



WILD ATLANTIC
NATURE LIFE

Lessons from results-based payment schemes in Wild Atlantic Nature

Peatland regeneration: Practice & prospects, AFBI, Hillsborough

22nd November 2024

Dr Gary Goggins



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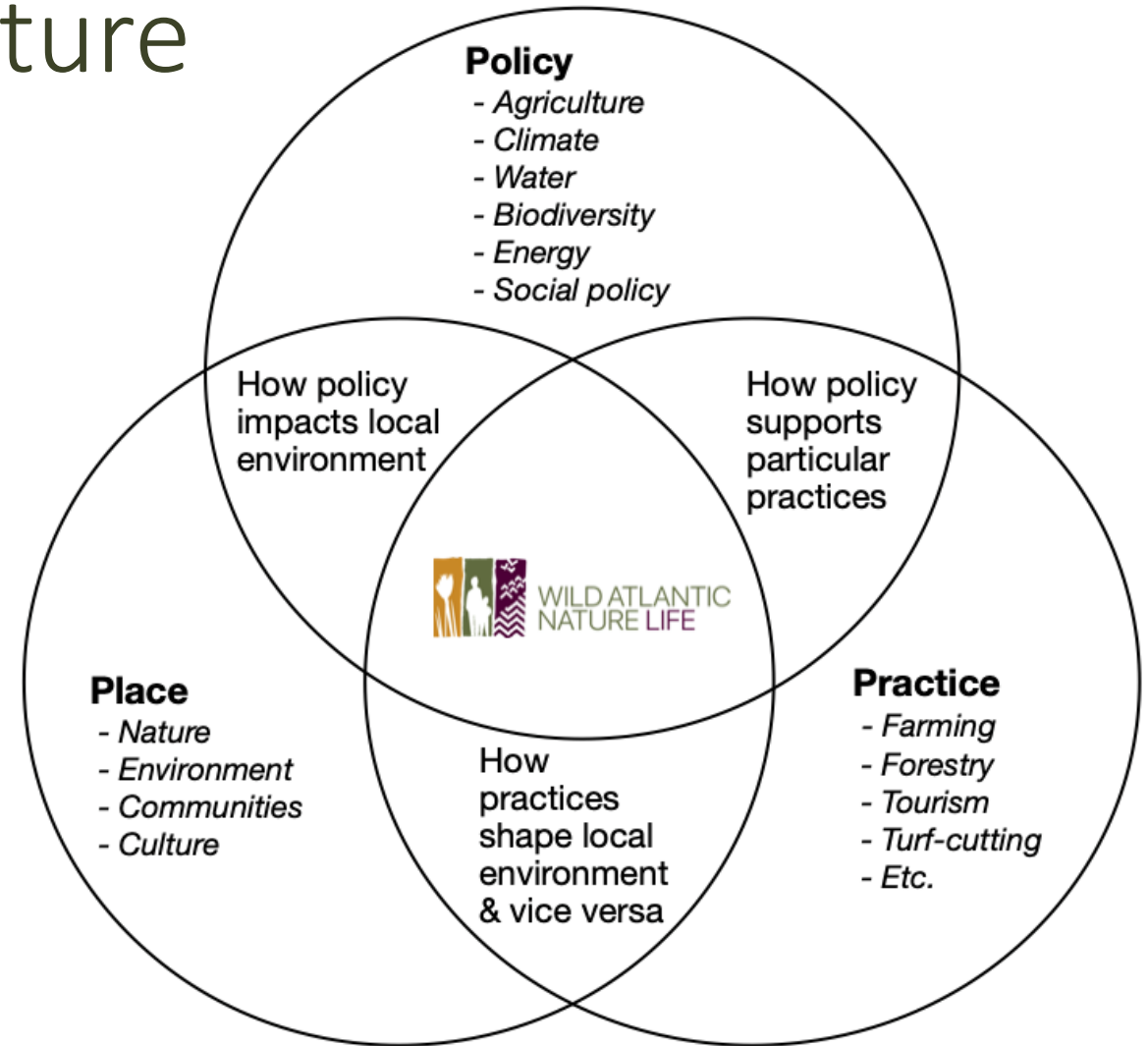
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LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature

- Key objective = high **quality** habitats, sensitive to local contexts that deliver for the environment, farmers and local communities



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What have we learned in the past 30 years?

Success factors	Description
Clearly defined objectives and indicators	Ensure common understanding related to objectives and how to achieve them
Appropriate supports for farmers	Appropriate advice, training, regulatory, financial, scientific, peer-to-peer and technical supports
Participatory processes	Engaging farmers' knowledge and experience and active involvement of farmers in decision-making
Autonomy and flexibility	Retain freedom to balance agriculture, restoration and conservation through adaptive management
Locally-adapted	Suitable for social and institutional context
Integration with policy	Compatibility with existing policy and opportunity to influence future policy



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(Hybrid) Results-based agri-environment programme (RBPS)



WILD ATLANTIC NATURE LIFE Peatland Habitat Score Card

Farmer ID: _____ Surveyor: _____ Total Score: (A+B+C) /100
 Plot number: _____ Survey date: _____

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

Positive indicators: (tick those present)

Moss Layer:	Sedge / Herb Layer:	Shrub Layer:
<input type="checkbox"/> Branched Mosses	<input type="checkbox"/> Bog Asphodel	<input type="checkbox"/> Bell Heather
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-crustose (bushy) Lichens	<input type="checkbox"/> Bog Bean	<input type="checkbox"/> Bilberry
<input type="checkbox"/> Sphagnum Mosses	<input type="checkbox"/> Bog Cotton	<input type="checkbox"/> Bog Myrtle
	<input type="checkbox"/> Deer Grass	<input type="checkbox"/> Cross-leaved Heather
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lousewort	<input type="checkbox"/> Ling Heather
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sundews	<input type="checkbox"/> Western Gorse
	<input type="checkbox"/> White-beaked Sedge	

Negative indicators: (tick those present)

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

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

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

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

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

Present	Score
Absent	0

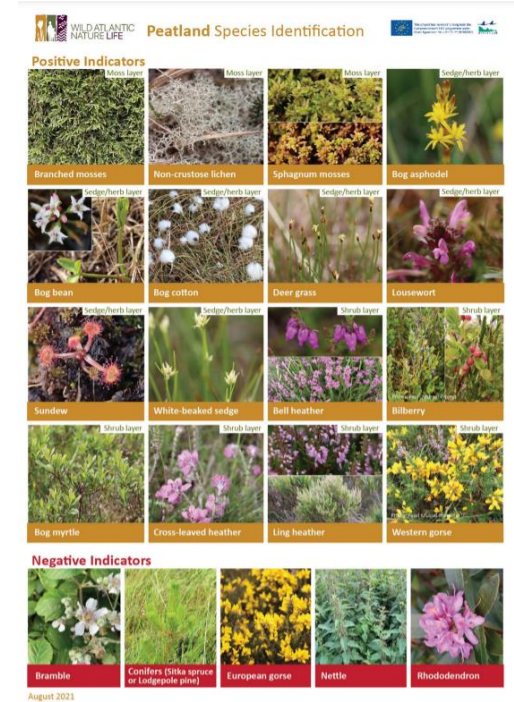
A4 What is the combined cover of all negative indicators/weeds (listed above) throughout the plot?

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

A5 Quality of vegetation structure?

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
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Delivery for water quality, biodiversity, climate & communities (**aligning policy**)

- Farm systems generally have grassland and peatland (some woodland)
- **Whole-farm approach** is essential



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Target landscape level

Prioritization based on geographical area (**SAC + Catchment**)



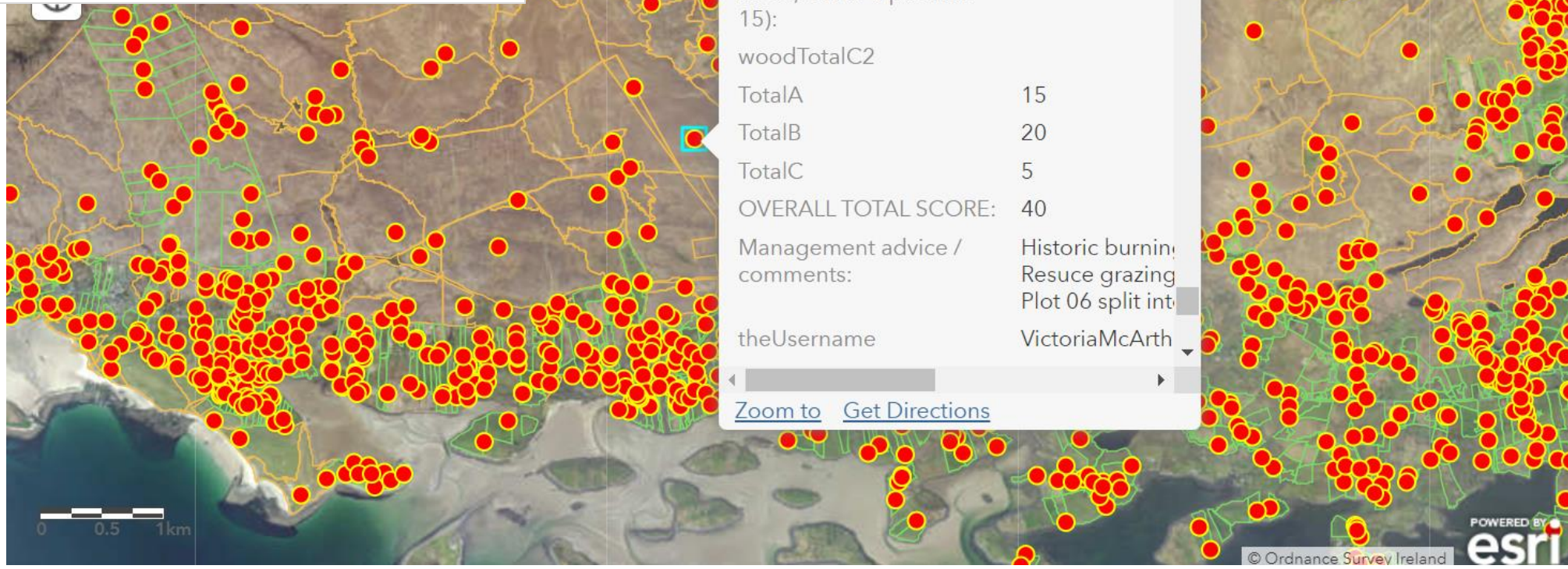
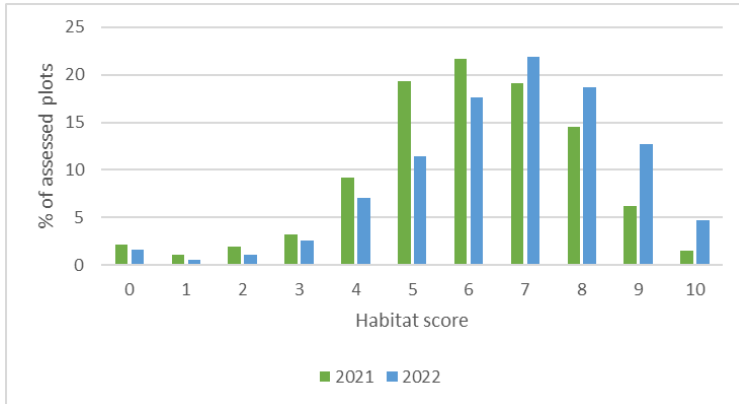
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Habitat quality payment

Degressive payments & **area banding** are important principles

Payment rates according to quality per ha (€):

Plot score	A First 30 _{ha}	B 31-70 _{ha}	C >70 _{ha}
<4	0	0	0
4	68	15	5
5	79	18	6
6	90	20	7
7	135	30	10
8	180	40	14
9	203	45	15
10	225	50	17



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Whole-farm assessment

Ensures good farm(yard) mgt, strong focus on **risk** to water quality

Whole-farm assessment result:

Quality	Correction factor
Poor	0.3 - 30% of the potential results-based payment is awarded
Inadequate	0.6 - 60% of the results-based payment is awarded
Good	1- 100% of the results-based payment is awarded
Excellent	1.2 - a bonus payment of 20% is applied to the results-based payment



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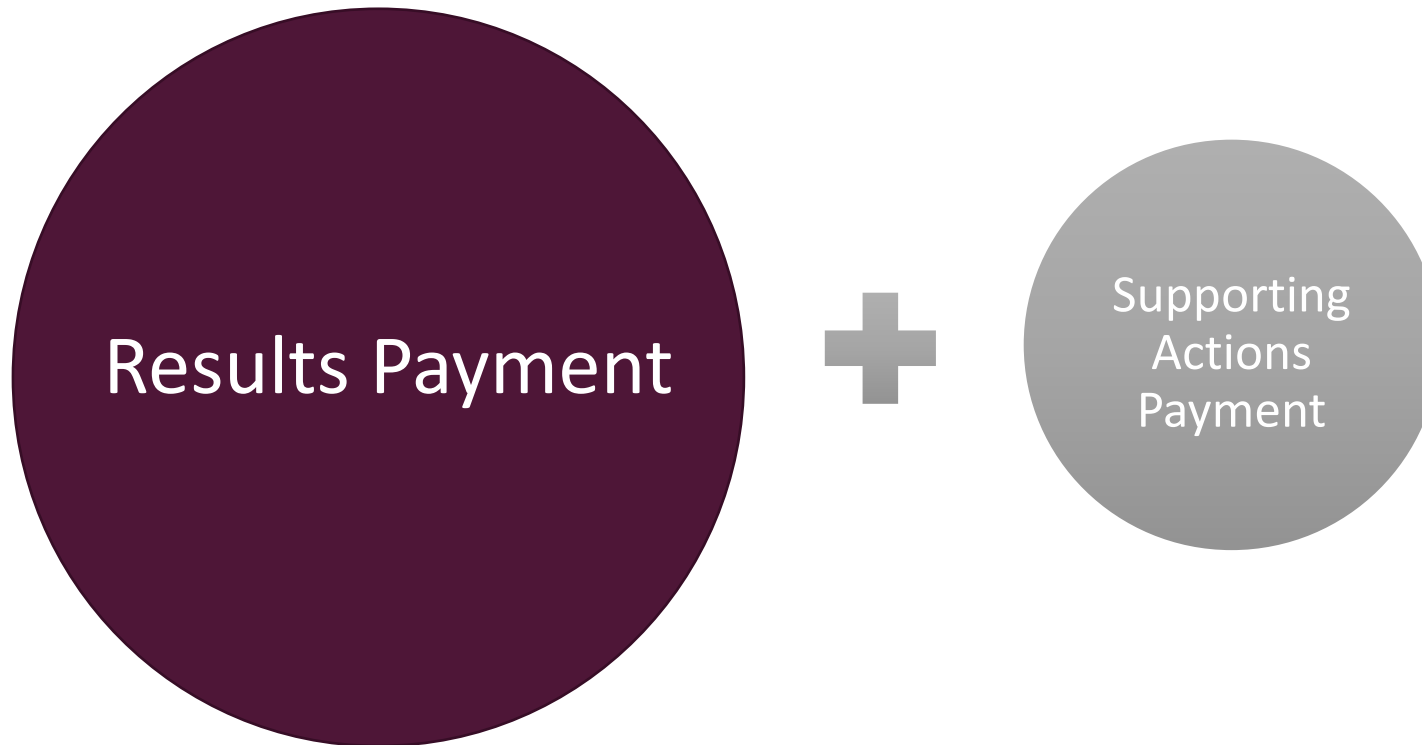
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Payment streams

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



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Supporting actions

- Assists with better farm management & improved ecological quality



Examples from Pearl Mussel Project EIP



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Communication, dissemination & exploitation



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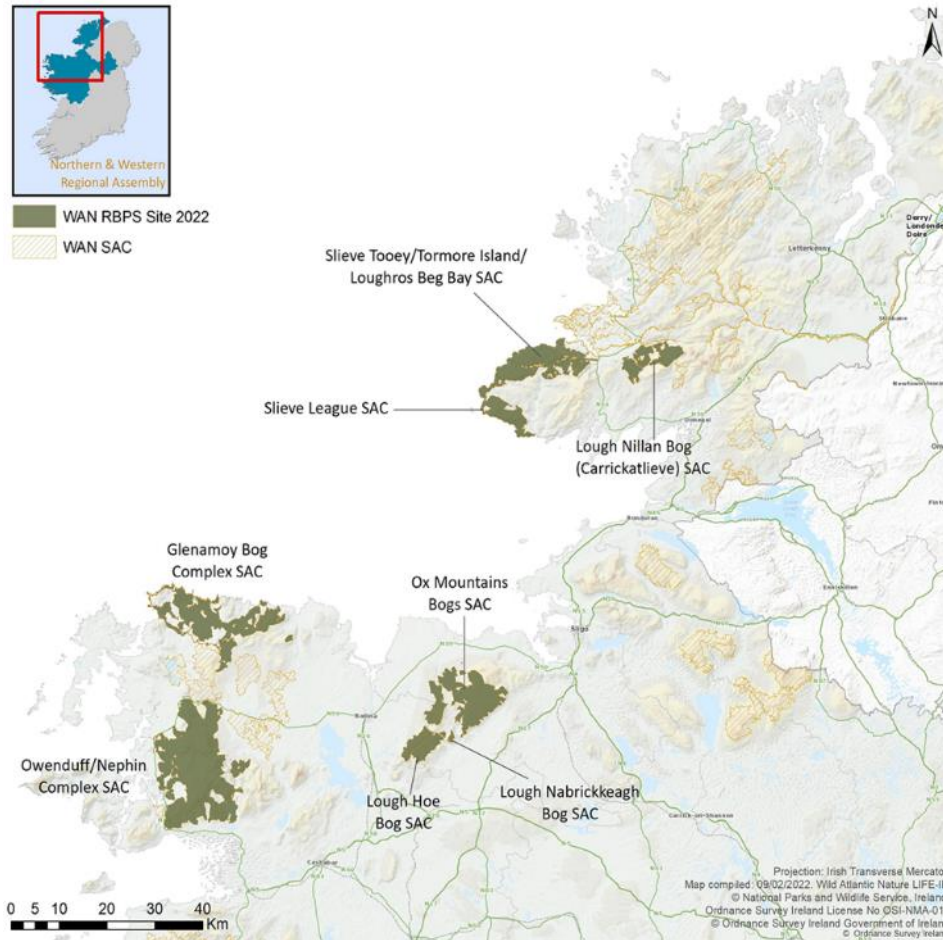


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LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature RBPS 2021/2022



- 823 farmers (>85% uptake)
 - 75% agreed results-based was a fair approach
 - 82% reported increase in awareness of environment issues
 - 89% reported increase in awareness of suitable actions
 - 68% made changes to farm practices
- 52 advisors trained
 - 94% agreed results-based was a fair approach
 - 88% reported increase in awareness of environment issues
 - 76% reported increase in awareness of suitable actions
- 63,000ha land surveyed – 6,000 plots
- ~ €3m direct farmer payments
- >100 restoration actions
- Lessons for CSP (2023-2027)
- Goggins *et al.* (forthcoming)



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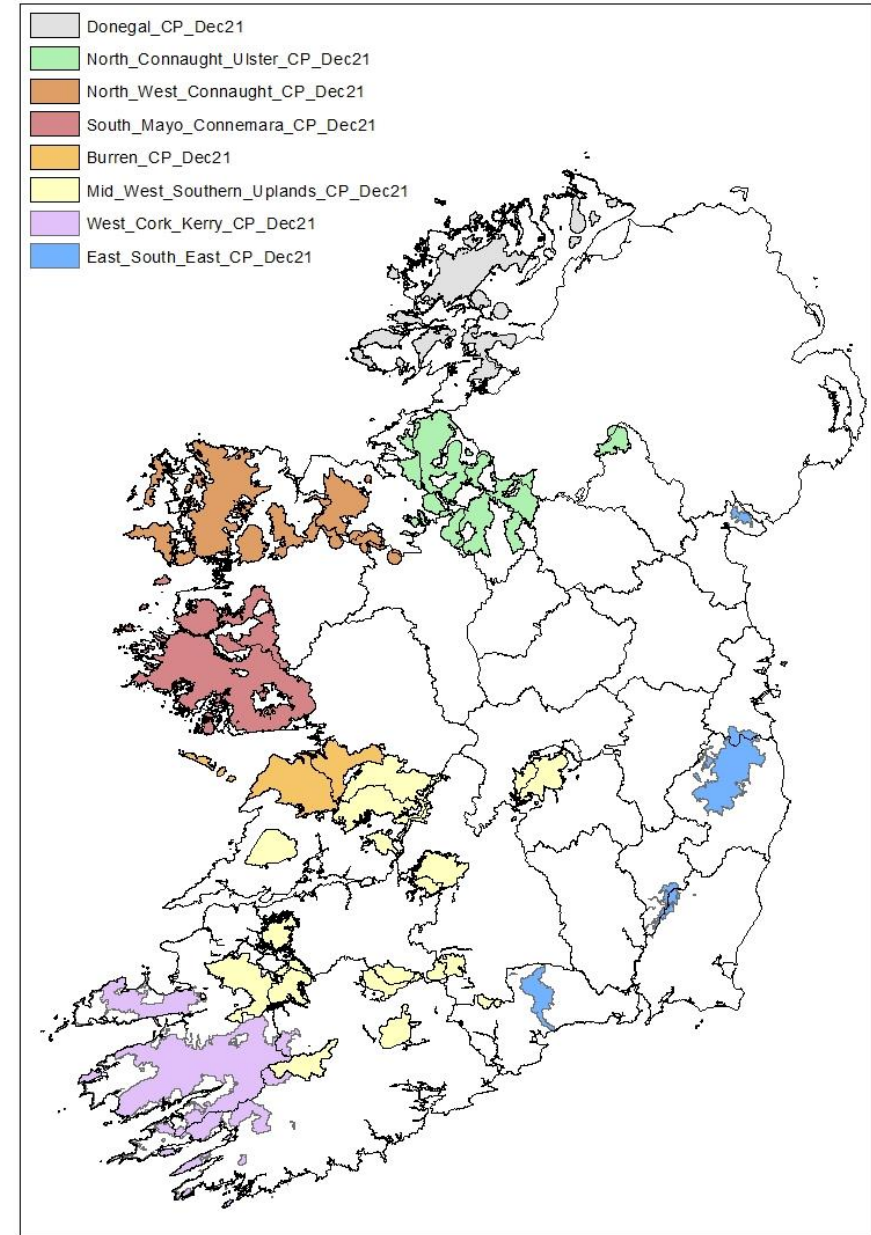


Upscaling of RBPS approach

- Eight ACRES Cooperation Project teams
- Roll-out of results-based model to 20,000 farmers
 - Results-based, supporting actions & landscape scale payments
 - Funded via CSP AECM, NPIs, Cooperation Articles

We now have an implementation mechanism for conservation measures & restoration actions

- Integration of land use policies
- Incentivises delivery of environmental services (water, biodiversity, climate)



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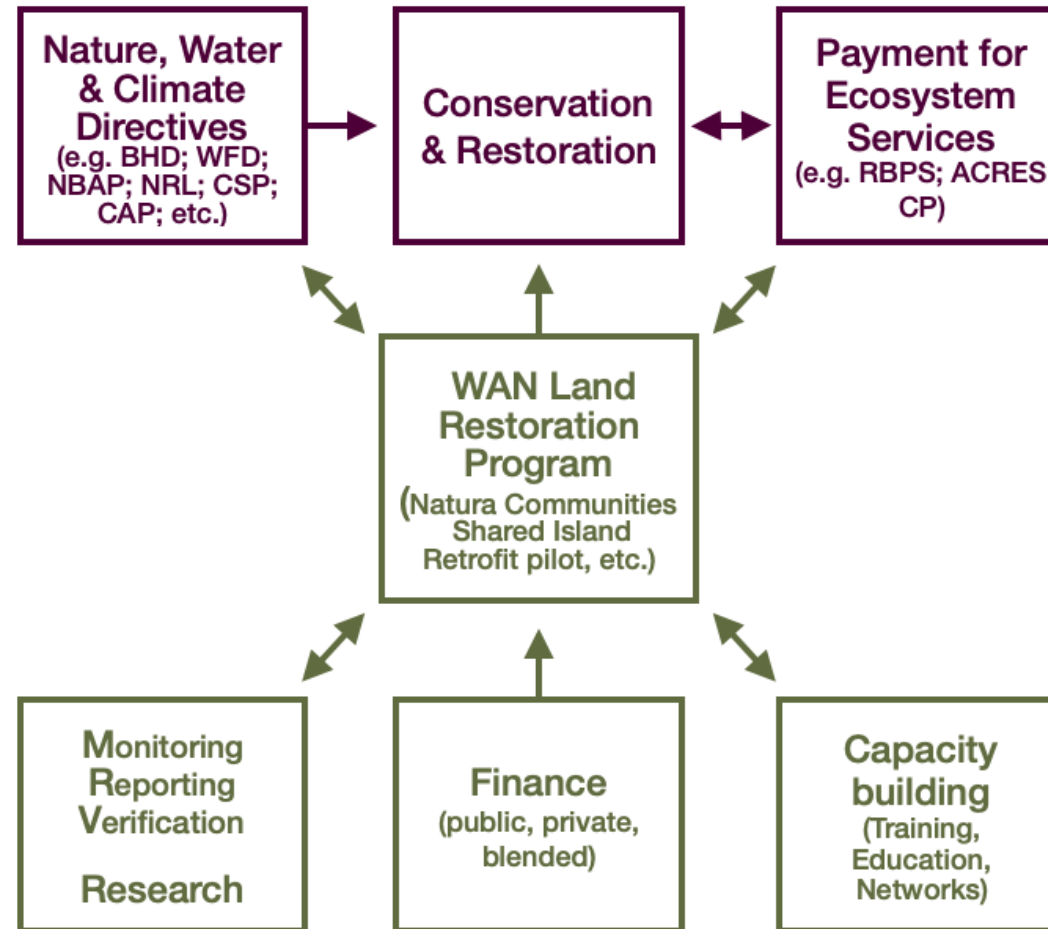


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Towards an integrated approach to (peatland) conservation



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Supporting locally-led (peatland) restoration

- Natura Communities
 - Over 40 full-time operatives across 3 NC groups



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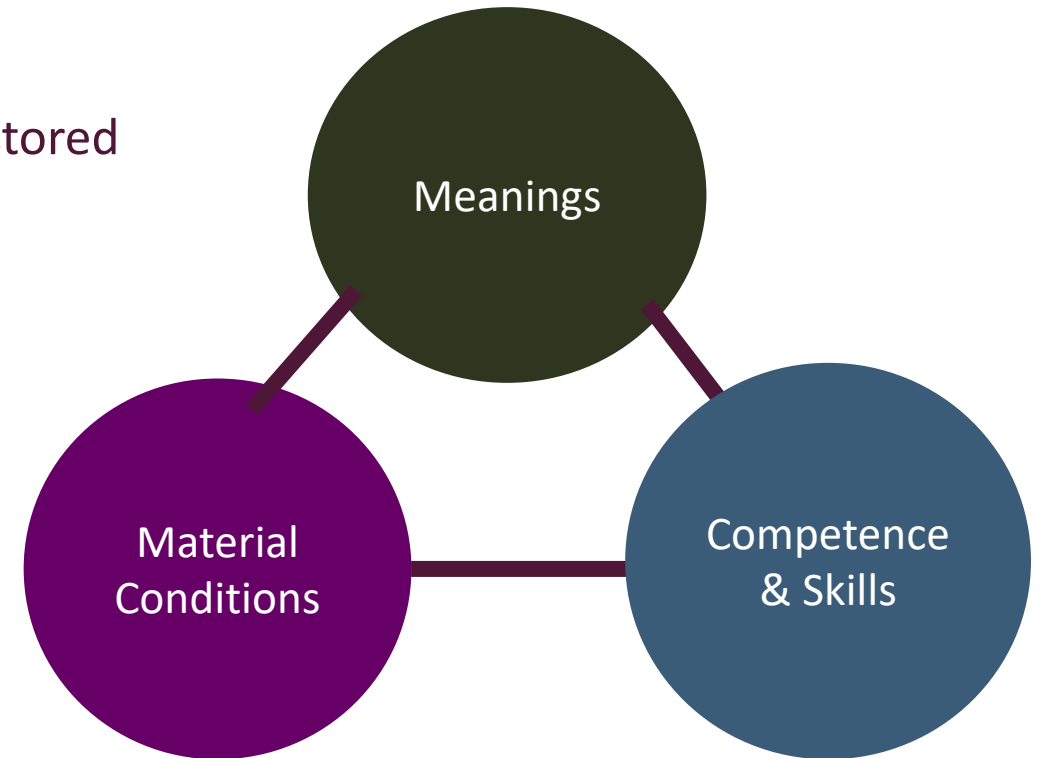


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Addressing turf-cutting in SACs

- Restoration-retrofit pilot project (RRPP)
 - Retrofitting 24 houses and associated lands restored



Establishment of demonstration farms/sites

- Working with ACRES CP, NPWS, farmers, others



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Delivery of large-scale restoration projects

- Leveraging (non-CAP) funding
 - Outside scope of CAP



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Capacity building: Training, knowledge, new networks



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Key messages

- Well-designed and supported results-based approaches (RBPS) provide an improved alternative to prescription approaches
- Farmers, advisors, academics and policy-makers support results-based approaches
- Consideration of the social and institutional context can improve project effects
- Upscaling is possible (*e.g.* via the CAP Strategic Plan)
- RBPS approach is an effective mechanism to deliver small and large-scale conservation and restoration



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www.wildatlanticnature.ie

@WAN_LIFEIP @WildAtlanticNature

info@wildatlanticnature.ie

gary.goggins@npws.gov.ie



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