



# Integrating nature, people and place

Teagasc Signpost Series

August 2022



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



# Project overview

Long-term project (2021-2029) funded  
under EU LIFE programme

Total budget €20.6m (€12.3m EU)

Aimed at our Natura 2000 network

Farmer and community focused supported  
by Government departments & agencies

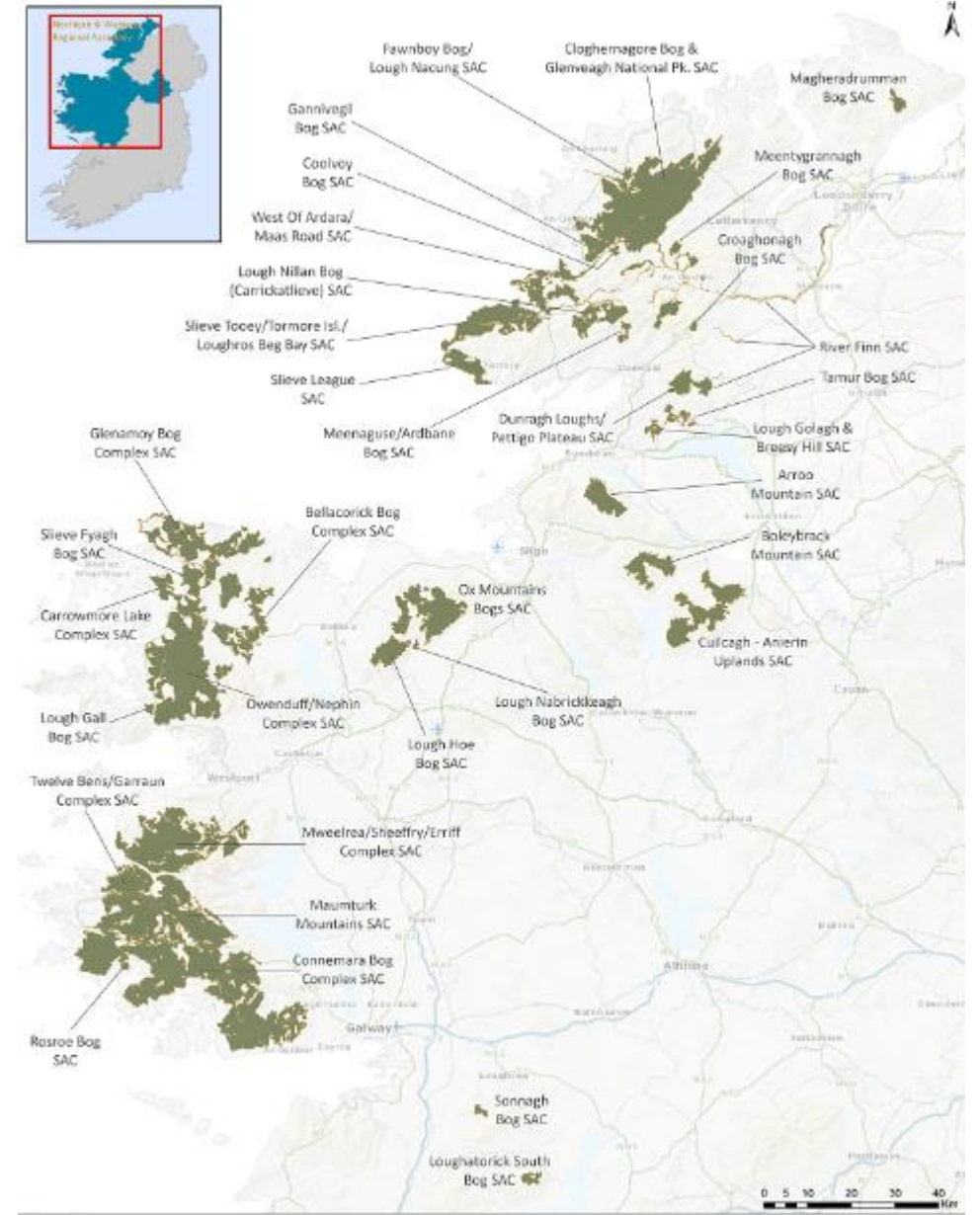


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# Wild Atlantic Nature project sites



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# Blanket bogs



- Peatlands cover only 3% of the world land surface but store more carbon than all other vegetation types combined.
- A 15cm layer of contains more carbon per hectare than a tropical rainforest
- Blanket bogs are under threat from afforestation, peat-cutting, burning, over-grazing, invasive species and wind-farms

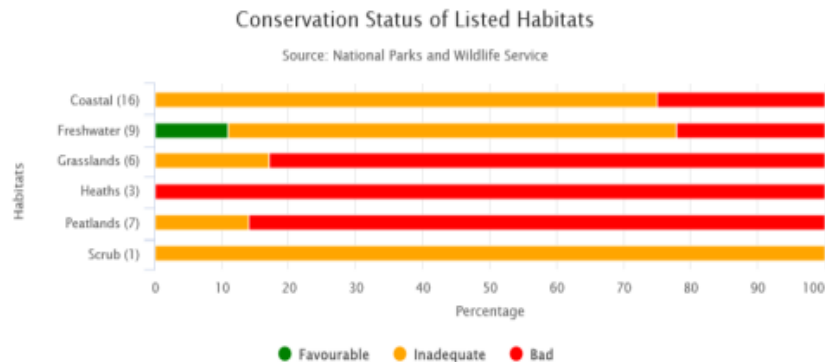


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# Organizational and institutional barriers to environmental improvement

Often, our land use policies don't align!



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# Land use policies often have a narrow focus



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# What have we learned in the past 30 years?



- Successful (agri-environment) programmes should
  - Be locally adapted, practical and results focused
  - Be developed with local people (farmers, communities)
  - Be properly and fairly funded
  - Facilitate flexible and adaptive management
  - Build local trust and capacity
  - Facilitate improvements
  - Account for factors outside farmers/communities control



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# Results-based payments

## Results-based approach

Payments are linked to nature quality of your farm.

**Higher nature quality = Higher Payment level**



Each plot is scored out of 10 using a scorecard that captures high and low quality habitat which reflect past and current management.



# Delivery for water quality, biodiversity, climate & communities

- Need to **reward** high quality but also **incentivise** improvement of poor quality



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# Scorecard



## Peatland Habitat Score Card

Farmer ID:

Surveyor:

Plot number:

Survey date:

Total Score:  
(A+B+C) /100

Which of the following best describes the plot (land parcel) (tick most appropriate):

Blanket bog ☐ Heath ☐ Mosaic of heath & bog ☐ Mosaic of heath with grassland ☐

### A Ecological Integrity

Total score A  
(sum of A1 to A5):  
/55

Positive indicators:  
(tick those present)

Moss Layer:

☐ Branched Mosses  
☐ Non-crustose  
(bushy) Lichens  
☐ Sphagnum Mosses

Sedge / Herb Layer:

☐ Bog Asphodel  
☐ Bog Bean  
☐ Bog Cotton  
☐ Deer Grass  
☐ Lousewort  
☐ Sundews  
☐ White-beaked Sedge

Shrub Layer:

☐ Bell Heather  
☐ Bilberry  
☐ Bog Myrtle  
☐ Cross-leaved Heather  
☐ Ling Heather  
☐ Western Gorse

Negative indicators:  
(tick those present)

☐ Bramble  
☐ Conifers (Sitka Spruce  
or Lodgepole Pine)  
☐ European Gorse  
☐ Nettle  
☐ Rhododendron  
☐ Other alien invasive

A1 How many positive indicators are present in the plot?

Count total number  
of positive indicators  
present:

No. of plants:	Score	No. of plants:	Score
Low: 0-4	0	High: 7-8	5
Medium: 5-6	2	Very high: 9+	10

Score A1:

A2 What is the combined cover of  
positive mosses & lichens (listed  
above) throughout the plot?

Cover:	Score	Cover:	Score
Rare: 0-5%	0	Abundant: 21-30%	15
Frequent: 6-20%	10	Dominant: >30%	20

Score A2:

A3 Presence of **non-native** species within  
the plot (rhododendron, self-sown  
conifers, other alien invasive)?

Score
Present -10
Absent 0

Score A3:

A4 What is the combined cover of all  
**negative** indicators/weeds (listed  
above) throughout the plot?

Cover:	Score	Cover:	Score
High: >25%	-15	Med-low: 1-10%	-5
Medium: 11-25%	-10	Absent/negligible	10

Score A4:

A5 Quality of vegetation structure?

Score A5:

Very Poor

Vegetation height  
is uniformly low.  
Little or no heather  
present on wet  
heaths. Often  
lacking moss and  
shrub layer. Often  
resulting from over  
grazing or recent  
peat cutting.

Score -15

Poor

Rank sward. Purple  
moor-grass/mat-grass  
and rank senescent  
heather dominating.  
Litter cover high, thatch  
forming in large  
continuous patches.  
Poorly developed ground  
layer. Often resulting  
from under  
grazing.

Score -10

Moderate  
(high grazed)  
Significant  
areas (>25%)  
of the plot  
have tight  
uniform  
vegetation  
although not  
throughout.

Score 0

Moderate  
(low grazed)  
Significant  
areas (>25%)  
of the plot  
have rank  
vegetation  
although not  
throughout.

Score 0

Good  
Sward in good condition,  
abundant grass and  
sedge-like vegetation on  
blanket bog with hummock, hollow, and pool  
complexes on bog. On heath, all stages of  
heather / shrub growth present, mostly  
>30cm. Mix of bog and / or heath vegetation  
at varying heights throughout. Well  
structured vegetation with all three layers  
(moss, sedge / herb, and shrub)  
well represented.

Score 15

May 2021



## Peatland Species Identification

### Positive Indicators



### Negative Indicators

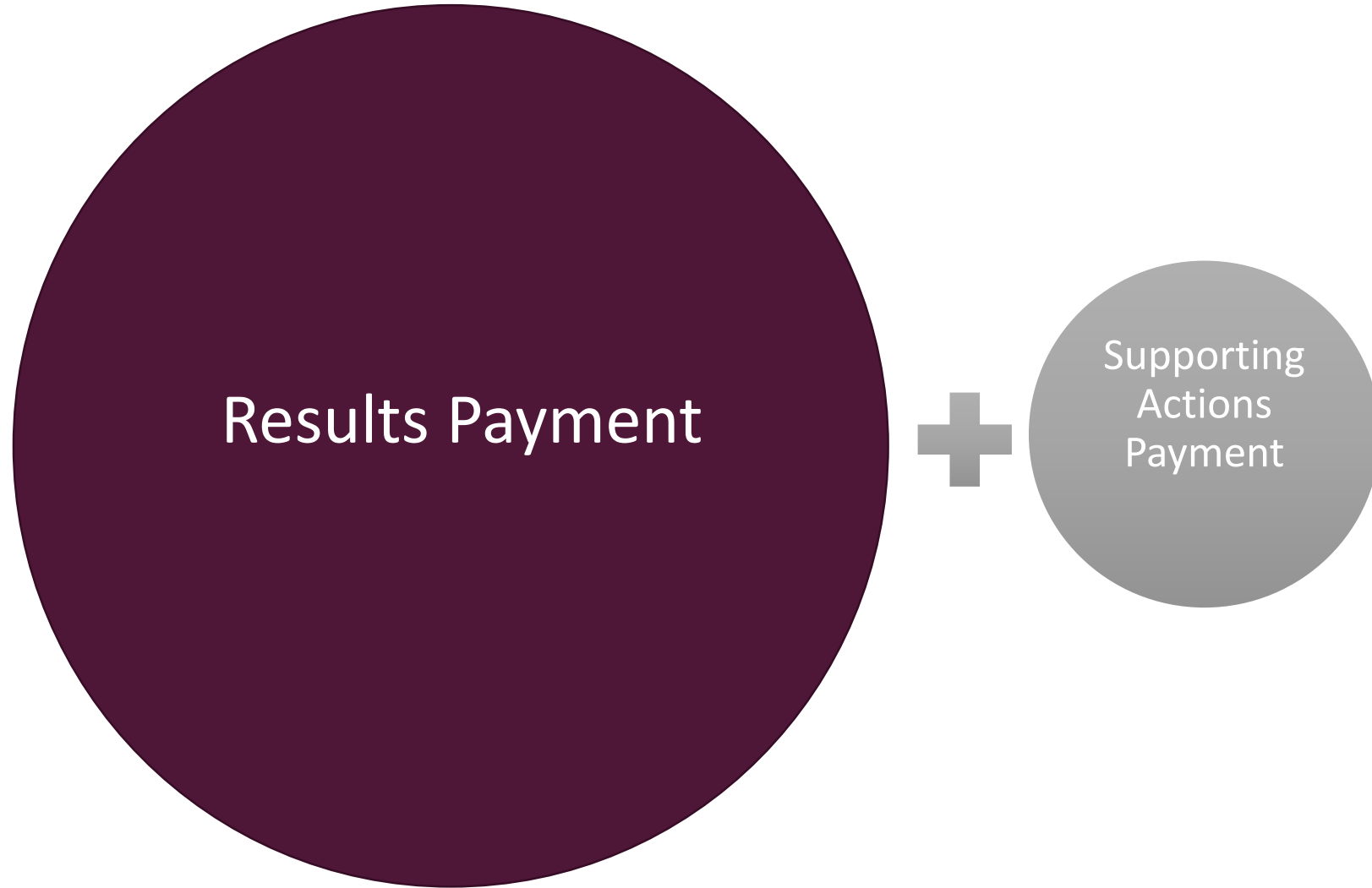


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# Payment streams



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Example  
from Pearl  
Mussel  
Project EIP



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# Supporting actions

- Assists with better farm management & improved ecological quality



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Example  
from Pearl  
Mussel  
Project EIP



# Supporting actions



Photos: Pearl Mussel  
Project EIP



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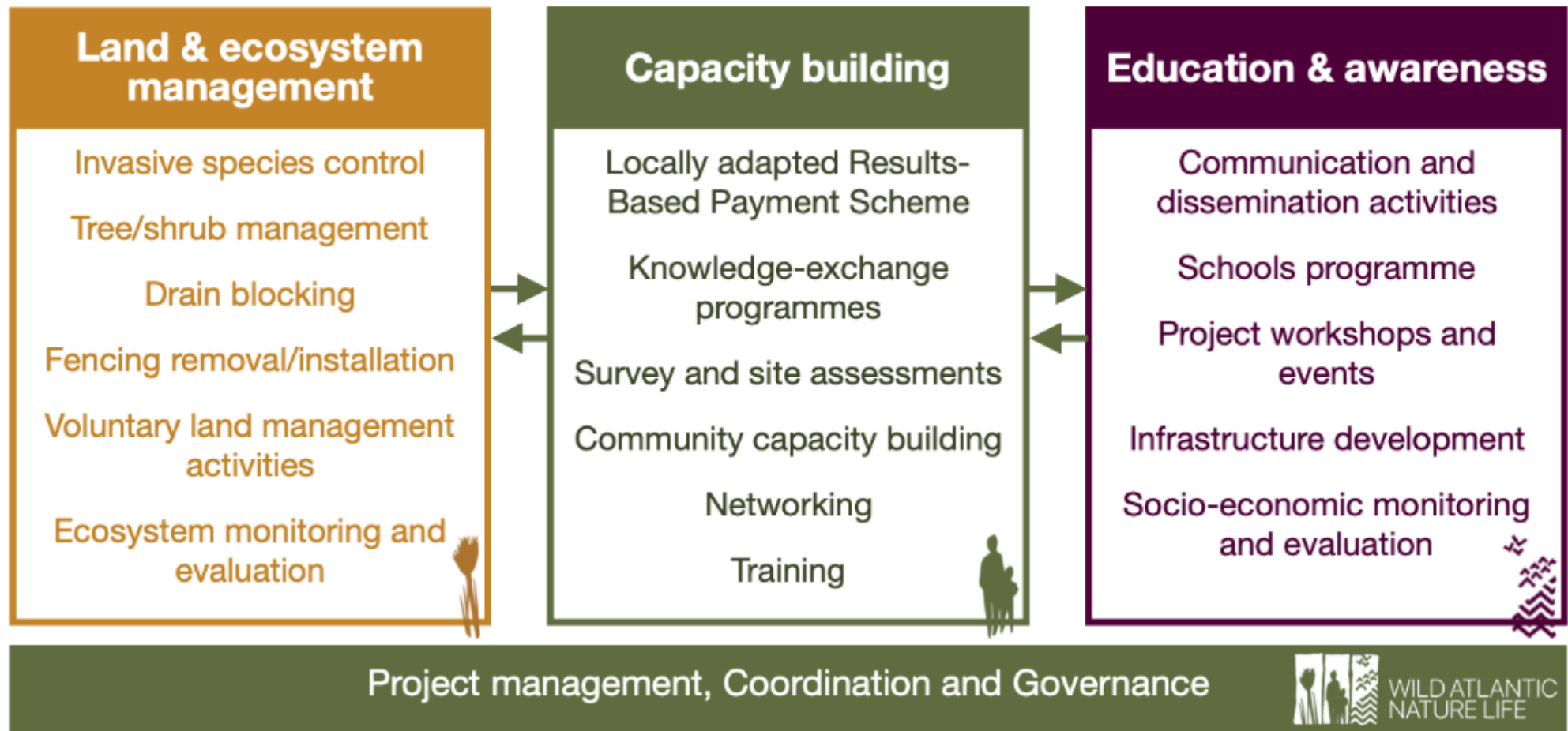


# Creating a market

- Putting market value on the services provided by High Nature Value farmland



# Wild Atlantic Nature programme approach



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# Wild Atlantic Nature RBPS participation

## 2021

- 167 farmers
- >20,000ha within the programme
- 26 advisors trained
- 150 farmers trained

## 2022

- c.750 farmers in 2022 to build CAP capacity
- Complementary training provided to stakeholders and related projects (LIFE, INTERREG, farmers and policy makers from other EU member states)

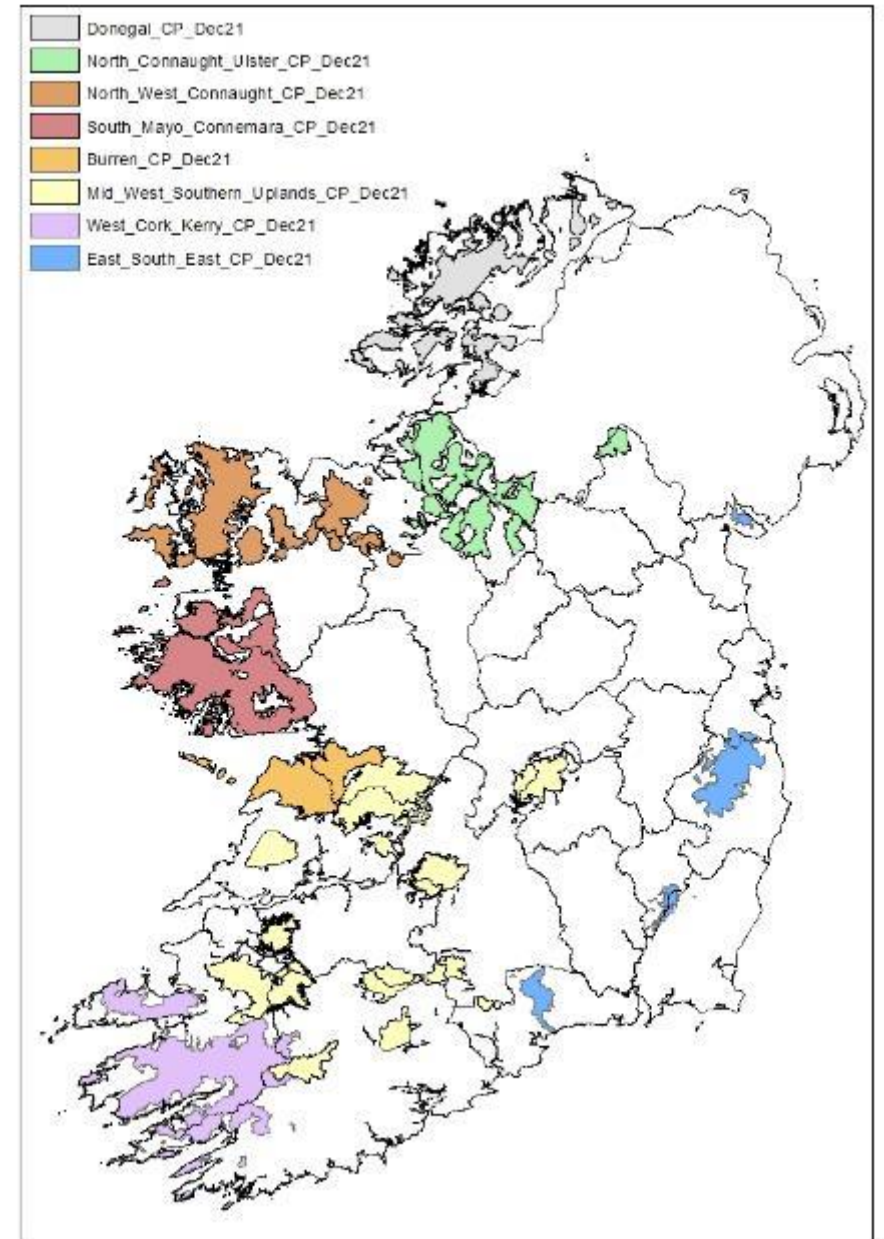


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# ACRES & Cooperation approach

- Eight Cooperation Project teams
- Roll-out of results-based model
  - Supporting actions & landscape scale payments
- Final detail being prepared
- We now have an implementation mechanism for conservation measures & restoration actions



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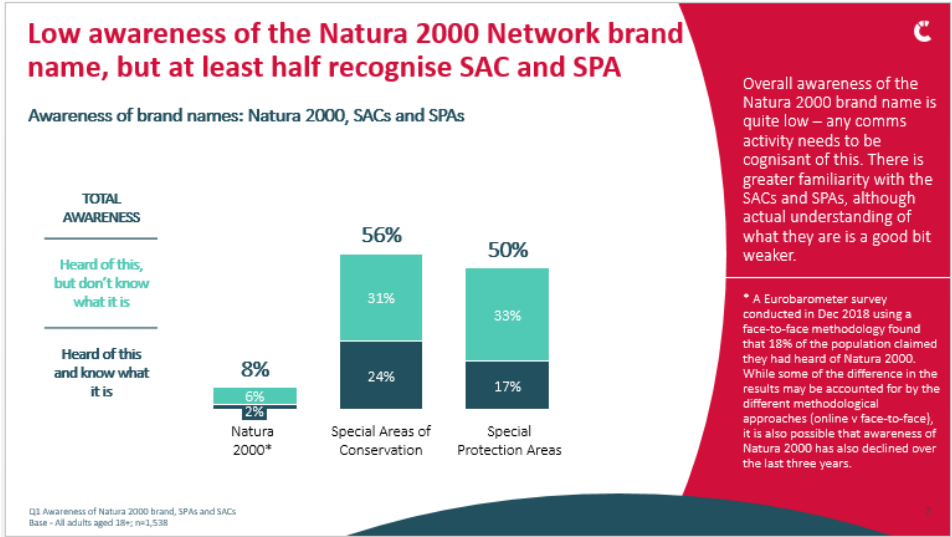
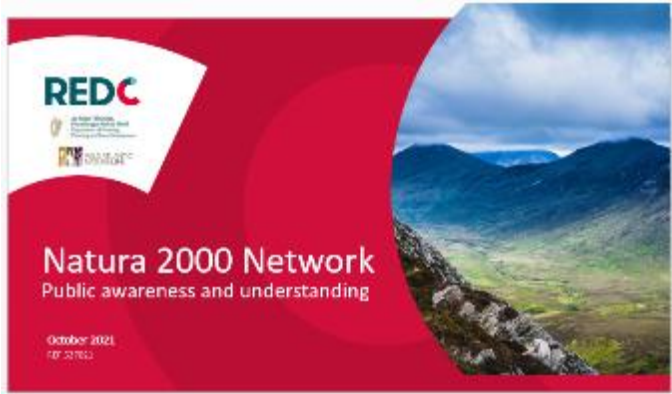
# Upland farmers knowledge exchange group (Teagasc)



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# Complementary funding: Evidence >> Investment & funding



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# Complementary funding

- WaterLANDS: Horizon 2020
  - €23m: 2021-2026 (DHLGH budget €2.1m)
  - Objective to improve the quality of wetlands across the EU
  - LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature site at Cuilcagh-Anierin SAC
  - Coordinated by UCD: 32 partners across 13 EU member states
- Several project we hope to see funded via Corporate, Private & Philanthropic sources
  - Community programmes
  - Women farming groups in Natura 2000 areas
  - Fuel poverty, retro-fitting & turfcutting
  - Various habitat restoration projects



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# We now provide quality-assured vital public goods

## Goods & services:

- Biodiversity
- Stable climate
- Carbon sequestration
- Protection of soil
- Clean water
- Flood management
- Aesthetic value
- Food
- Recreation & well-being

## Quality is our platform

- Basis for:
  - Farmer payments
  - Tourism
  - Land-use planning
  - Food labelling
  - Natura marketing



# Summary

- Integrated land use framework – people, practice & policy
- Focus on quality
- Results-based model that invests in landowner skills
- Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE IP provides a strong opportunity to assist with local issues



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LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature

[www.wildatlanticnature.ie](http://www.wildatlanticnature.ie)

Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE IP, a 9-year EU-funded LIFE Integrated Project, works with farmers, local communities and land owners to add value to the wide range of services provided from our Special Area of Conservation (SAC) network of blanket bogs and

**RBPS programme 2021** has now launched for Owenduff/Nephin Complex SAC area in 2021.



This project has received funding from the EU's LIFE programme under Grant Agreement No. LIFE18 IPE/IE/000002



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NATURE LIFE



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Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



Thank you for your attention!

[www.wildatlanticnature.ie](http://www.wildatlanticnature.ie)

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