

# Waters of **LIFE**

## Waters of LIFE Advisor Training

Module 1: Project Overview

Jan 2025



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



# Outline of presentation

- 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



# EU LIFE Programme



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



# Waters of LIFE Structure

- Waters of LIFE will run until March 2028
- Project is being led by the DHLGH
- Project partners
  - LAWPRO
  - Teagasc
  - EPA
  - DAFM
  - Coillte
  - Forest Service
  - OPW
  - Six Local Development Companies



**OPW** Oifig na  
nOibreacha Poiblí  
Office of Public Works



**COILLTE**  
GROW · TRANSFORM · SUSTAIN



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Bia agus Mara**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine



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the European Union

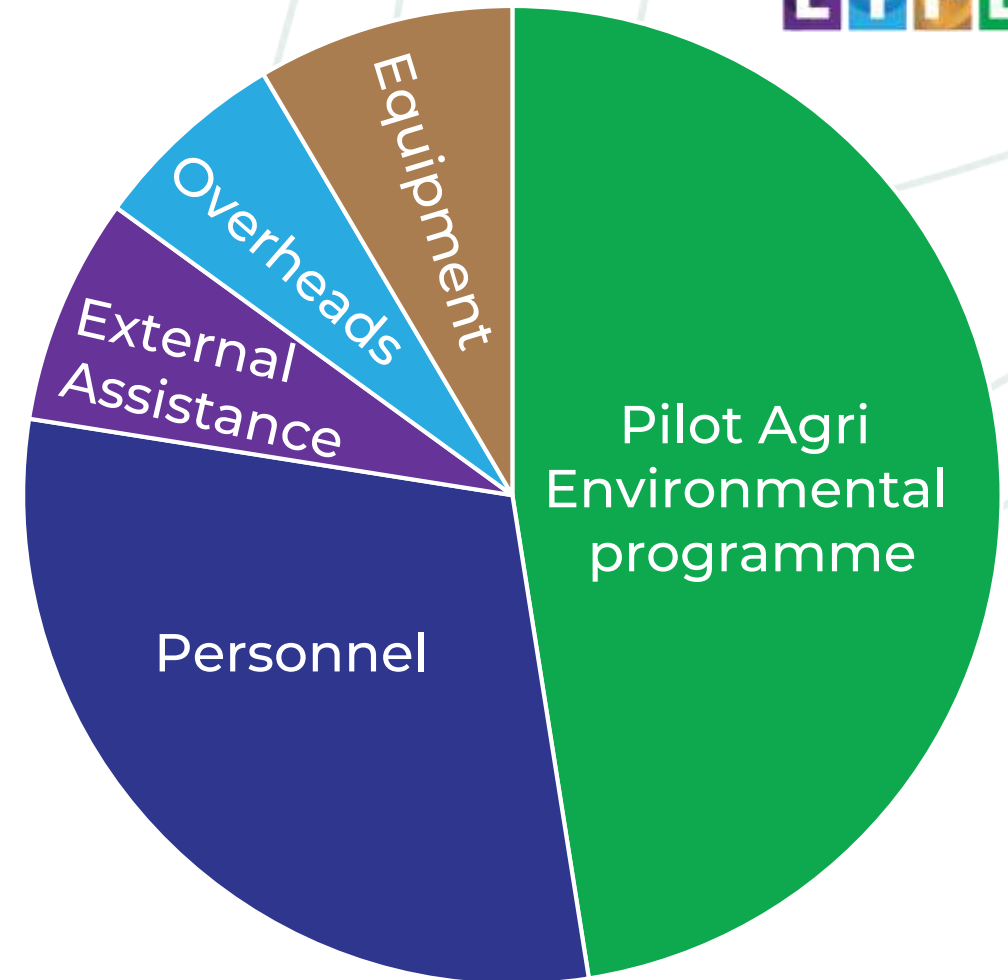


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# Waters of LIFE Funding



- 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 pilot agri environment scheme
  - Farmer payments
  - Advisor payment
  - Development of IT system.



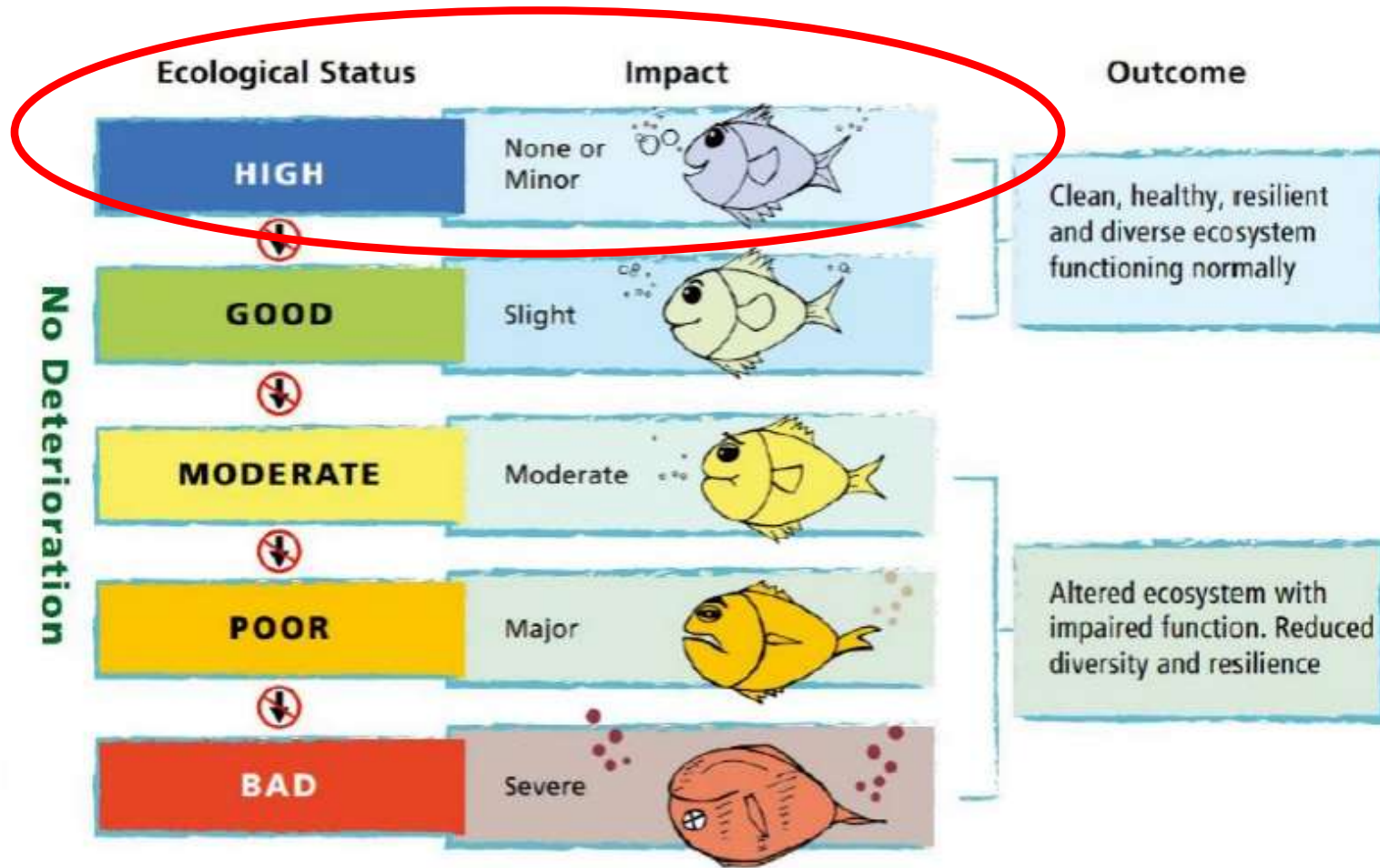


# Demonstration Catchments

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

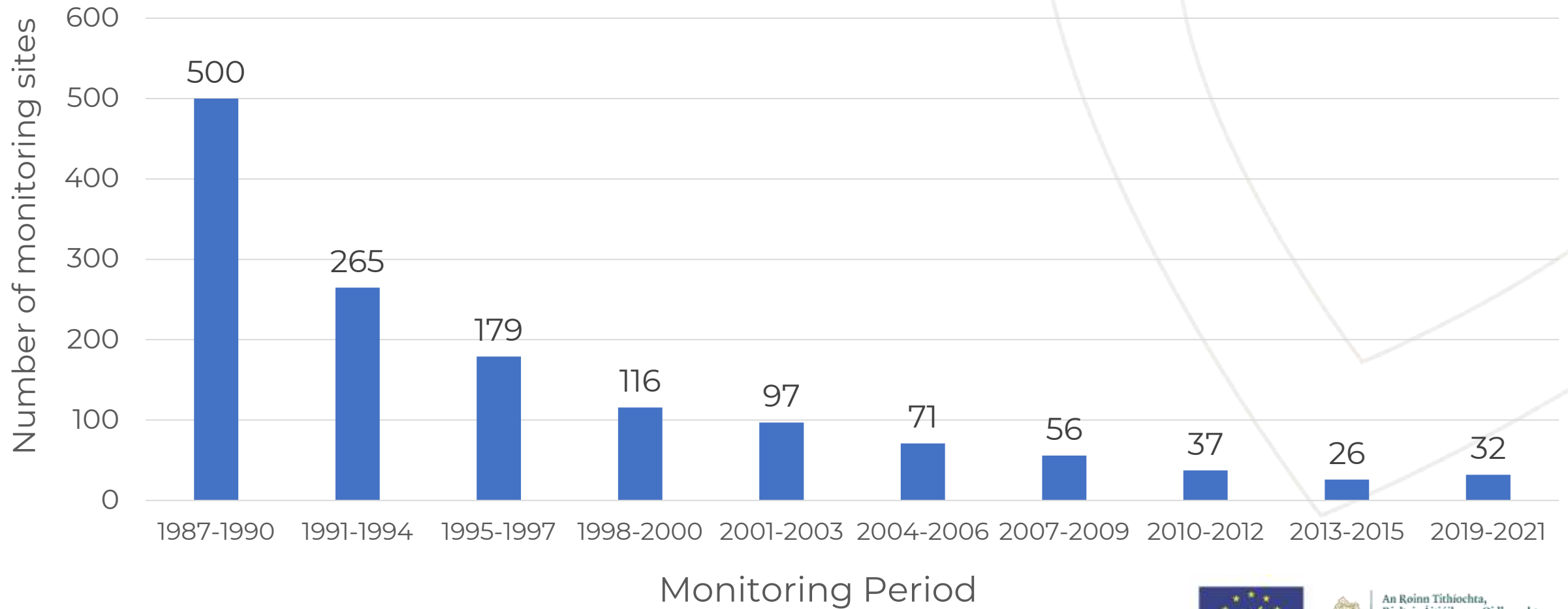


# Project Focus – High Status Objective Rivers



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

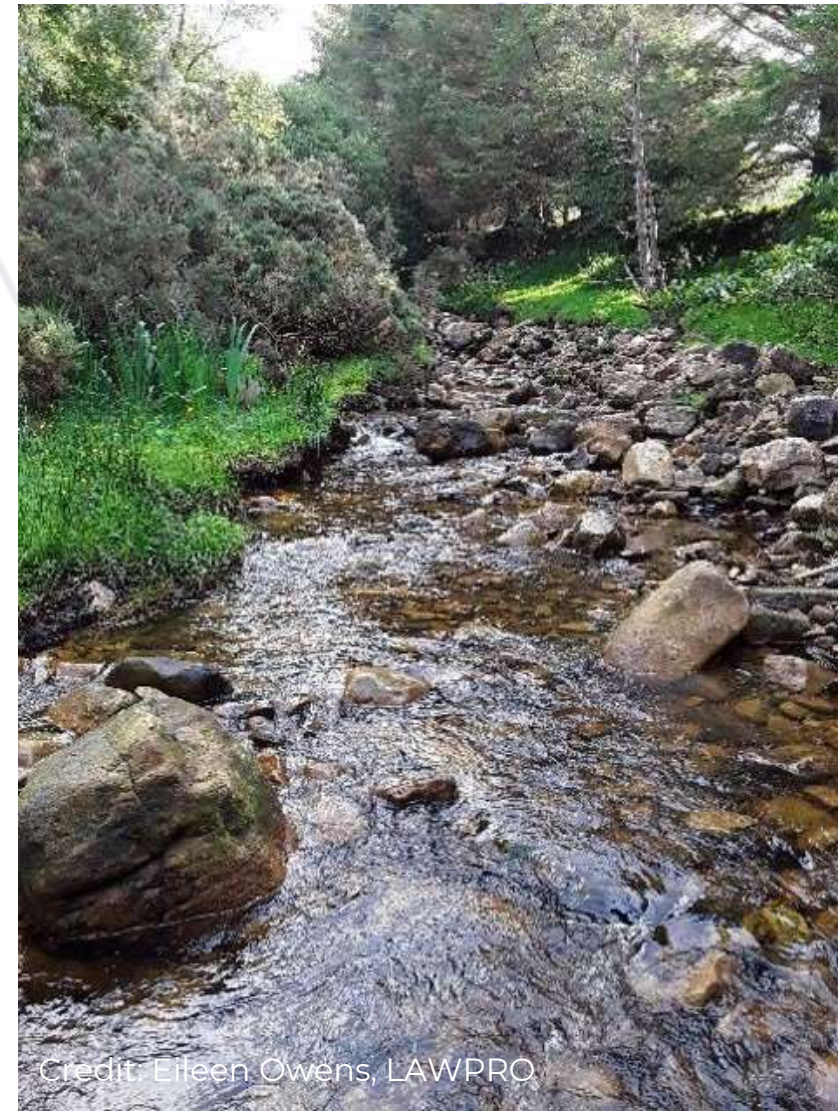
# Decline in Pristine (Q5) Rivers Sites



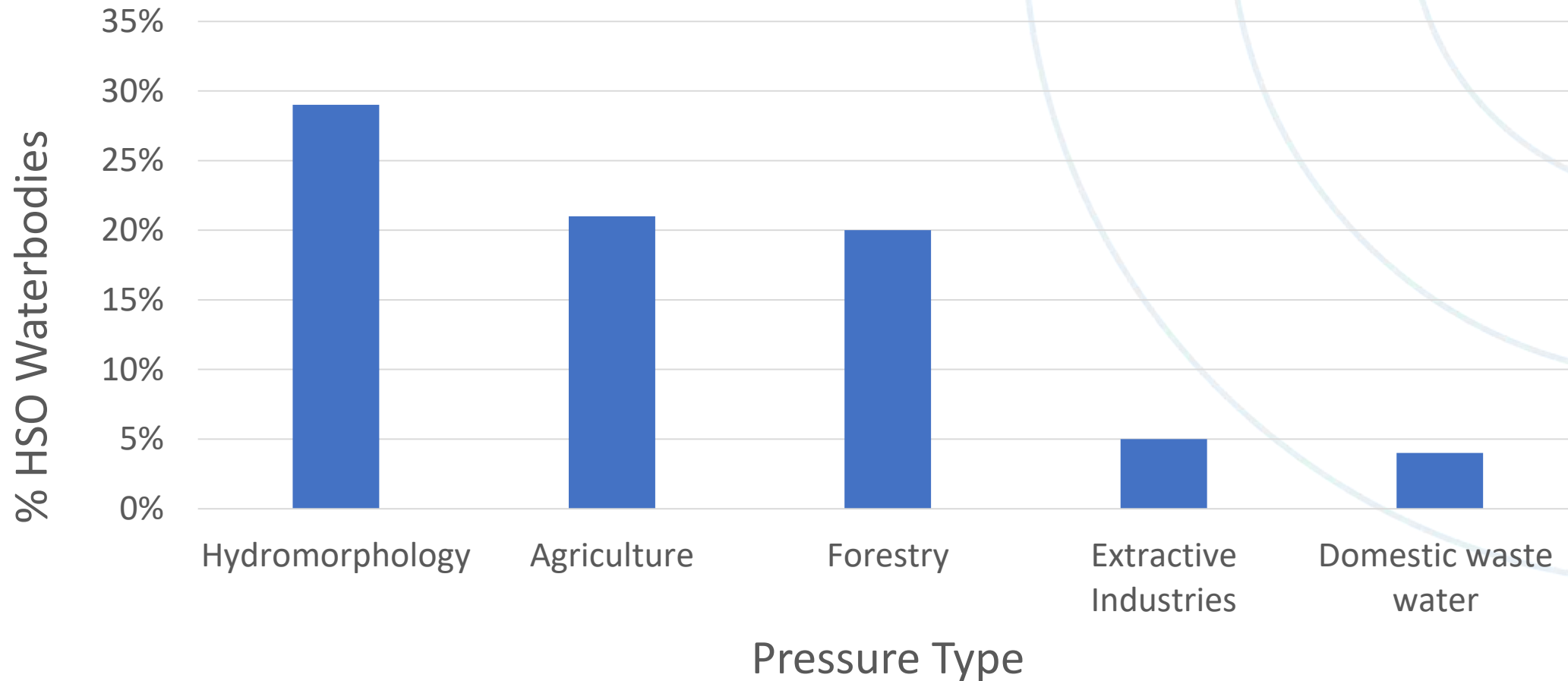


# Project Objectives

- Improve our understanding of HSO rivers and what had driven 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



# Pressures on High Status Objective Rivers

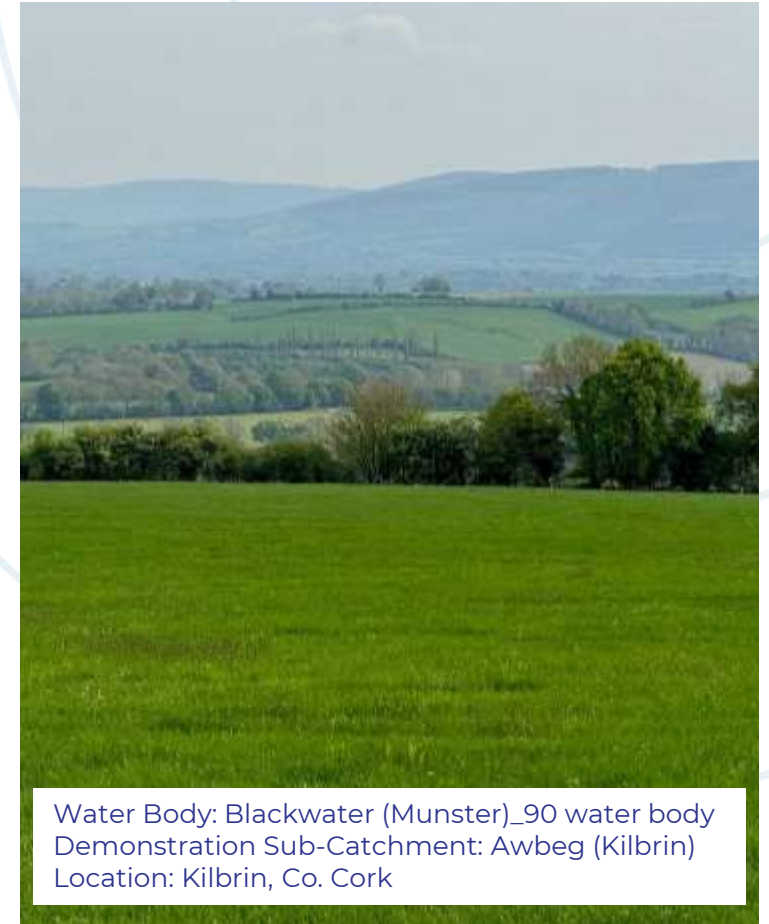


# Waters of LIFE Pilot Agri Environment Programme



## Programme Elements

1. Results based payments based on habitat scores
2. General Actions to address nutrient and sediment loss
3. Supporting Actions
  1. Non productive investments (NPIs)
  2. Landscape Measures
4. Education and Training



Water Body: Blackwater (Munster)\_90 water body  
Demonstration Sub-Catchment: Awbeg (Kilbrin)  
Location: Kilbrin, Co. Cork



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# Results Based Payments

## Habitats included in Waters of LIFE Programme

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

Scorecards similar to ACRES CP scorecards with additional emphasis on water quality.

New scorecards to reflect the importance of the area immediately adjacent to the river.

Similar to the FarmPEAT grassland scorecard – emphasis on depth of water table.



## Why Riverside Habitat?

- 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



Water Body: Lisduggan\_North\_10  
Demonstration Sub-Catchment: Awbeg (Kilbrin)  
Location: Castlemagner, Co. Cork



## How will it work?

- Applies on mapped rivers where there is no other semi natural habitat
- Will be assessed using a scorecard
- A farmer will be paid up to a maximum width of 20m.
- Don't have to give the full 20m: paid on the width provided.
- Payment will depend on both the width and the score
- Full 20m assessed for any damaging activities which could impact on the river.





# Habitat Payment Rates to Farmers\*

Based on a score of 10

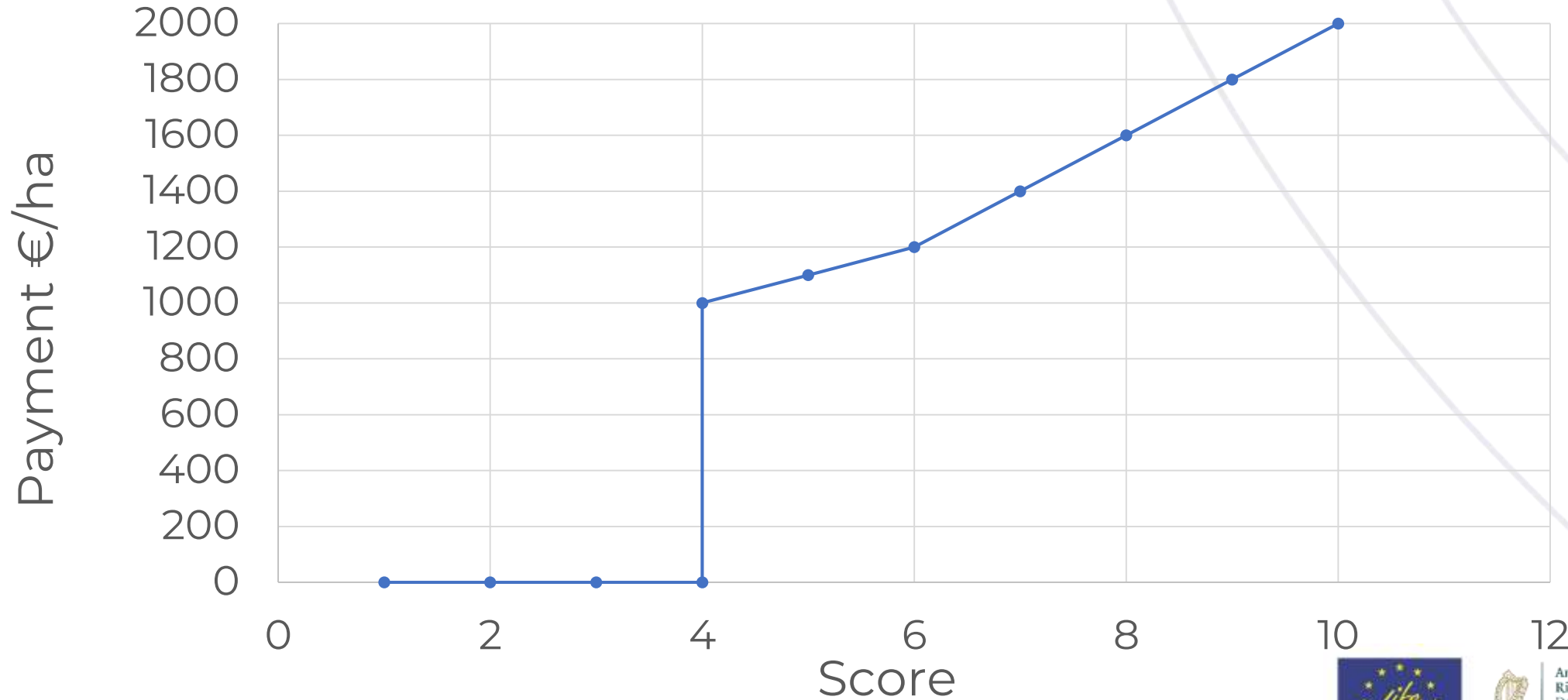


Habitat/Scorecard	Plot payment	Riverside bonus
Riverside habitat on improved grassland	€2000/ha	N/A
Riverside habitat on Tillage	€2000/ha	N/A
All other habitats	€400/ha	€3.2/m of river frontage (payment varies with plot score)

\* No payment on scores less than 4



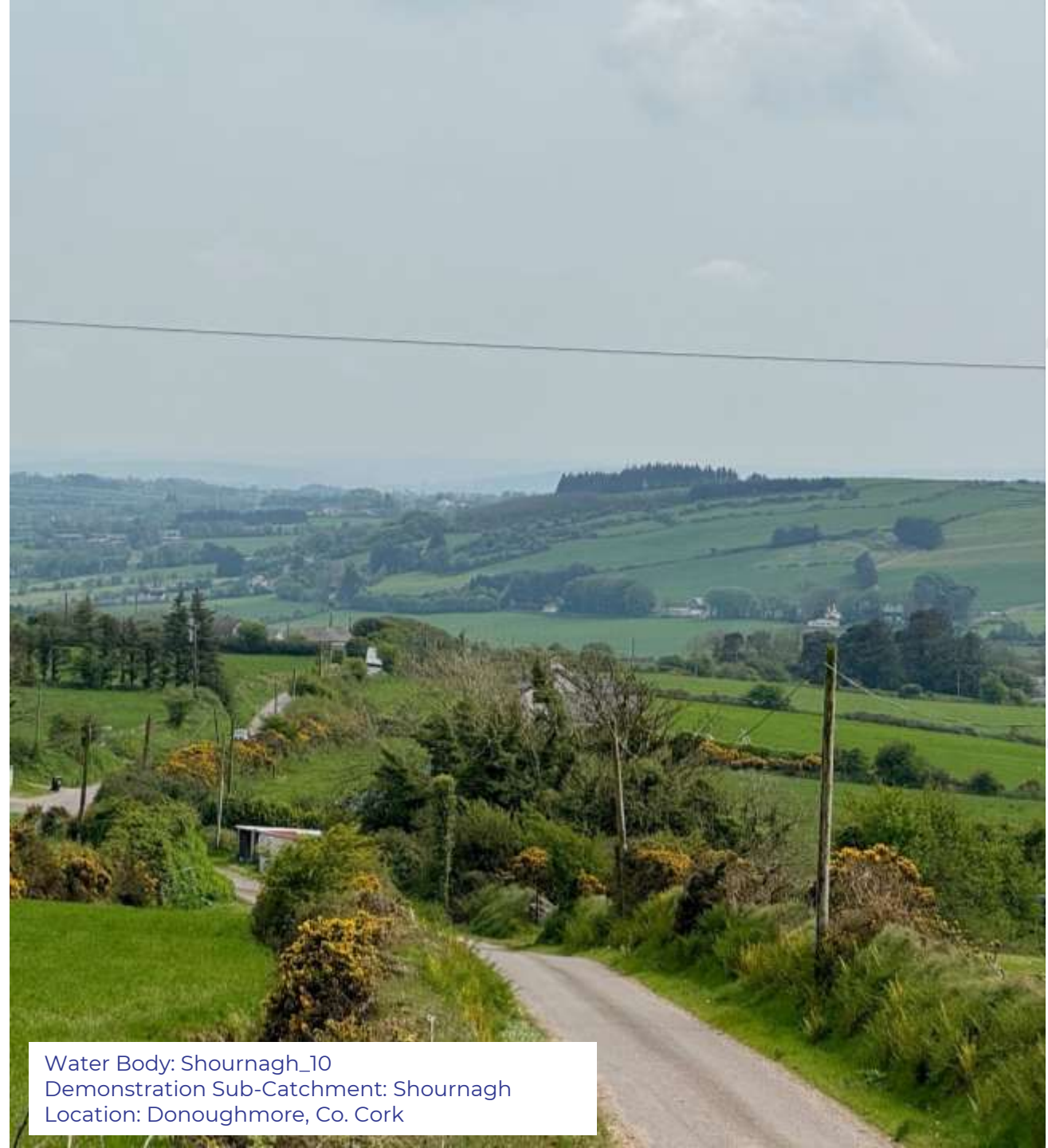
# Payment per Hectare vs Score for River Side Habitat



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# General Actions

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



Water Body: Shournagh\_10  
Demonstration Sub-Catchment: Shournagh  
Location: Donoughmore, Co. Cork



# Supporting Actions

## Non Productive Investments

- Approximately 28 supporting actions available
- Chosen because of potential benefit for water quality
- Can be selected by advisor through the project app or web portal.
- Must be approved by project team before installation
- Must have a reason for specifying: can be used to:
  - Address issues identified in the Runoff Risk or
  - Improve habitat scores
  - Right measure for the right reason in the right place.
- Farmer paid on submission of verification data (geotagged photo, invoices)



*Solar Pump on for alternative drinking point*

# Supporting Actions

## Landscape Actions

- Details not yet available – will be available later in 2025
- Will deal with issues that:
  - Need to happen at catchment scale (eg invasives control) or
  - That need significant prior assessment (eg drain blocking)
- The need can be highlighted by the advisor or the project team
- <sup>20</sup> Implementation by project team.





# Education and Training

## Farmer Training

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





# Advisor Payments



Results Based Scoring	
Standing charge per farm	€200.00
Payment per scorecard/plot	€20.00
Scored Semi Natural Habitat	
0-15 ha: /ha	€10.00
>15 ha: /ha	€2.00
Riverside Habitat: m riverside	€0.10

Run-off Risk Assessment	
Standing charge per farm	€200.00
Total Farm area	
0-30 ha: /ha	€10.00
>30 ha: /ha	€2.00



# Advisor Payment Example

70ha farm

6 scoreable plots

Area of scored plots scored 19.1ha

Length of 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

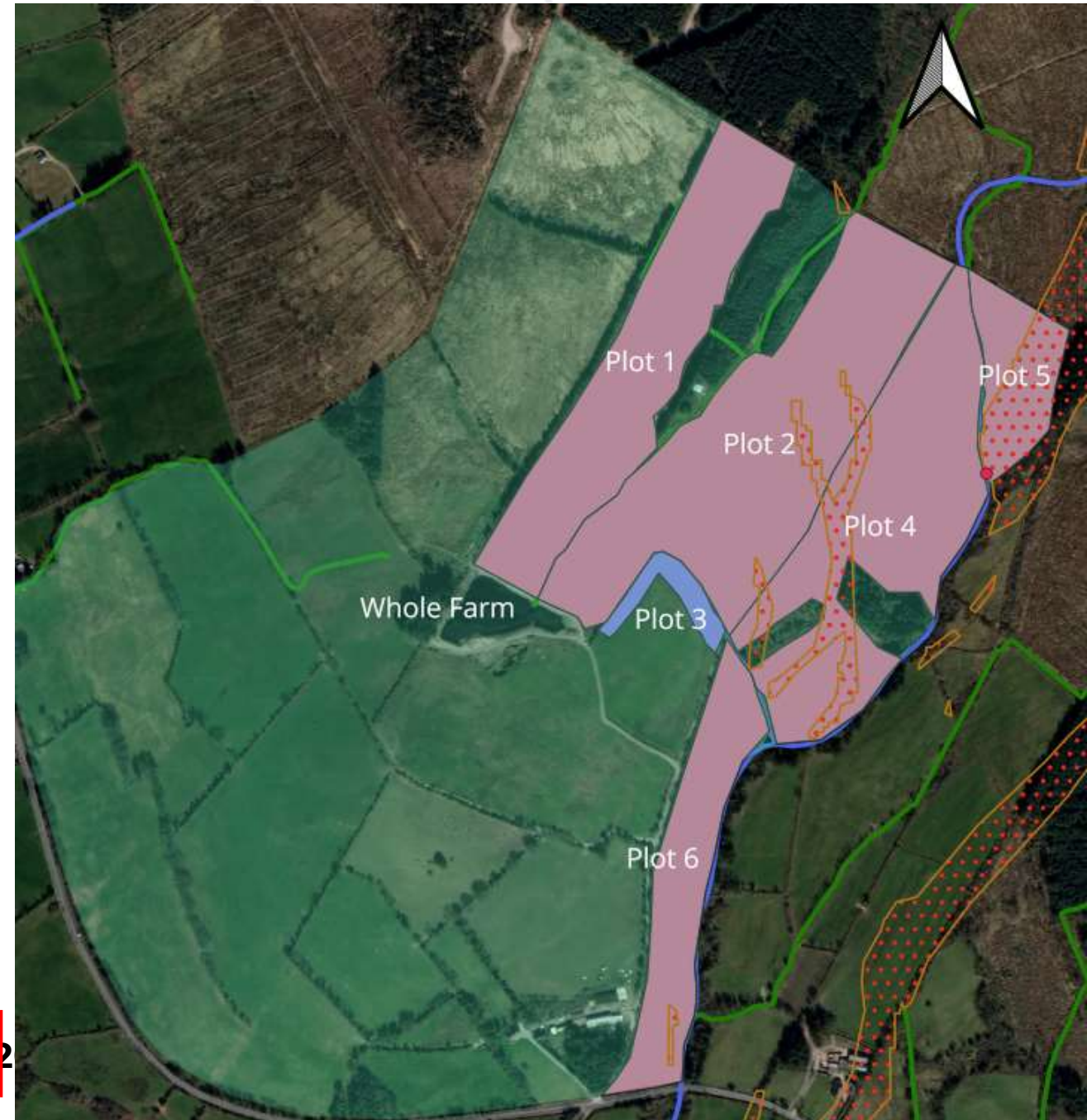
Standing charge = €200

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

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

**Payment for scoring = €478.20**

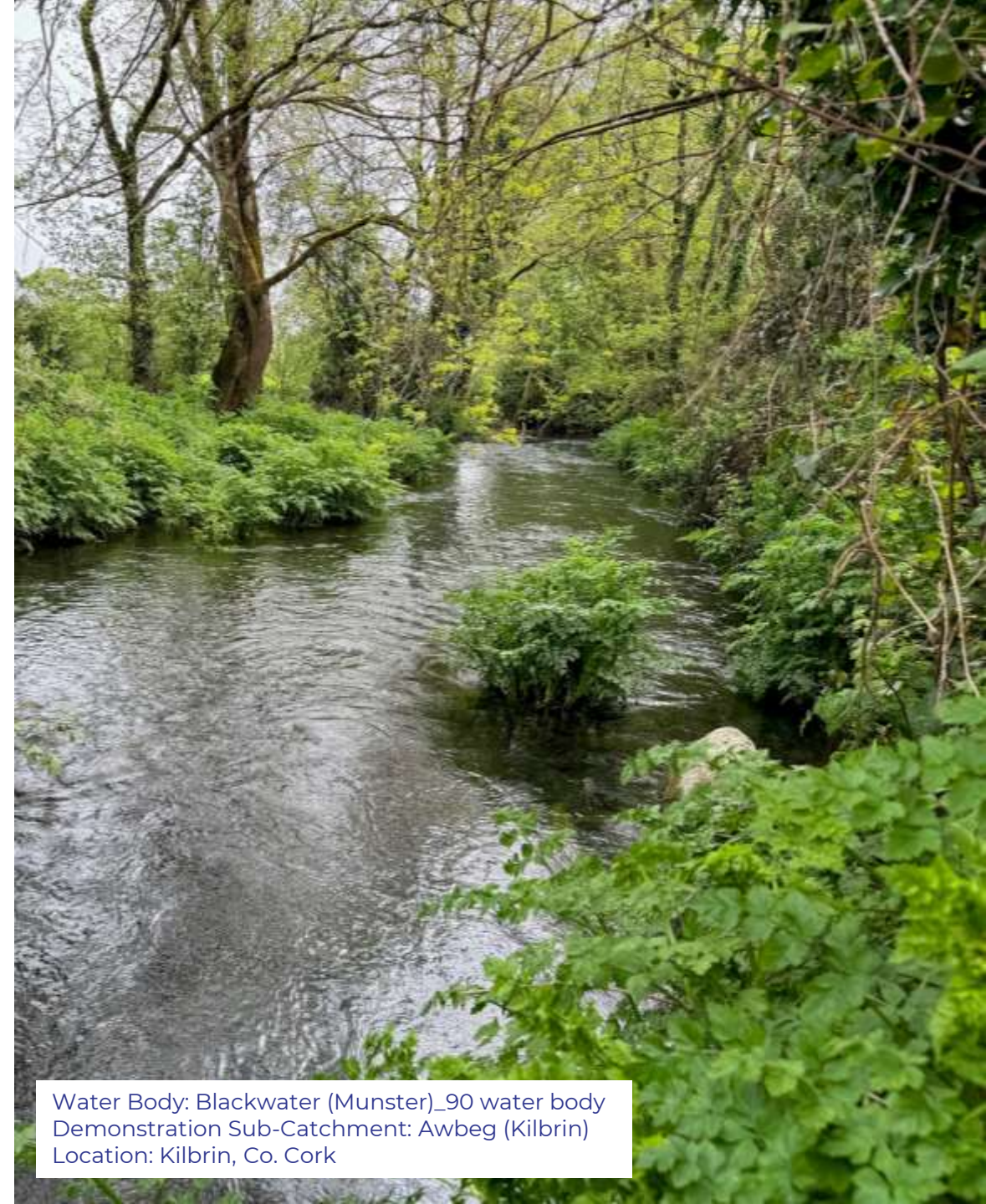
**Total Advisor Payment = €478.20 + €580 = €1,058.20**





# Key Takeaways

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





## Exercise



What are 3 questions a farmer is most likely to ask you about either the Waters of LIFE Project or the Pilot Agri Environmental Programme?

In your groups, spend:

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



# Waters of **LIFE**

## Waters of LIFE Advisor Training

Next Steps

Jan 2025



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# Farm Plans and Contracts



- Farm plans to be issued to farmers in early Feb
- Will set out habitats on farm and general actions available and indicate payment they might get
- Contracts to be returned within 2 weeks
- Must nominate advisor from approved list





## 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

### Other Schemes/Programmes

ACRES General:      ACRES CP      Organics:      Farming for water:

**Indicative payment based on farm characteristics (see plot details on page 2 and map on page 2)**

#### Potential Habitat Payment

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

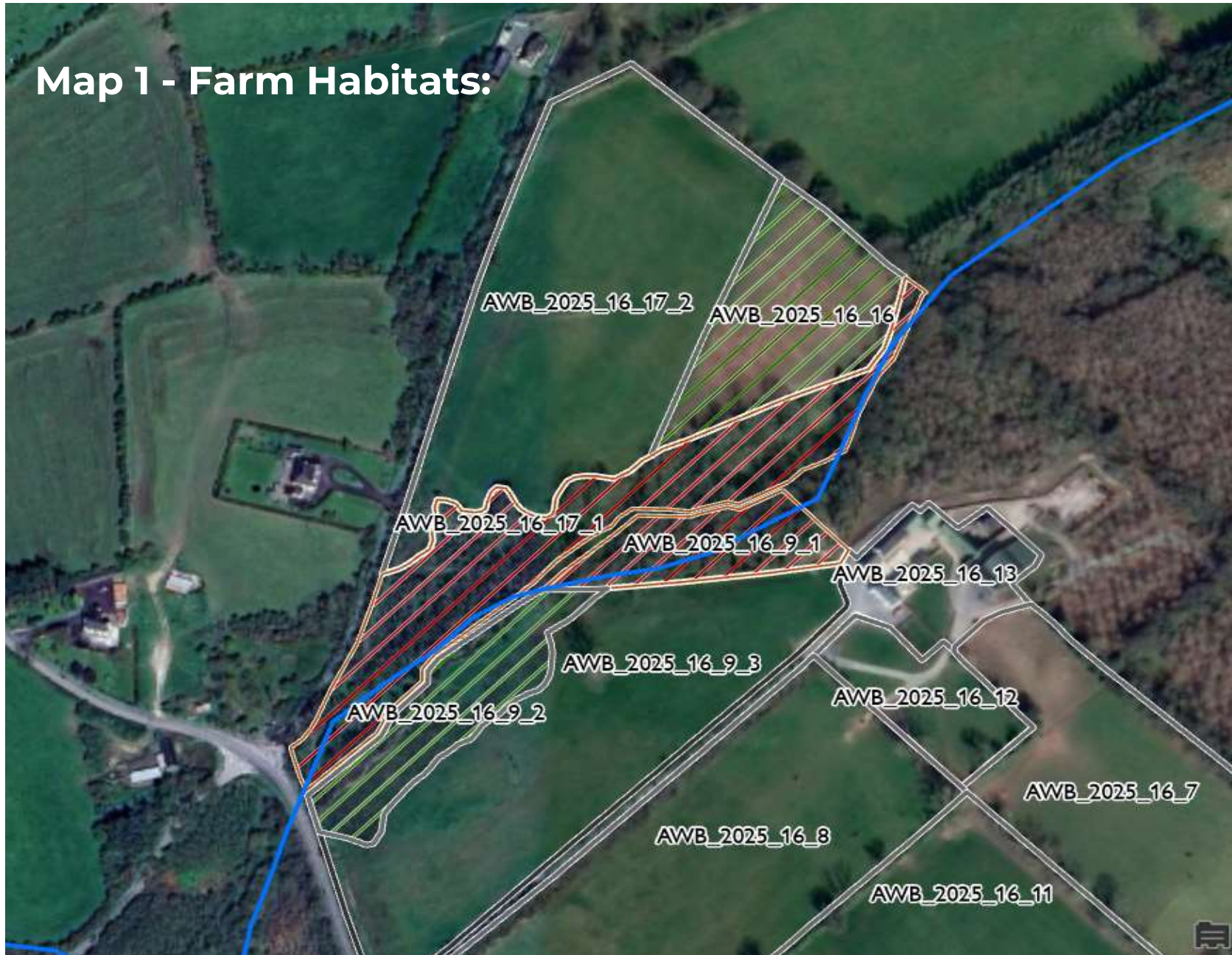
**Max Payment for General Measures      €2,352.50**

## Waters of LIFE Farmer ID:

### Details of habitat 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

# Map 1 - Farm Habitats:





## Waters of LIFE Farmer ID: Waters of LIFE Farm Plan - Part 2 General Actions

The following general actions are available to you as a scheme participant.

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

# Resources



- Specs for:
  - General Measure
  - Supporting Actions
- Overview of the Agri Env Programme
- Agricultural measures document
- Guidance document on Runoff Risk Assessment



## Next Steps for Advisors

- Once training complete, will be added to list of approved advisors
- Likely to be contacted by your clients to discuss the plan before the contract returned
- Training on app will be held on line in the coming weeks – brief online session
- Should be ready to start runoff risk assessments as soon as possible after contract returned
- Support from ASSAP advisors and Project team will be available to accompany you on early visits if you feel you would like a second opinion
- Early summer - hold another brief on line session to introduce you to the scorecards.





# Thank you

