



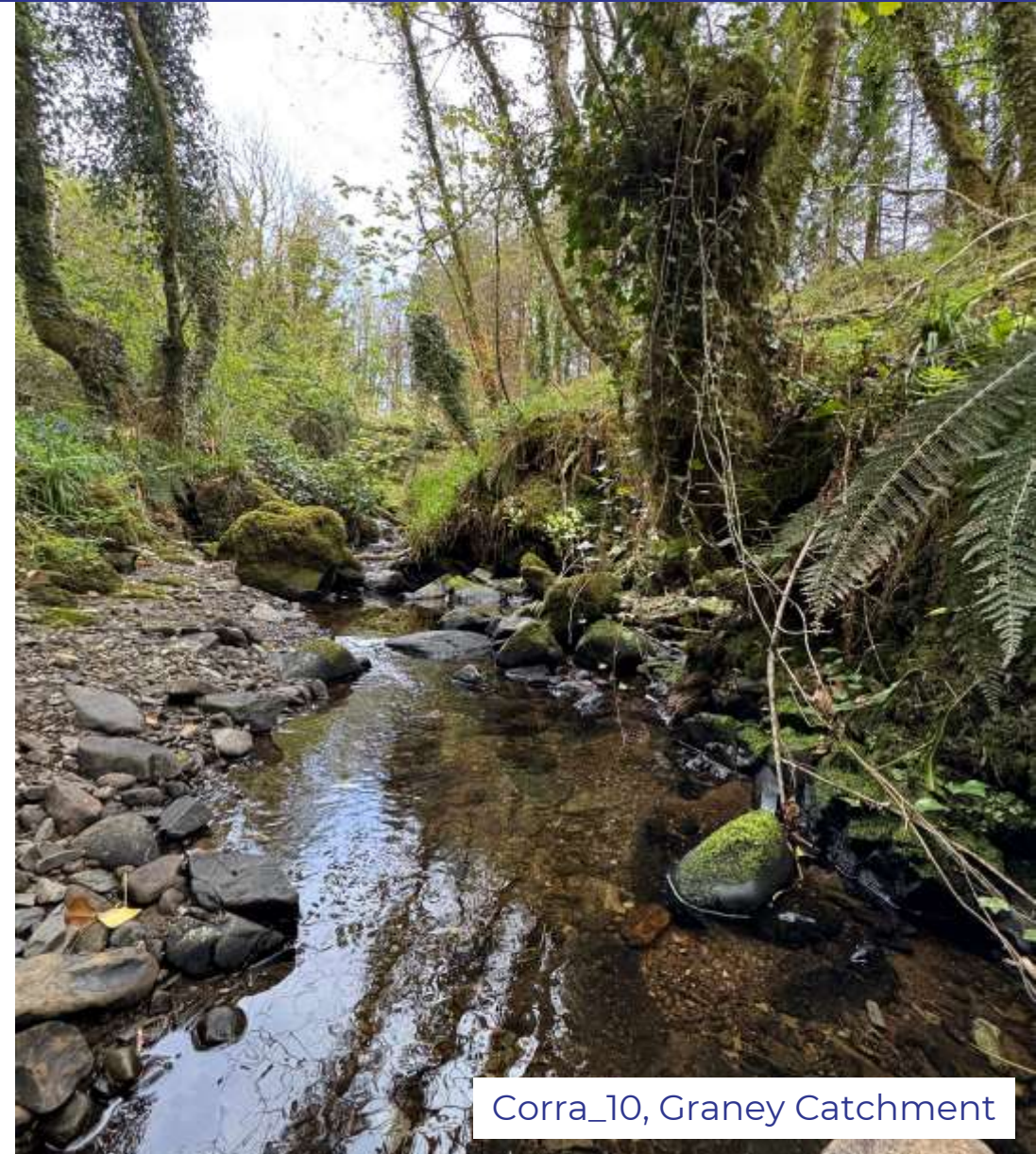
Co-funded by
the European Union

Waters of LIFE Farmer Training

Module 1: Project Overview

May 2025

- EU LIFE Programme
- Waters of LIFE structure and funding
- Project aims
- Pressures on high status objective rivers
- Waters of LIFE Pilot Agri Environmental Programme
- Advisor payments



Corra_10, Graney Catchment

- Waters of LIFE is an EU co-funded LIFE Integrated Project
- LIFE is EU's funding stream for climate change and environment
- Integrated Projects help implement EU plans and policies (in our case the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland)
- IPs inform policy in relevant areas (e.g., Cap Strategic Plan) and influence how funding is allocated
- LIFE Integrated Projects \neq European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs)



- Waters of LIFE runs to March 2028
- Project led by the DHLGH
- Project partners
 - LAWPRO
 - Teagasc
 - EPA
 - DAFM
 - Coillte
 - Forest Service
 - OPW
 - A number of Local Development Companies



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



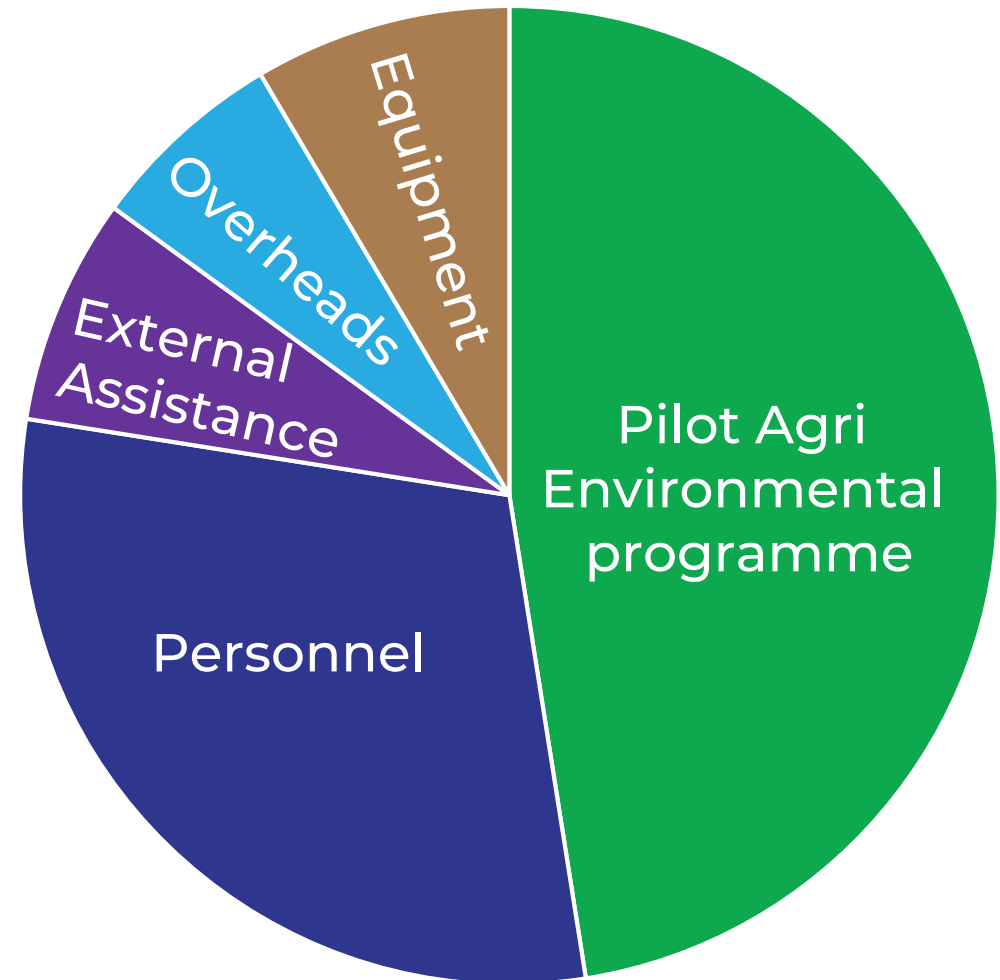
An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



OPW

Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

- Total Project Funding = €20.2m
- Largely made up of contribution in-kind (staff time) from partners
- €9.5m funding committed by EU
- €9.5m allocated to project project implementation
 - Farmer payments
 - Advisor payment
 - Development of IT system.

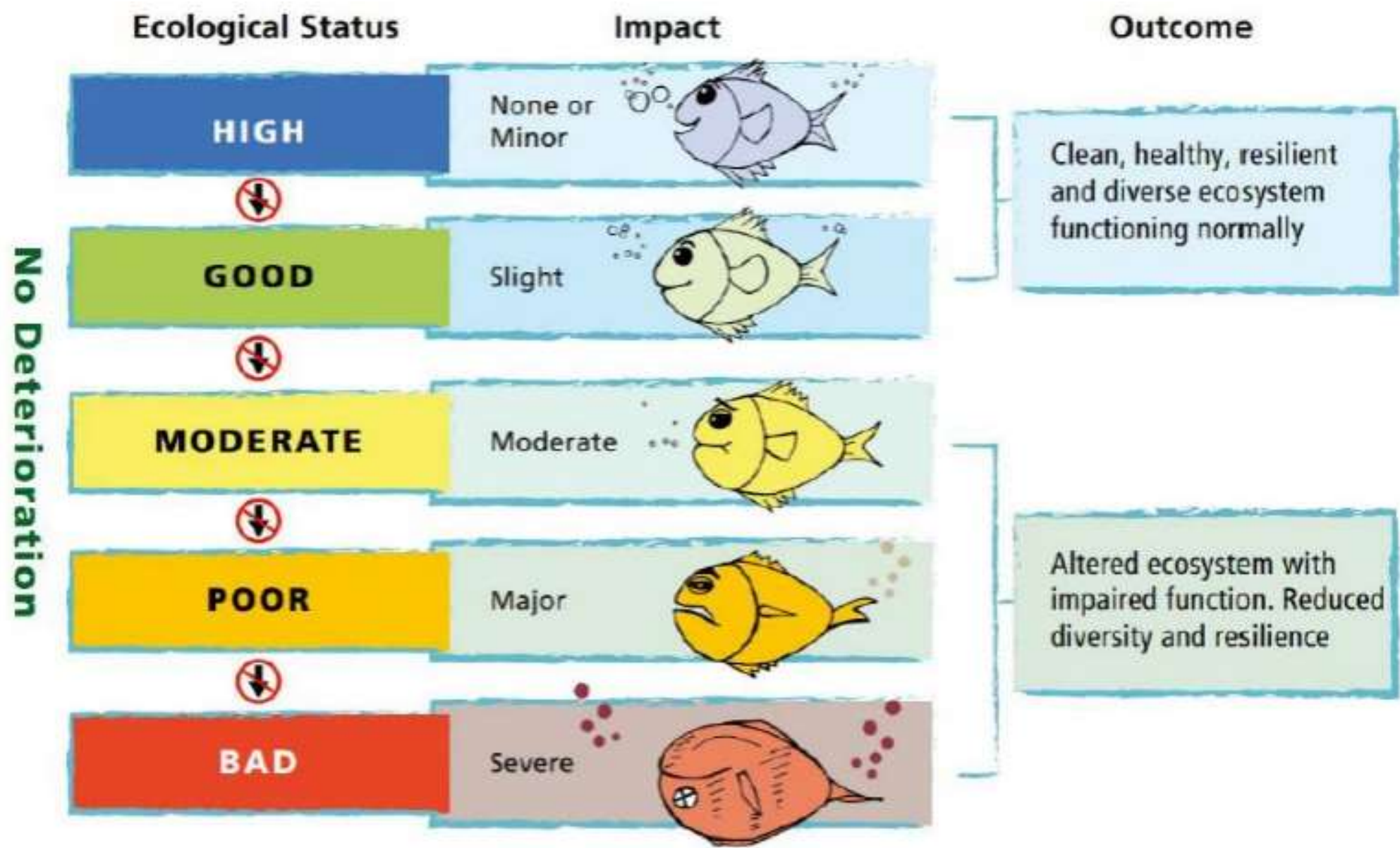


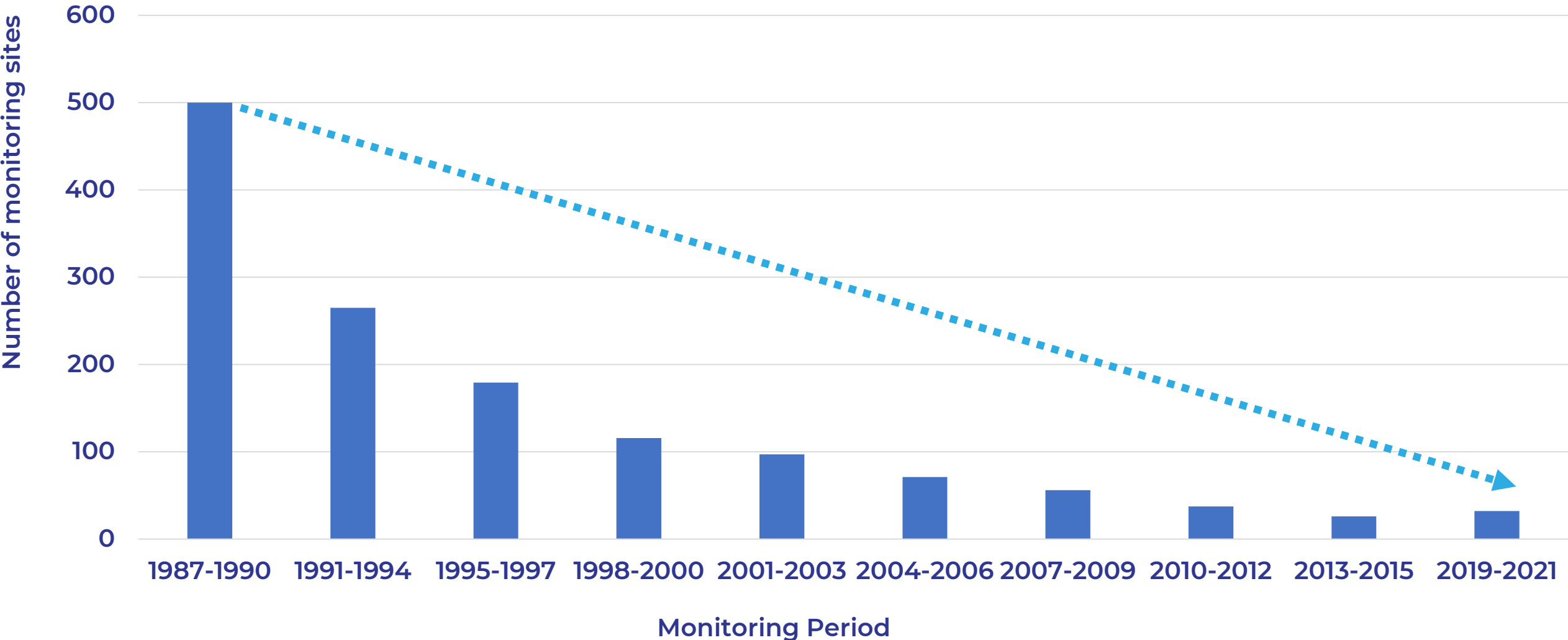
Avonmore	Wicklow
Graney	Clare / Galway
Islands	Galway / Roscommon
Awbeg	Cork
Shournagh	Cork
Sheen (Control)	Kerry



PROJECT FOCUS – HIGH STATUS OBJECTIVE WATER BODIES

- 334 high status objective Rivers
- 148 currently achieving high status
- Must restore by 2027
- No deterioration





- Improve understanding of HSO rivers and drivers of decline
- Identify main pressures on HSO rivers
- Develop and test measures to address pressures
- Raise awareness and understanding of HSO rivers
- Generate custodianship
- Monitor the effectiveness of measures
- Inform policy and funding



Hydromorphology

29%

Agriculture

22%

Forestry

20%

Extractive Industries

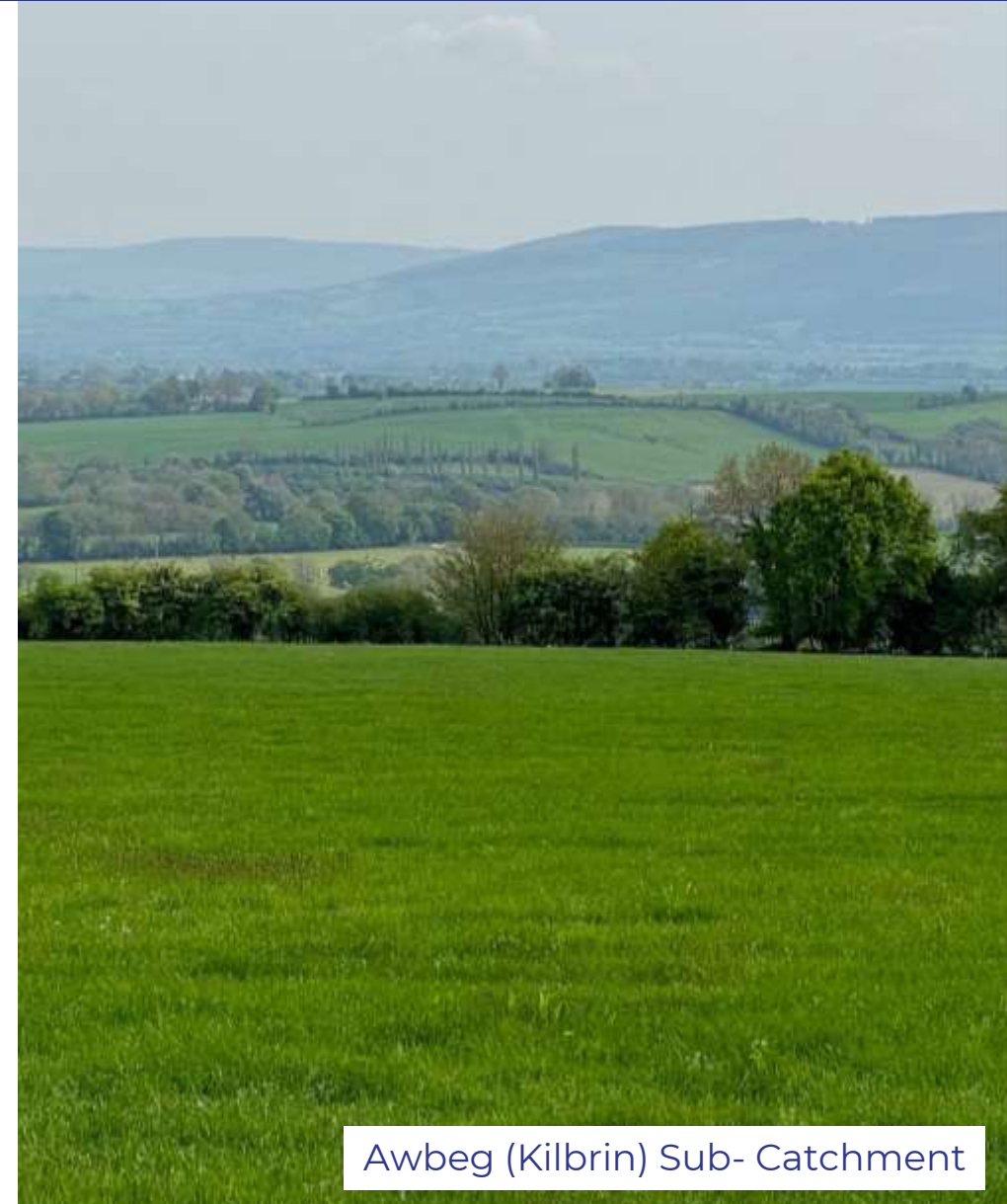
5%

Domestic Waste Water

4%



1. Results based payments based on habitat scores
2. General actions to address nutrient and sediment loss
3. Supporting Actions
4. Education and Training



Awbeg (Kilbrin) Sub- Catchment

1. Semi natural grassland

2. Woodland and scrub

3. Peatlands

4. Riverside habitat on improved grassland

5. Riverside habitat on tillage

6. Grassland on Peat



Credit: Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE

RESULTS BASED PAYMENTS

Habitats included in programme		What's different?
1	Semi natural grassland	Scorecards similar to ACRES CP scorecards with additional emphasis on water quality.
2	Woodland and scrub	
3	Peatlands	
4	Riverside habitat on improved grassland	New scorecards to reflect importance of area directly beside river
5	Riverside habitat on tillage	
6	Grassland on peat	Similar to the FarmPEAT grassland scorecard – emphasis on depth of water table.

- Much more than a buffer zone to intercept pollutants
- Forms an important part of the river ecosystem, especially when it contains complex vegetation including trees.
- Trees beside a river:
 - Supply food for aquatic creatures (leaf litter)
 - Provide in-stream woody debris
 - Give shade to prevent overheating
 - Can help to mop up excess nutrients



Shournagh Sub-Catchment

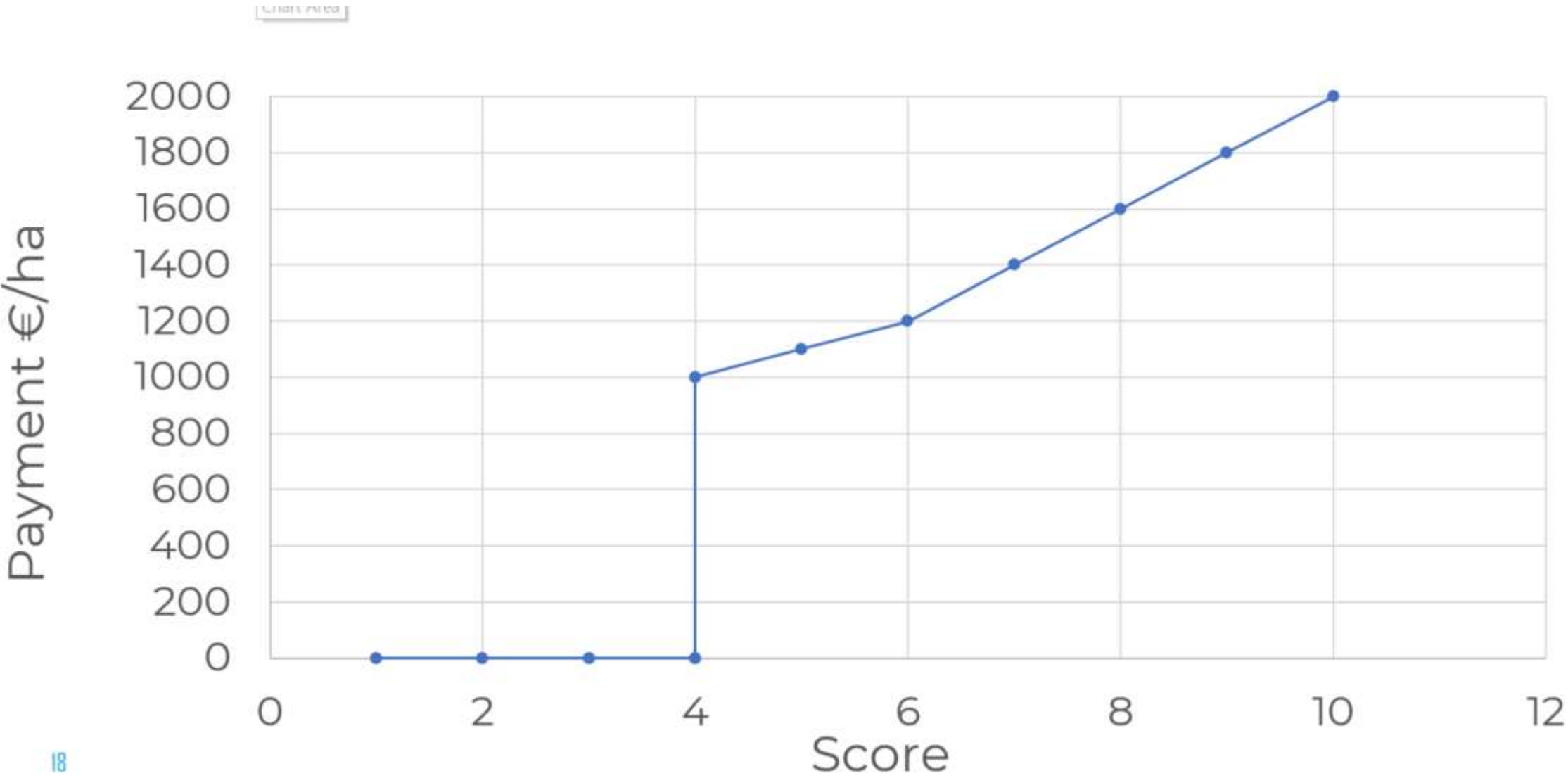
- Applies on mapped rivers with no other semi natural habitat
- Assessed using a scorecard
- Farmer paid up to maximum width of 20m
- Don't have to give the full 20m: paid on the width provided.
- Payment depends on both width and the score
- Full 20m assessed for any damaging activities which could impact on the river.



Shournagh Sub-Catchment

HABITAT PAYMENT RATES TO FARMERS

Habitat/Scorecard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on a score out of 10 No payment on scores less than 4/10 	Plot payment	Riverside bonus
Riverside habitat on improved grassland	€2000/ha	N/A
Riverside habitat on Tillage	€2000/ha	N/A
All other habitats	€400/ha	€3.2/m of river frontage (payment varies with plot score)



1. Runoff Risk Assessment
2. Nutrient Management Planning
3. Nutrient Surplus Recording (using AgNav)
4. Precision Nutrient Application (using PBI and MoSt)
5. Min Till
6. Catch Crops
7. Mob grazing

Specs on your tables



- 34 supporting actions available
- Chosen for potential benefit to water quality
- Selected by advisor through app or web portal
- Must be approved by project team before being installed
- Must have a reason for specifying
- Can be used to:
 - Address issues identified in Runoff Risk
 - Improve habitat scores
 - Right measure for right reason in right place
- Farmer paid on submission of verification data (geotagged photo, invoices)



Solar Pump for alternative drinking point

- Some supporting actions will deal with issues that:
 - Need significant prior assessment
 - e.g. drain blocking
 - Need solutions at catchment scale
 - e.g. invasive species control
- Need can be highlighted by advisor during runoff risk or habitat scoring or by or project team
- Implementation by project team with project partners



Source: [Invasives.ie](https://invasives.ie)

- One compulsory day per year for participants.
- Payment of €156 per day
- Additional optional:
 - Workshops
 - Site visits
 - Discussion groups



Pearl Mussel Project
Training



Waters of LIFE Farmer Training

- Attend training
 - Today
 - Online sessions (2/3 short, focused sessions)
 - Habitat scoring
- Explain farm plan to participant
- Conduct runoff risk assessment
- Recommend supporting actions to reduce risks
- Score habitats
- Recommend supporting actions to improve scores
- Support participant in general actions
- Waters of LIFE team always available for support



ADVISOR PAYMENTS

RESULTS BASED SCORING		
Standing charge per farm		€200
Payment per scorecard/plot		€20
Scored Semi Natural Habitat	0-15 ha: /ha	€10
	>15 ha: /ha	€2
Riverside Habitat: m/riverside		€0.10

RUNOFF RISK ASSESSMENT		
Standing charge per farm		€200
Total Farm area	0-30 ha: /ha	€10
	>30 ha: /ha	€2

- 70ha farm
- 6 scoreable plots
- Scoreable plot area 19.1ha
- River frontage =199m

Payment for Runoff Risk Assessment

Standing charge: €200

Area based payment: $30 \times €10 + 40 \times €2 = €380$

Total payment for runoff risk: €580

Payment to advisor for habitat scoring

Standing charge: €200

Plot no payment: $6 \times €20 = €120$

Plot area payment: $15 \times €10 + 4.1 \times 2 = €158.20$

Payment for scoring: €478.20

Total Advisor Payment

$€478.20 + €580 = €1,058.20$



1. A LIFE IP is not the same as an EIP
2. High Status rivers: a valuable resource we are rapidly losing
3. Farmers can play a vital role in helping to protect and restore these rivers.
4. Advisors have a pivotal role to play in supporting farmers to do this
5. Advisory costs will be paid by the project



3 questions a farmer will ask you about Waters of LIFE.

In your groups, spend:

- 5 mins thinking of questions
- 5 mins discussing answers
- Present your three top questions and answers to the room





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Waters of LIFE Farmer Training

Next Steps

May 2025

- 350+ farm plans issued to eligible farmers
- 250+ farmers signed contracts
- 250+ farmers nominated project trained advisor
- Expressions of interest invited until July 2025 for 2026 entry



Potential Habitat Payment

- Low habitat quality (average score 4/10) €978.40
- High habitat quality (average score 8/10) €2,589.60

Max Payment for General Actions €2,352.50

Waters of LIFE Farm Plan - Part 1: Farm Habitats

Farmer details

Waters of LIFE Farmer ID		AWB_2025_16		WOL Year of Entry:		2025	WOL Catchment:		Awbeg
Herd No	HERD_NO	Total area in WOL catchment (ha):		49.49	Total area of scored habitats (ha).			2.18	

Farmer Name and Contact Details	Farm Advisor Name and contact details
FARMER NAME	ADVISOR NAME
ADDRESS	ADDRESS
PHONE	PHONE
EMAIL	EMAIL

PLOTS TO BE SCORED

Plot ID	LPIS Parcel ID	Habitat Type	Scorecard	River Frontage (Y/N)	River Length (m)	Plot Area (ha.)
AWB_2025_16_6	D3100200017	Improved grassland (not riverside)	Not Scored	No	0	3.18
AWB_2025_16_7	D3100200018	Improved grassland (not riverside)	Not Scored	No	0	1.70
AWB_2025_16_8	D3100200019	Improved grassland (not riverside)	Not Scored	No	0	3.08
AWB_2025_16_9_1	D3100200027	Scrub / Woodland	Scrub / Woodland	Yes	130	0.40
AWB_2025_16_9_2	D3100200027	Semi-natural grassland	Semi-natural grassland	Yes	62	0.54
AWB_2025_16_9_3	D3100200027	Improved grassland (not riverside)	Not Scored	No	0	2.03
AWB_2025_16_10	D3100200028	Improved grassland (not riverside)	Not Scored	No	0	1.50
AWB_2025_16_17_1	D3101500024	Scrub / Woodland	Scrub / Woodland	Yes	527	1.23
AWB_2025_16_17_2	D3101500024	Improved grassland (not riverside)	Not Scored	No	0	2.38

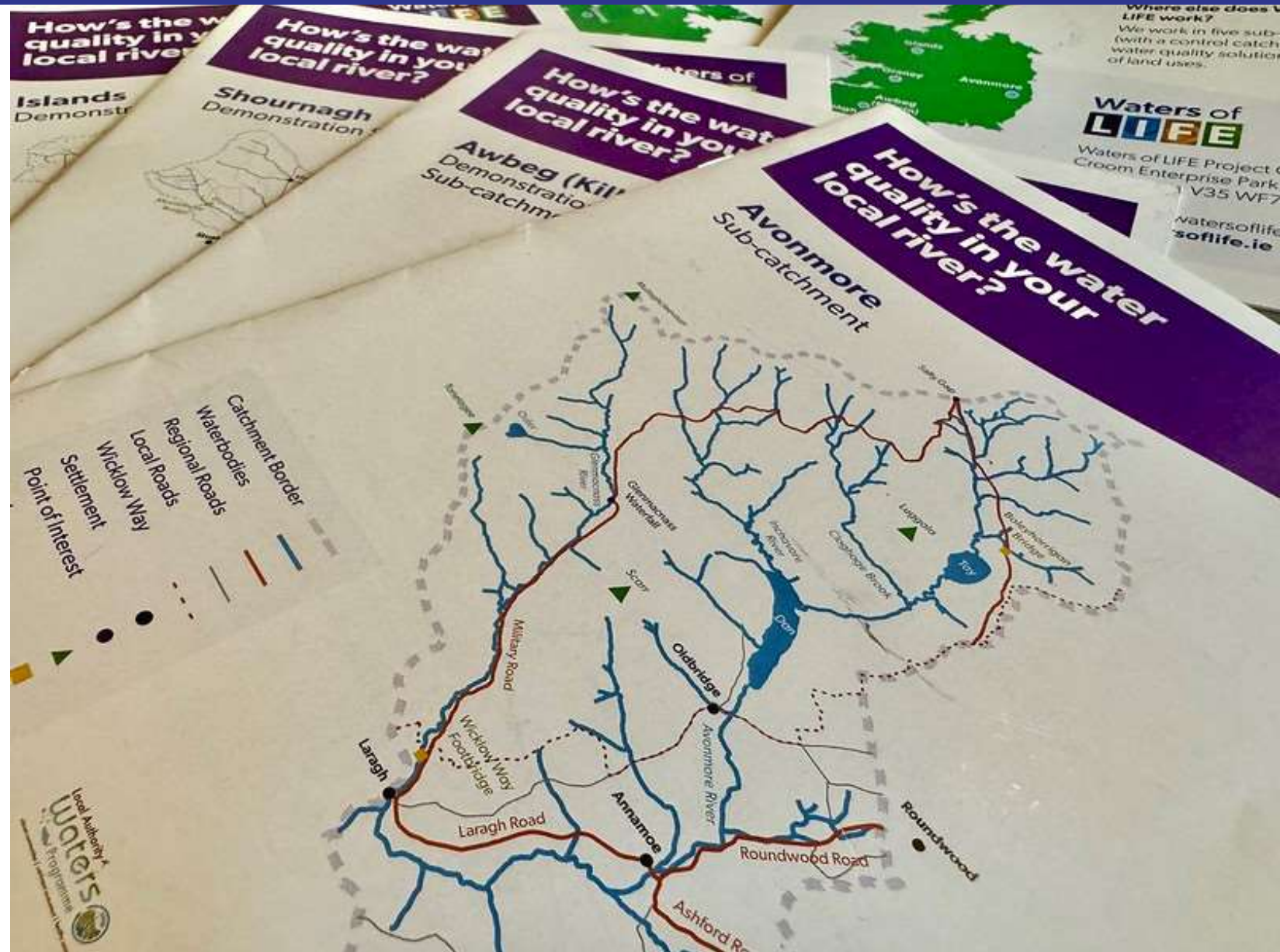
Plot Maps



FARM PLAN PT 2: GENERAL ACTIONS

Action name	Payment rate	Optional ?	Other details
Runoff Risk Assessment	€250 each	Required	To be completed in years 1 & 3 on a whole farm basis
Nutrient Management Plan	€400	Required	Must be based on in-date soil tests
Nutrient Surplus Calculation	€250	Required	To be completed using AgNav
Precision Nutrient Application	Up to €962.50 Up to €490 for PBI Scorecard	Optional	Requires use of PBI and current NMP and soil tests. 35 grass covers

- Specs for:
 - General Actions
 - Supporting Actions
- Programme booklet
- Agricultural measures document
- Guidance document on Runoff Risk Assessment



- Once training complete, will be added to list of approved advisors
- List of farmers assigned to each approved advisor will be finalised
- Approved advisors get access to their clients' data in web portal/app
- Online training on Waters of LIFE Runoff risk assessment App w/c 9th June
- Start runoff risk assessments as soon as possible after training
- Support from project team available to accompany you on early visits if you feel you would like a second opinion
- Scorecard/Habitat training w/c 16th June.

- Habitat scoring should be completed by 15th August
- Separate visits must be made for runoff risk assessment and habitat scoring.
- Approved advisors will be given AgNav access and training over the summer. It's the first time private advisors have been given access.
- Use farm visits as an opportunity to engage with farmers about general measures to ensure a high level of uptake.
- Advisor payments will be calculated through system based on activities completed.
- Be sure to contact the project team if you have any questions.

- Evaluation forms – your feedback is very important to us.
- Be sure to sign out

Waters of LIFE Farmer Training - Participant Feedback

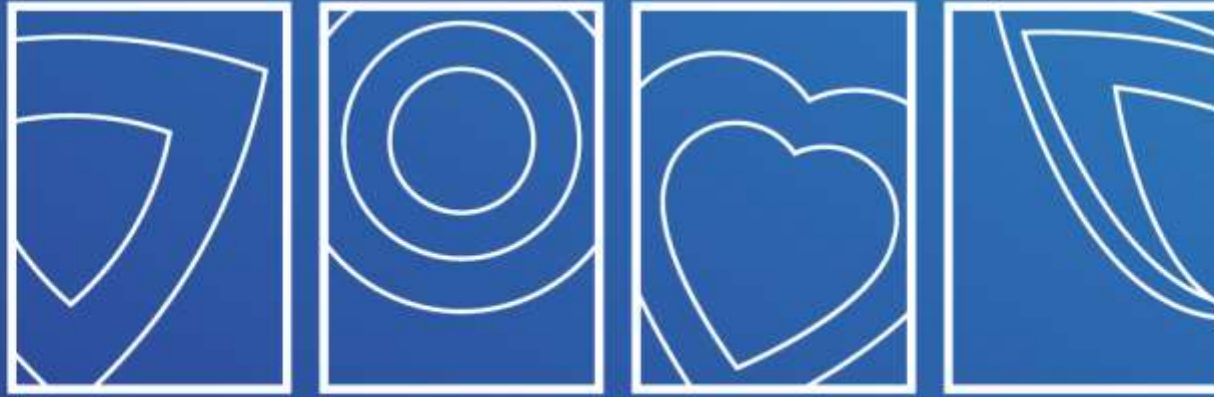
Please take a minute to help us improve future training events.

Today's Date: ____ / ____ / ____

1. Do you have any previous training in catchment science? Tick as appropriate.	None	Short Training Course e.g. 1 Day	Formal Qualification		
2. Please tick an overall rating for today's training. Today's training was:	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
3. Please tick your rating of the following training elements.	Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Very Good	Excellent
Presentations					
Exercises e.g. Scoring Plots and agreeing supporting actions					
Discussions e.g. Discussing challenges and opportunities					
Venue					
4. What other general feedback to you have for us?					
5. For upcoming training and knowledge exchange, would you be willing to host an event or case study on your farm?	Yes		No		
If you said yes to the above question, please write your name and number:					
Name:					
Number:					



THANK YOU



protect restore respect sustain