the use of fins on the sea / ocean water's surface using a snorkel and mask. ***Finman*** – derived from Carrick**fin man**. Henry is from Carrickfin hence the name **Finman** also fits with a swimmer using fins…finswim …finswimmer etc.

**What Finswim Gear will the swimmer use?** Henry will use a variety of long and medium fins depending on sea conditions and will swim with goggles, fins, swim hat and swim togs only combination as required. He will wear a custom made triathlon suit as required when off shore and when water temperatures decrease. **Other devices / equipment** to be used by the swimmer for safety and finswim verification includes a personal swimmer tracking device (monitored by specialist expedition experts ), modern mobile phone and smartwatch with special functions for simultaneous tracking and live feed to website for public to check finswim progress.

**Expedition** A Quest and Pioneering Journey of adventure and exploration Beyond the Wave with a number of Research elements to be logged for future reference in terms of finswimming statistics, human resilience and other. **University Research** - Henry was selected to participate in the PIER Project (Public Health Impact of Exposure to antimicrobial Resistance in Recreational Waters) at the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) .The PIER project will investigate whether people who regularly swim, surf or do other in-water activities in Irish rivers, lakes and coastal seas are more likely to pick up and carry Antibiotic resistance (AR) bacteria in their gut. PIER will also identify and map the barriers and facilitators to people using natural waters for recreation, creating a "systems map" where we can target future change interventions to maximise our use of natural recreational waters https://www.nuigalway.ie/medicine-nursing-and-health sciences/medicine/disciplines/bacteriology/ research/pier/

**Safety is the Number One Priority for All Involved the finswim2020 expedition.** The swimmer and crew are trained, very experienced and well prepared. Henry, now in his 50’s, is a qualified beach lifeguard, specialist diver, swimming teacher and holder of the International Certificate of Competency (ICC) – Power boat license. He started sea swimming at the age of four and has over forty years’ experience finswimming in the sea and other aquatic environments. The safety boat is fitted with relevant safety and navigation aids, devices, life raft, lifejackets, first aid, MOB device(s), and communications systems & other. Finswim2020 is COVID COMPLIANT and The Team will abide by all covid guidelines to help protect the swimmer, crew and others involved. Special Covid Protocols are in place in line with best practice for land and sea operations. Covid Risk Factor may be described as Negligible to Very Low in terms of risk to the expedition team because of the geographic location (marine-off shore) and operational nature of the event. The expedition will maintain close contact with The Irish Coastguard, Maritime Coastal Agency and other relevant agencies as required.

**FINSWIM 2020 EXPEDITION MISSION STATEMENT**

Henry O’Donnell ( *Anrí Ó Domhnaill* ) will Attempt to Finswim around the Island of Ireland in an effort to become the first person in history to circumnavigate a Country by Finswimming and in doing so will help to raise funds for Two National Charities.

**AIMS**

* Safely and Successfully complete the solo finswim between September 2020 and September 2021. An experienced Expedition Safety Support Team will be Operational for the duration of the pioneering finswim.
* Help to raise funds for Two National Charities:
	+ **1.** Irish Cancer Society (ICS) <https://www.cancer.ie>
	+ **2.** Water Safety Ireland (WSI) <https://watersafety.ie>
* Undertake some Scientific and Other Research during the Expedition.

**GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

* **FUNDRAISING** - Help to raise funds for Two National Charities through the finswim expedition – Engage as a Voluntary Ambassador in support of both Charities during the event in 2020-21.
* **HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER SAFETY** - Encourage and promote Water Safety and Drowning Prevention around the Irish coast and in all other aquatic environments in Ireland in Support of Water Safety Ireland efforts to reduce drowning / fatalities by increasing water safety awareness and by changing attitudes and behaviours so that aquatic environments can be enjoyed with confidence and safety.
* **HIGHLIGHT CANCER AWARENES, RESEARCH AND SUPPORTS** – The Irish Cancer Society is a community of survivors, families, patients, friends, nurses, doctors, scientists, professionals, supporters and volunteers. They are dedicated to preventing cancer, detecting it early and fighting it at every level. For over half a century they have worked together for and on behalf of people affected by cancer in Ireland. Finswim2020 will help them to help others.
* Hope to become the first person to finswim solo around the Island of Ireland.
* Promote and encourage the development of finswimming in all possible manifestations throughout Ireland.
* Encourage and promote improved physical fitness, recreation and health in the community for all through swimming, finswimming and related aqua activities – Safety must always be at the core of any Aqua Activity.
* Henry / Anrí is from An Gaeltacht - The expedition will be bilingual and will Promote the Irish Language, Tradition and culture during the event. Our language, culture and tradition are part of who we are – we should preserve it.
* Promote the Irish Coastline. Islands, Gaeltacht Regions, Blue Flag Beaches and associated key coastal attractions, historic sites, Wild Atlantic Way, Hidden Heartlands, Ancient East and Other. Tourism is vital to our economy.
* Provide a Safe, exciting, challenging, inspiring and high value expedition.

