



# Aligning policy and practice in an integrated land use programme

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# Presentation overview

- Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE IP
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- What next?



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# Part 1

Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE IP

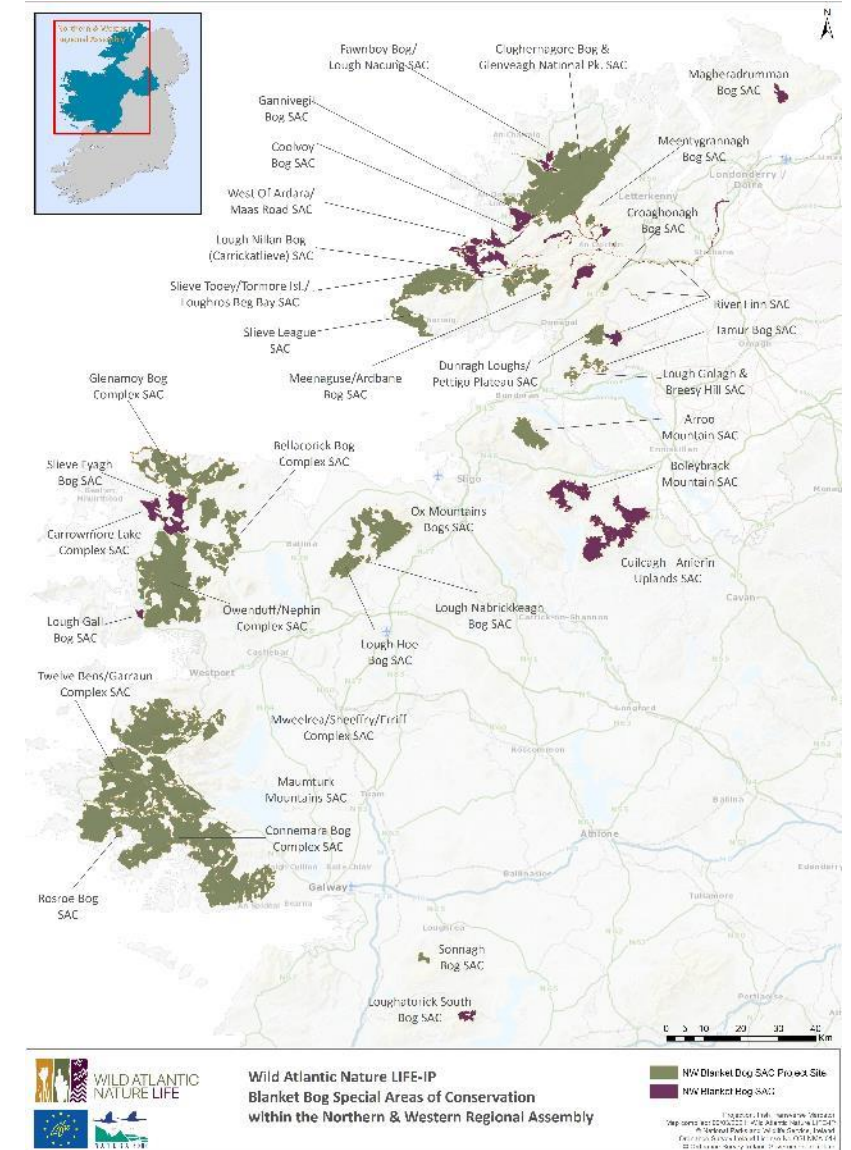


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# LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature

- Long-term project (2020-2028) funded under EU LIFE programme
- Total budget €20.6m (EU 12.3m)
- Aims to assist delivery of Ireland's Prioritized Action Framework
  - Management of Natura 2000 network nationwide (SACs & SPAs)
  - Specific focus to protect & restore Ireland's SAC network of blanket bog in northwest region
- Multi actor project involving relevant authorities
  - Farmer and community focused



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# Part 2

## Challenges



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# Our policies often have a narrow focus



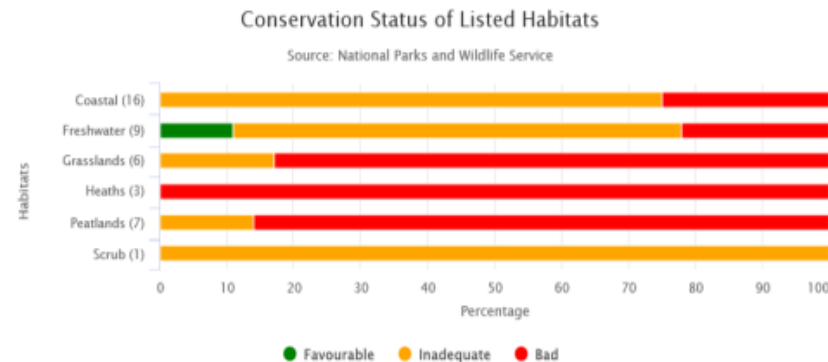
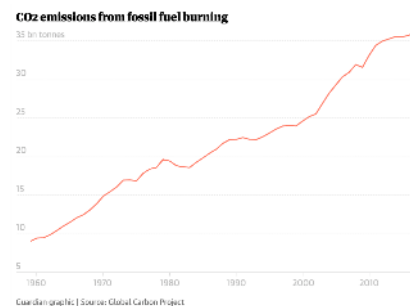
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# Considerable organizational and institutional barriers

Our land use policies don't align!



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# Obstacles are often cultural

- Low levels of appreciation of ecological value of natural habitats
- Underdeveloped sense of community ownership towards local environment
- Insufficient stakeholder involvement at community level
- Political sensitivities
- One-size fits all approach
- Theoretical focus on 'stick' rather than 'carrot' so land owners are only told what they can't do



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# Part 3

Opportunities: what has worked?

- example of locally adapted agri-environment programmes in Ireland



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# What have we learned in the past 30 years?

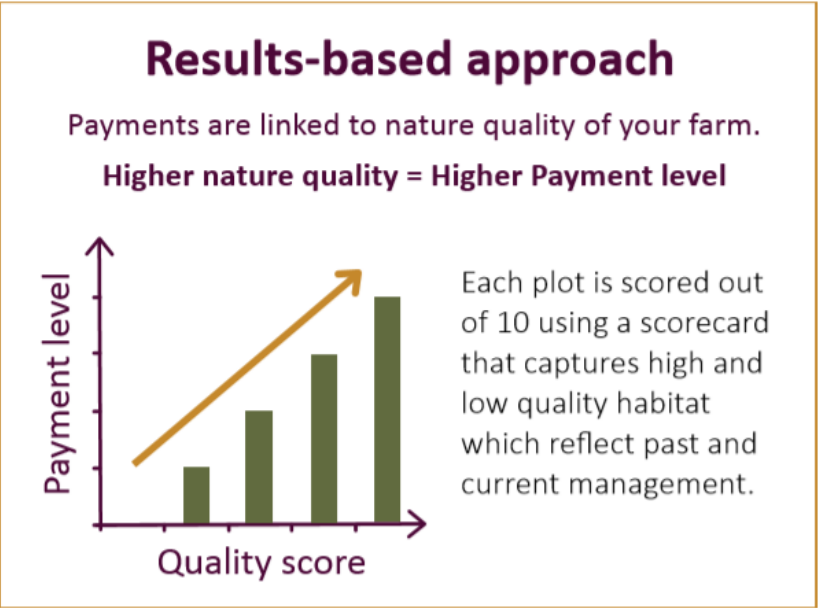
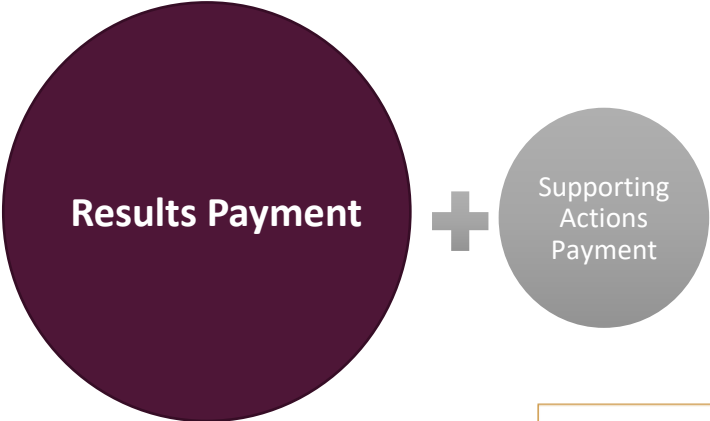
- Successful (agri-environment) programmes should
  - Be locally adapted, practical and results focused
  - Be developed with local people (farmers, communities)
  - Be properly and fairly funded
  - Facilitate flexible and adaptive management
  - Build local trust and capacity
  - Facilitate improvements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



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# Results-based Payment Scheme (RBPS) approach



**Pearl Mussel Project Habitat Score Card** Peatland

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

Which of the following best describes the Plot (land parcel) (insert X in appropriate circle):  
Blanket bog ☐ Heath ☐ Mosaic of heath & bog ☐ Mosaic of heath with grassland ☐

**A Ecological Integrity** Total points for Section A (sum of A1 to A5): Score: /55

**A1** How many positive indicators are present in the plot?  
Circle all positive indicators present below & circle summary score below.

Number of plants:	Low: 0 - 4	Score: 0	Medium: 4 - 6	Score: 2	High: 7 - 8	Score: 5	Very High: 9+	Score: 10
Positive indicators: (circle those present)								
<b>Shrub Layer:</b>								
1. Bell Heather								
2. Bilberry								
3. Bog Myrtle								
4. Cross-leaved Heather								
5. Ling Heather								
6. Western Gorse								
<b>Sedge / Herb Layer:</b>								
7. Bog Asphodel								
8. Bog Bean								
9. Bog Cotton								
10. Deer Grass								
11. Lousewort								
12. Sundews								
13. White-beaked Sedge								
<b>Moss Layer:</b>								
14. Branched Mosses								
15. Non-crustose (bushy) Lichens								
16. Sphagnum Mosses								
Negative indicators: (circle those present)								
A. Bracken								
B. Bramble								
C. Conifers (Sitka Spruce or Lodgepole Pine)								
D. European Gorse								
E. Nettle								
F. Rhododendron								
G. Other alien invasive								

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

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

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

Present	Score: -10	Absent	Score: 0

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

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

**A5** Quality of vegetation structure?

Cover:	Very Poor	Poor	Moderate (high grazed)	Moderate (low grazed)	Good
Vegetation height is uniformly low. Little or no heather present on wet heaths. Often lacking ground and shrub layer. Often resulting from over grazing or recent peat cutting.	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.	Significant areas (>25%) of the plot have tight uniform vegetation although not throughout.	Significant areas (>25%) of the plot have rank vegetation although not throughout.	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	Score: -10	Score: 0	Score: 0	Score: 15	

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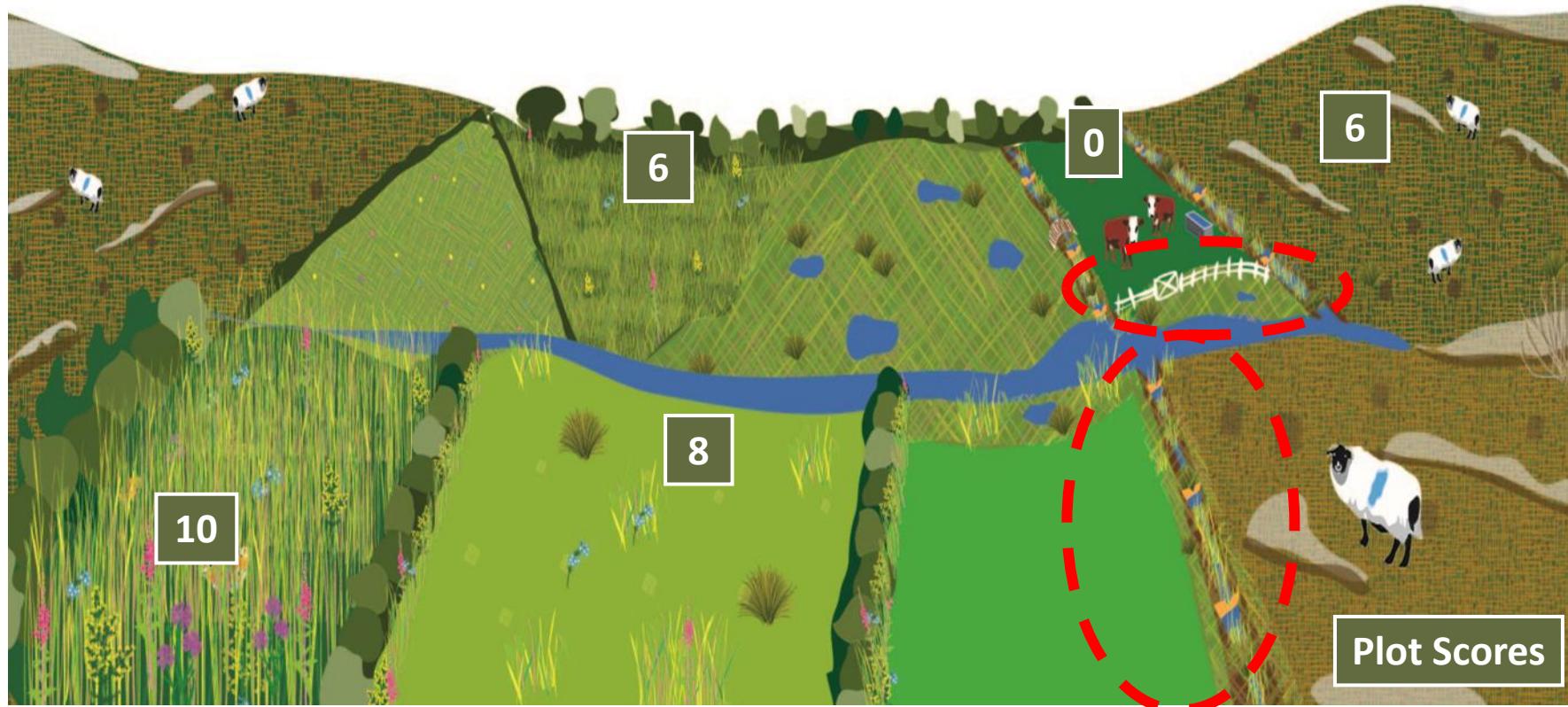
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# Private farm example

- Co-funded supporting actions
- Floodplain payment
- Whole farm improvement



Example  
from Pearl  
Mussel  
Project EIP



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# Creates new market for farmers





# Supports land and ecosystem management

- Assists with better farm management & improved ecological quality



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Example  
from Pearl  
Mussel  
Project EIP



# Landscape approach

- Hen Harrier Project
  - Results-based: payments relate to habitat quality
  - Fire resilience
  - Successful breeding bonus





# Part 4

What next?

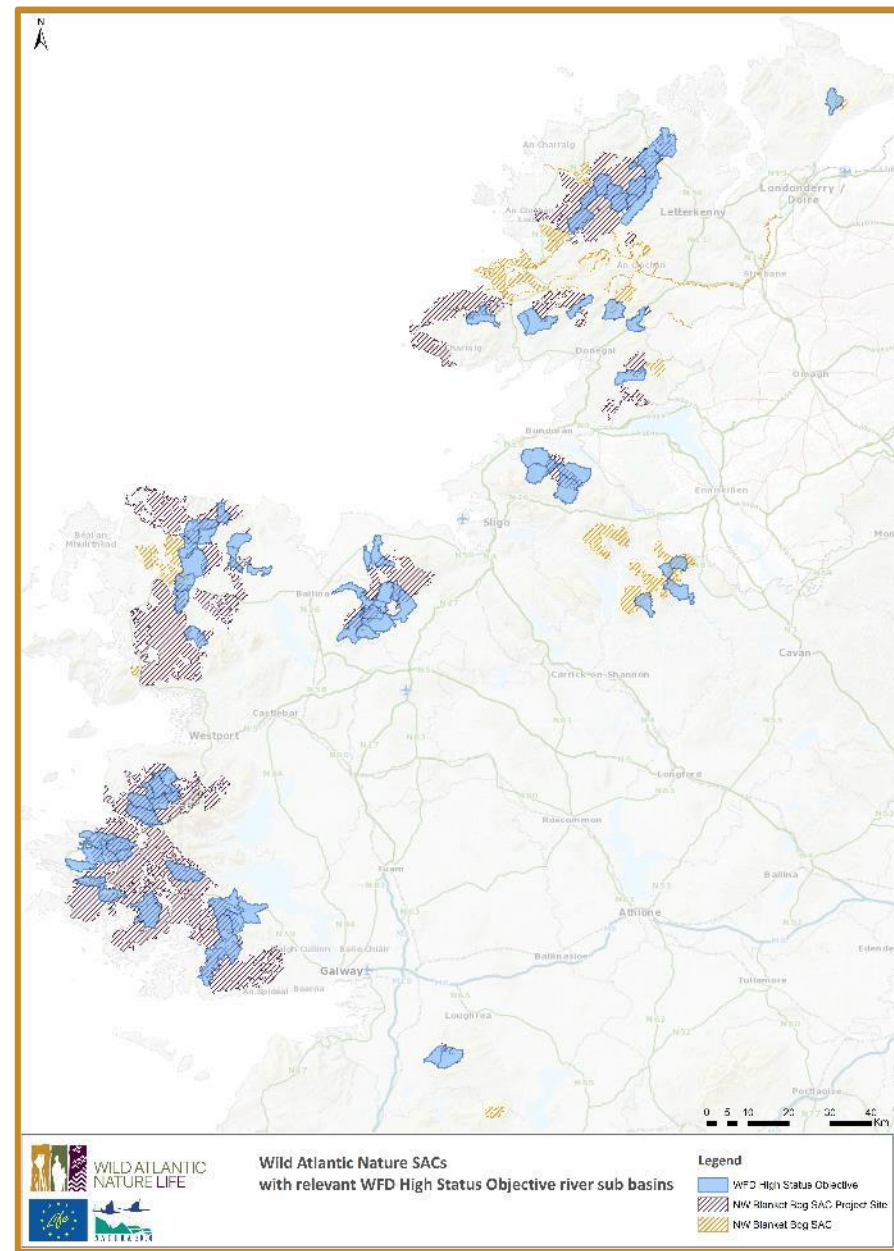


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# Integrated approach

- Cross-cutting EU Directives
- Hydrological / landscape linkage
- Excellent individual examples of how to solve many of our problems
  - LAWPrO; ASSAP
  - EIPs
  - LIFE / INTERREG / Horizon 2020
  - EPA / IFI / LAs / NPWS
- Coherence required



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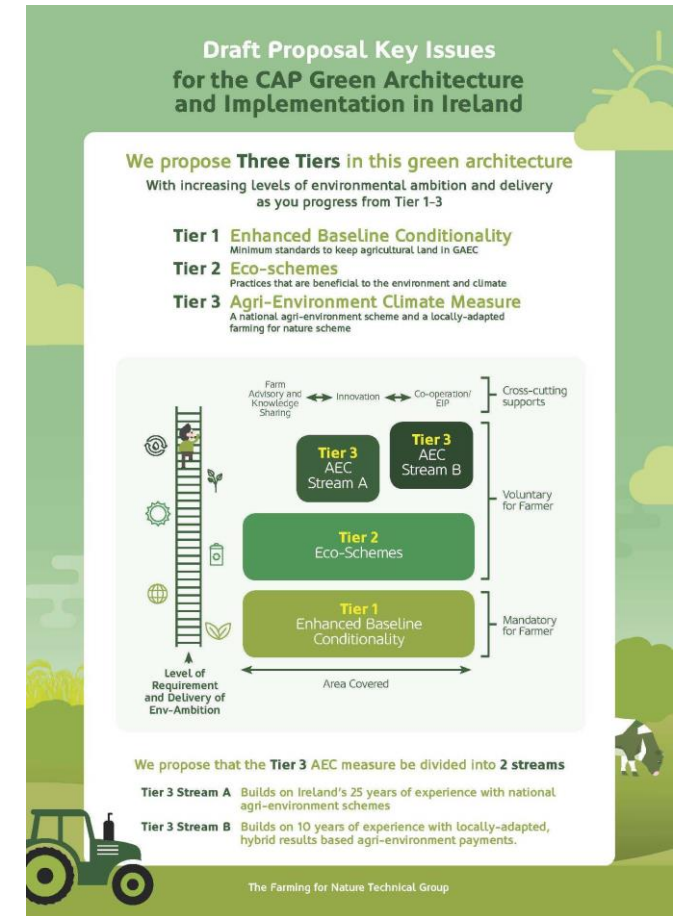


# It needs to start with CAP

## Farming for Nature Technical Group:

- Convened by the Heritage Council
- Provides for a CAP architecture that facilitates landscape targets
- Facilitates integration of LAWPrO, ASSAP, NPWS, etc.

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/farming-for-nature-technical-group>



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# Landscape-level quality score (pilot)

- Water quality: lowest water quality value (Q index)
- Mean farm-level score
- % semi-natural habitats
  - climax vegetation, e.g. dunes, deep peats, etc.
- Ecological connectivity
- Threats to “landscape target”
  - e.g. % cover of turbary, water abstraction, etc.
- Features of particular interest (PAF)
  - corrected for conservation status/condition of that landscape level



# Provide quality-assured, vital public services

- Public and eco-system services
  - Biodiversity
  - Stable climate
  - Carbon sequestration
  - Protection of soil
  - Clean water
  - Flood management
  - Aesthetic value
  - Food
  - Recreation & wellbeing
- Quality is the basis for:
  - Natura 2000 marketing
  - Tourism
  - Land-use planning
  - Food labelling
  - Farmer payments





# Conclusion

- *'First, do no harm'*
- Policies need to be in 3D
- Focus on quality
- Integrated land use framework
- Integrated Departmental approach
- Defined landscape-scale targets
- Results-based model that invests in landowner skills



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Thank you for your attention!

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

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