



Connemara - Community Information Meeting

Connemara Coast Hotel

24th April 2025



Co-funded by
the European Union



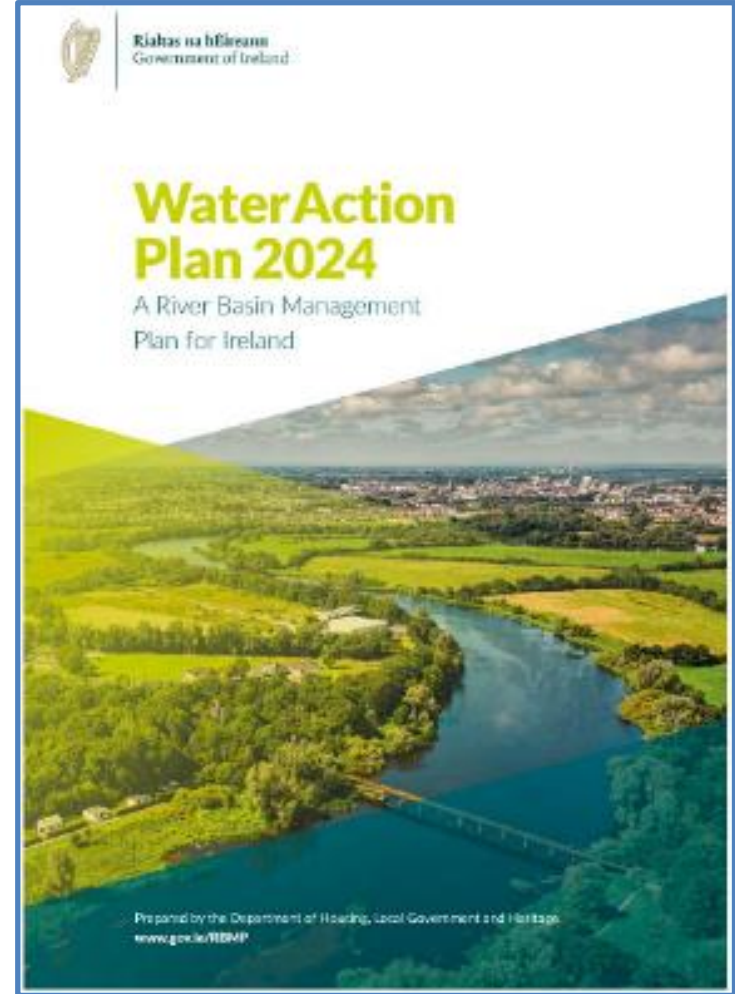
Meeting structure

- Presentation
 - 15 - 20 minutes
- Questions and Answers
 - 10 - 20 minutes
- Stand Engagement
 - 30 - 60 minutes
- We have a **sign-up** sheet at the LAWPRO table if you want to be kept up to date with our work e.g. newsletter

Water Action Plan 2024

Launched September 2024

- Government commitment to protecting & restoring Ireland's natural waters by complying with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive
- Accelerate the identification and implementation of the **right measures in the right places** to both restore and protect all water bodies



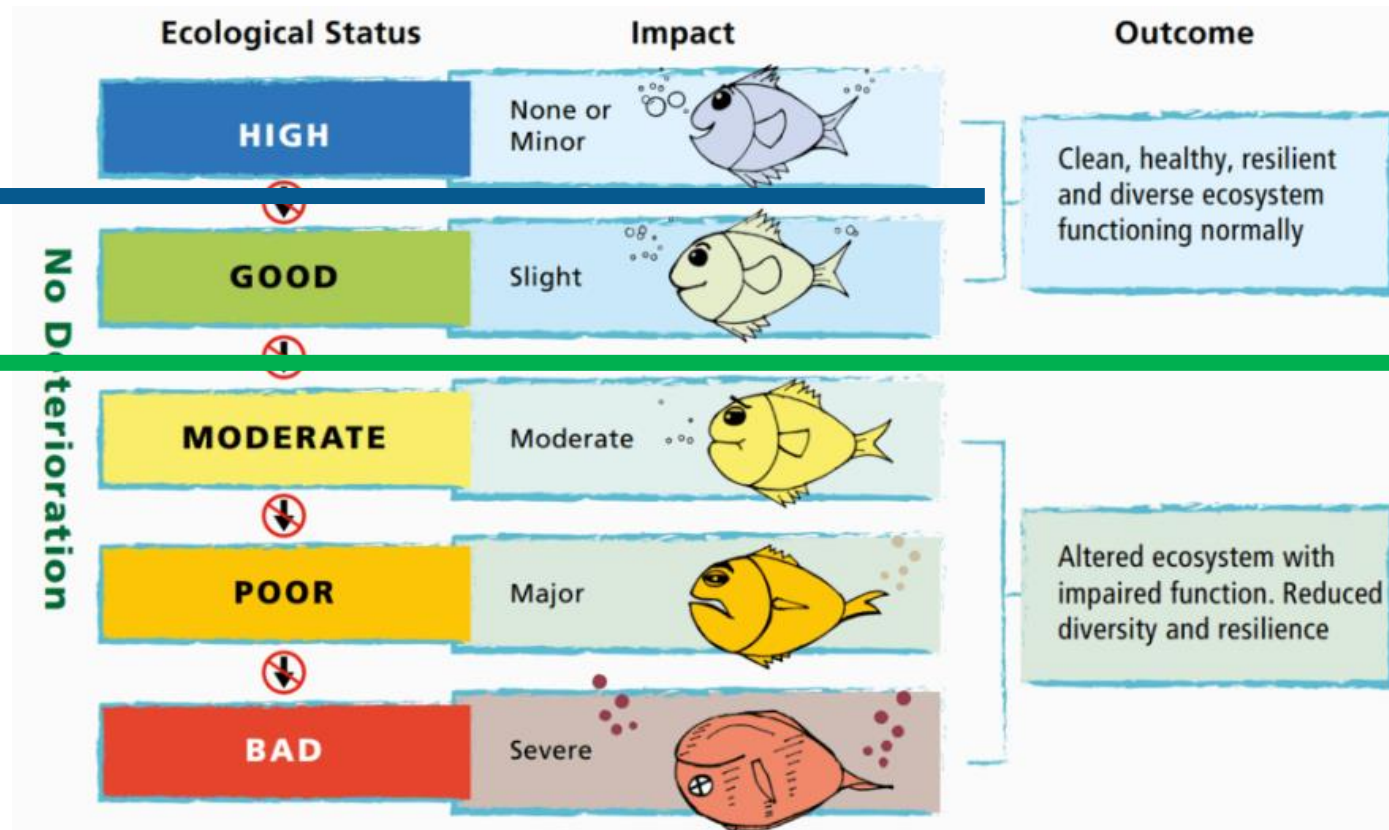
gov.ie - River Basin Management Plan 2022 - 2027

What do we mean by water quality?

EU Water Framework Directive

No Decline –
Blue Dots

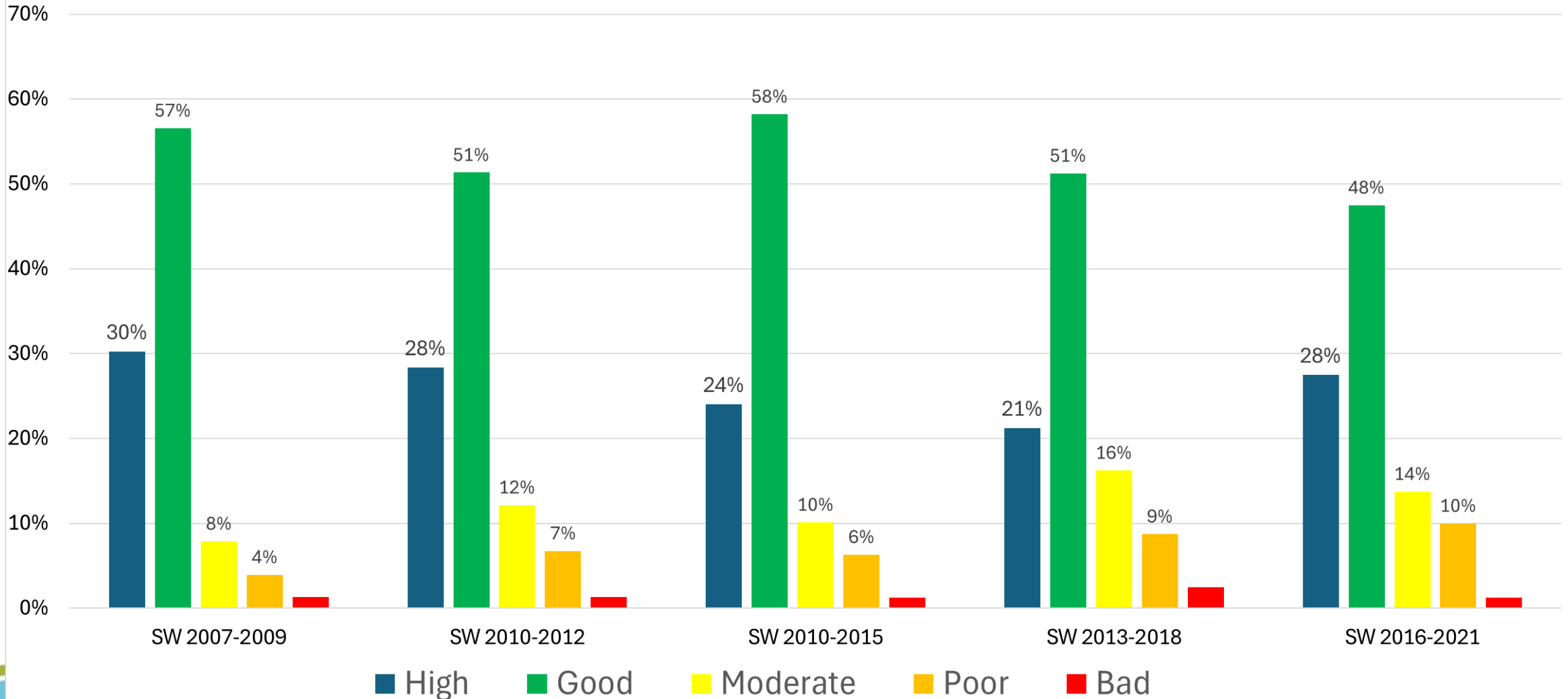
At least Good



All surface waters must achieve at least Good Ecological Status by 2027

Water quality in Connemara

WFD Status (%) of Rivers and Lakes in Municipal District of Conamara - Monitored only



WQ Mapping

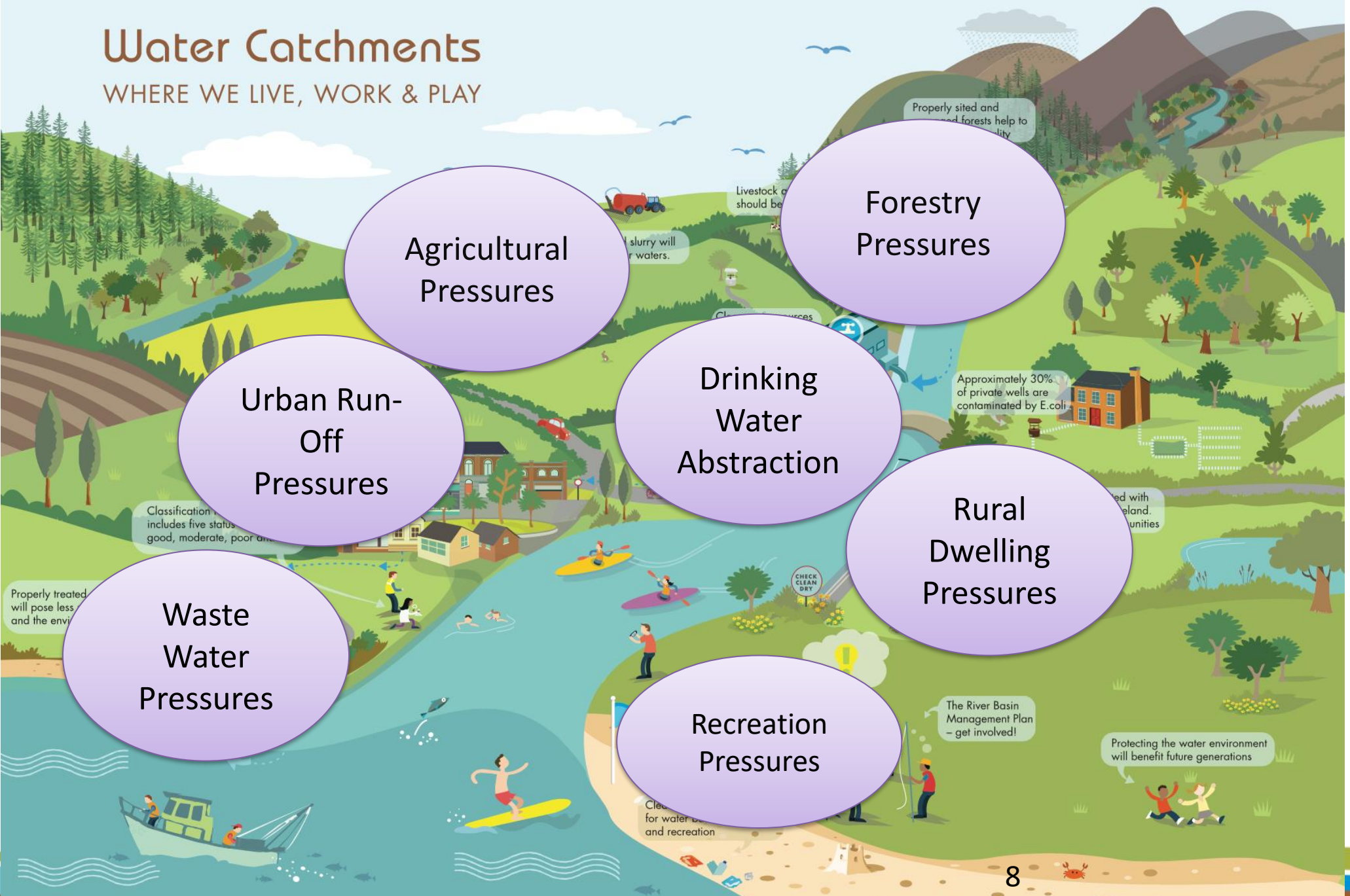


What impacts our water?



Water Catchments

WHERE WE LIVE, WORK & PLAY



Agricultural Pressures

Forestry Pressures

Urban Run-Off Pressures

Drinking Water Abstraction

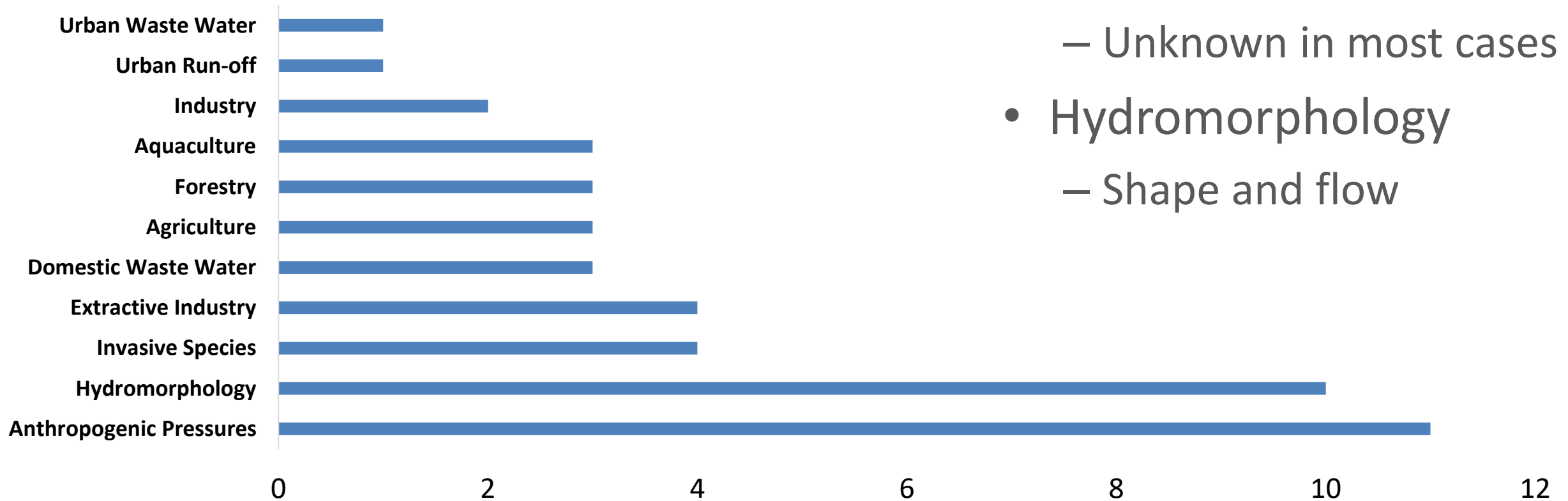
Rural Dwelling Pressures

Waste Water Pressures

Recreation Pressures

Pressures in Connemara

Significant Pressure in At risk waters



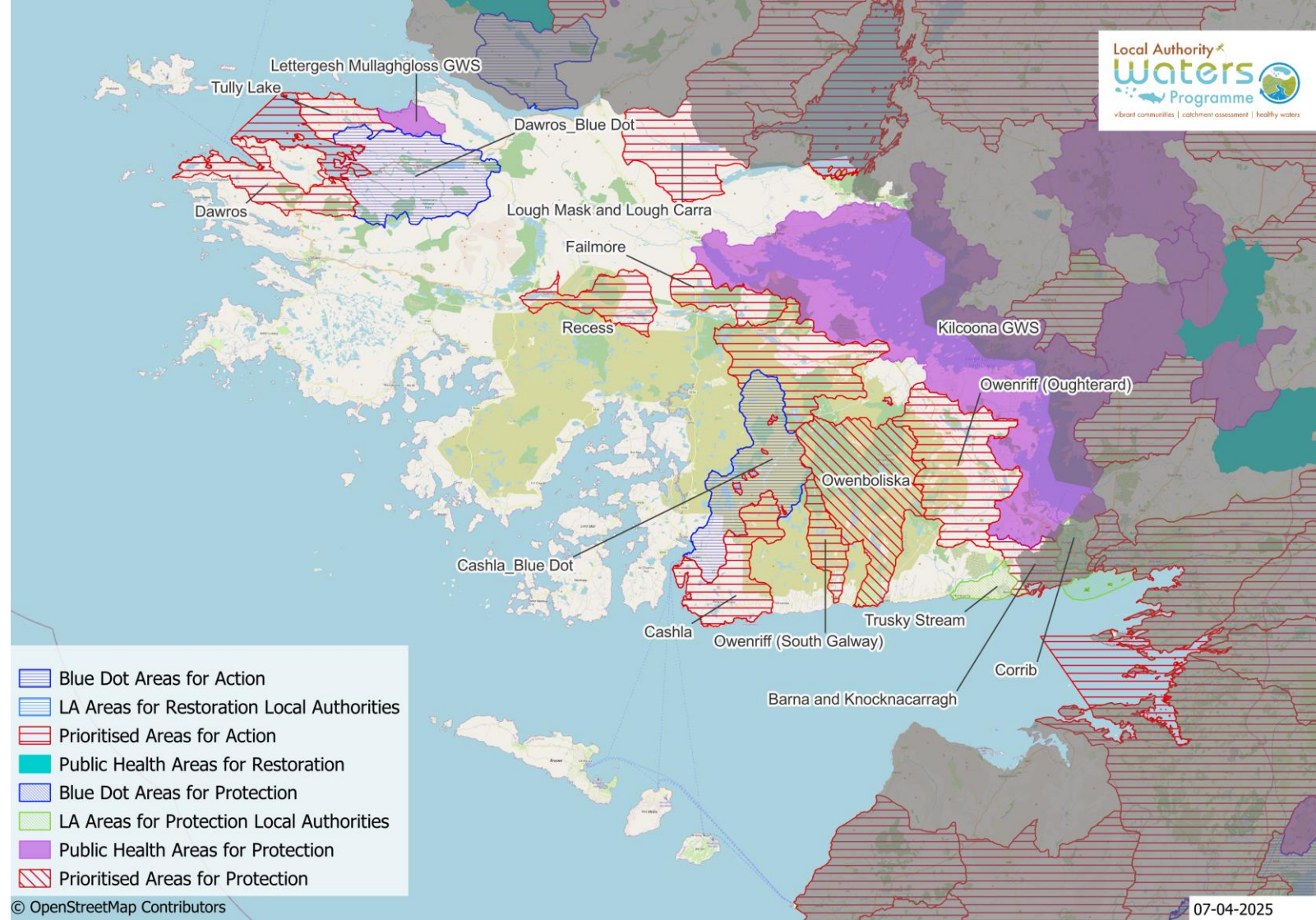
- Anthropogenic Pressures
 - Unknown in most cases
- Hydromorphology
 - Shape and flow



What are we are doing

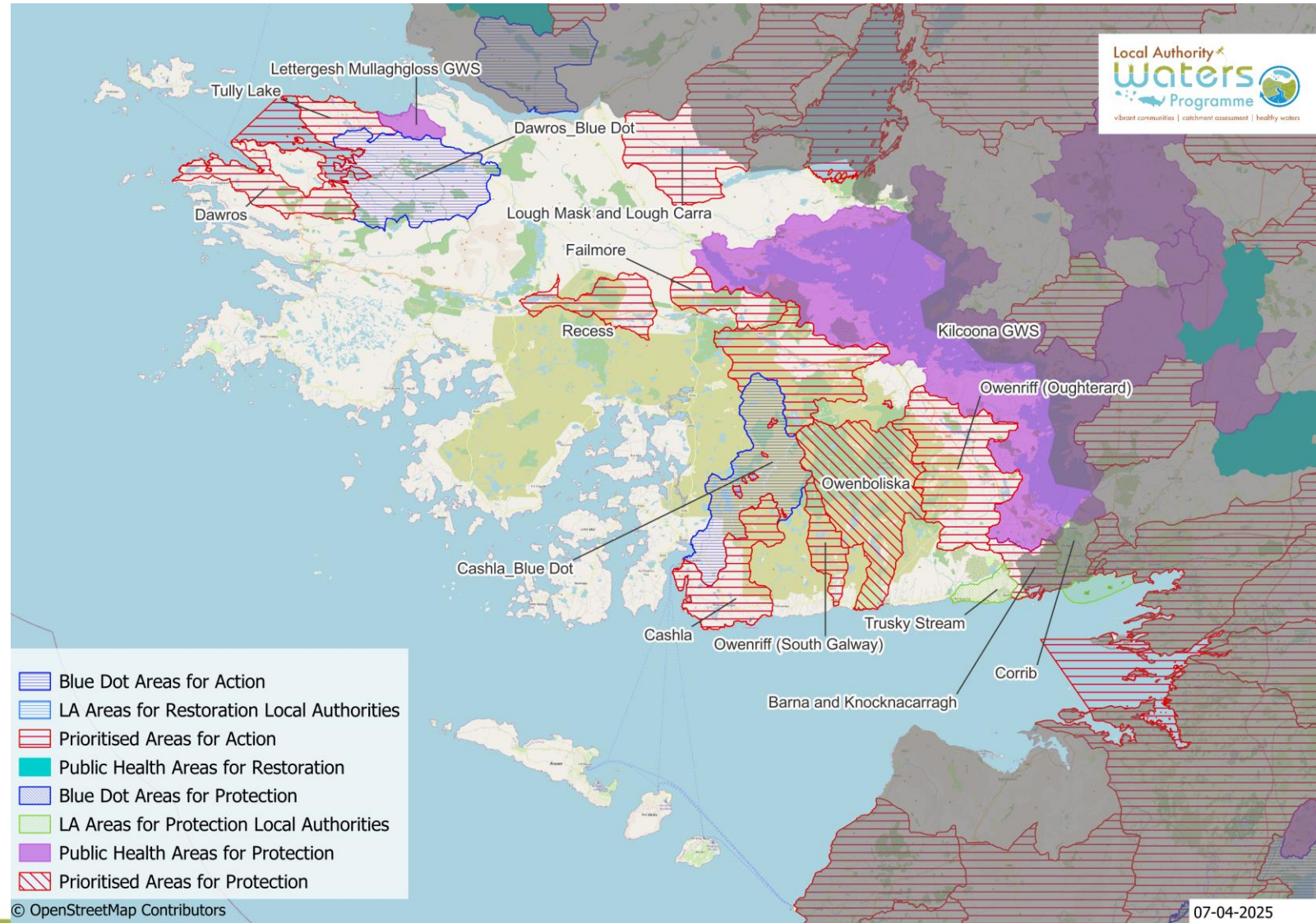


- Priority Areas for Action
- Detailed assessment of water quality
- 14 areas intersect Connemara
- 30 of 90 Rivers are in an Area for Action
- Mostly LAWPRO led – red/blue areas



Other Areas for Action

- Areas for Action Led by Local Authorities
- Trusky Stream with Galway County Council
- Support for measures on the ground with our Catchment Assessment



Local Catchment Assessment

Finding issues on the ground



Field chemistry and field observations



Biological sampling - invertebrates



River walks



Chemistry sampling



Biological sampling - vegetation

Referrals

- When we find issues, we let people know
 - Agriculture, we refer to ASSAP
 - Forestry, we refer to Forest Service
 - Licensed discharges, we refer to Local Authority or Environmental Protection Agency etc.
- Measures can be used then to address the impact



What is The ASSAP?

- Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme
- Focus is on improving water quality in Priority Areas for Action (PAA)
- Provides free & confidential farm advice and acceptance is voluntary
- Industry, government, farm orgs collaboration
- 44 Advisors - 20 Teagasc, 24 from Dairy Co-ops
- Work in collaboration with Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
- LAWPRO – scientific investigation; LCA, desk study, chemical, biological, hydro morphology etc., assess streams
- Provide referrals to advisors to focus farm visits



CARBERY



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

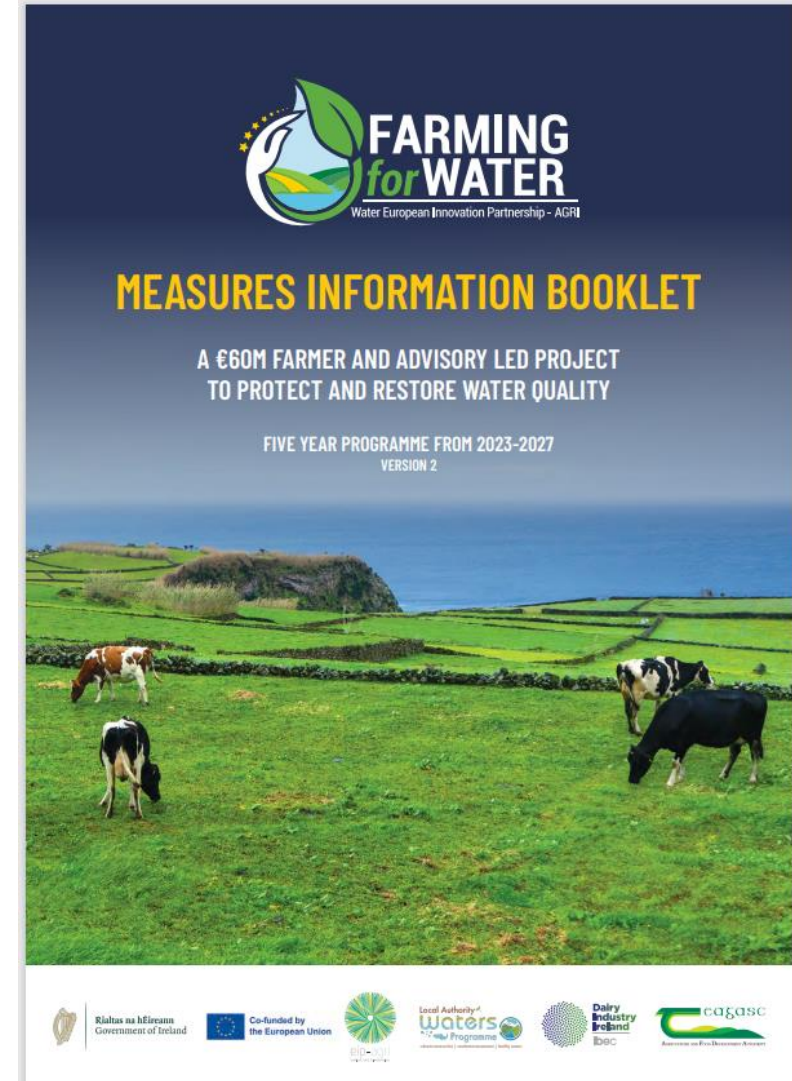


An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



The Farming for Water project, aims to tackle water quality issues while promoting sustainable agricultural practices and delivering environmental benefits.

- **Collaboration & Innovation:** The project brings together farmers, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to co-develop practical, scalable solutions that go beyond regulatory requirements.
- **Funding & Support:** With €50 million from DAFM and the European Commission for farmer payments and €10 million in administrative support from DHLGH, the initiative is well-funded to support on-the-ground actions.
- **Leadership & Timeline:** Led by the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) in partnership with Teagasc and Dairy Industry Ireland, the programme launched in March 2024 and will run until 2027, engaging a wide network of collaborators including other supporting stakeholders.



Key Points

Prioritisation of Entry into the Project

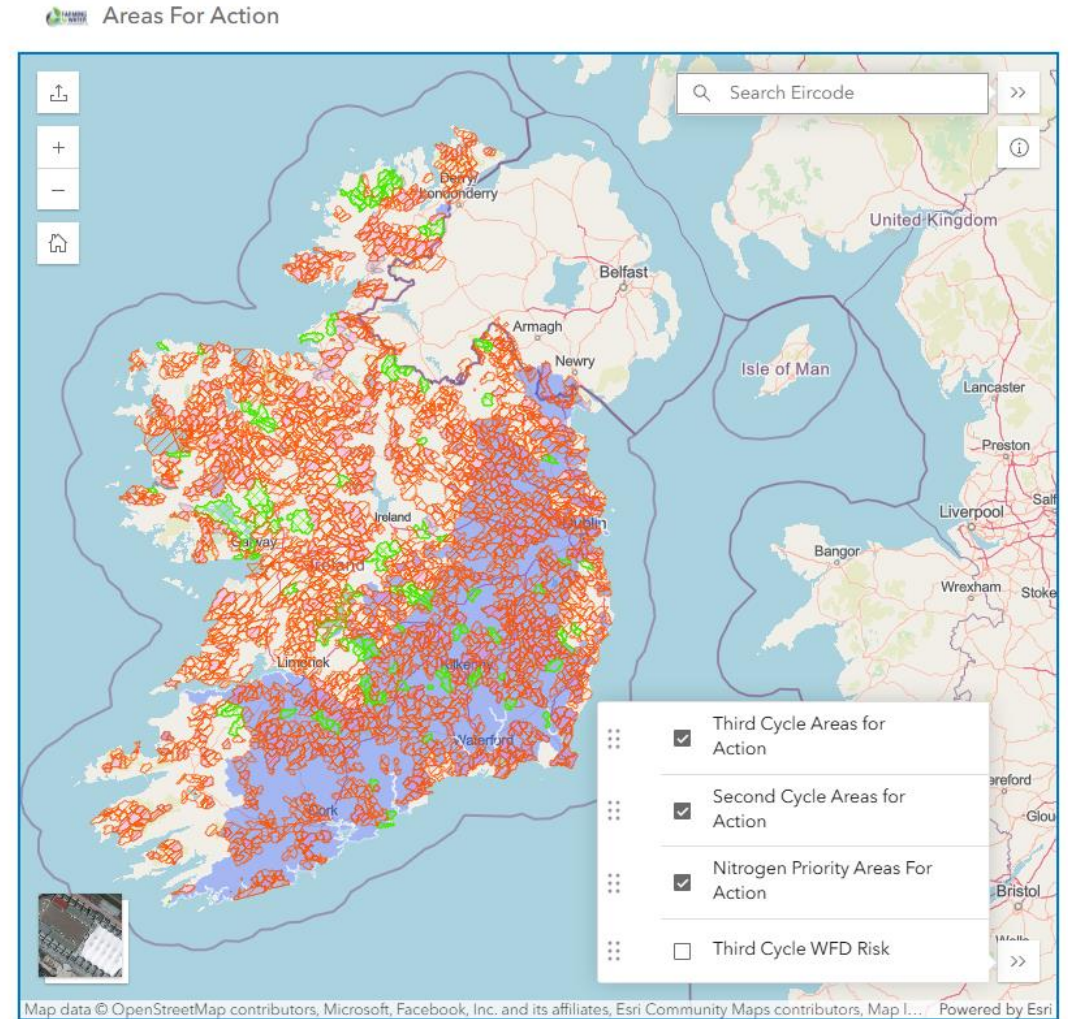
-focus on specific areas based on risk levels.

Mapped Areas for Action: Selected areas [Farming for Water website](https://farmingforwater.ie/).

Risk-Based Selection: Entry into the project is guided by the agricultural sustainability support and advisory programme and is based scientific assessments of agricultural pressures on water bodies.

Research projects being developed which will validate the measures being tested as part of the Farming for Water EIP.

<https://farmingforwater.ie/>





Community Engagement

- Éanna Hyland is the Community Water Officer for West Galway
- Our work with Communities
 - Funding Community Water Development Fund
 - Catchment Support Fund
 - Small Grants

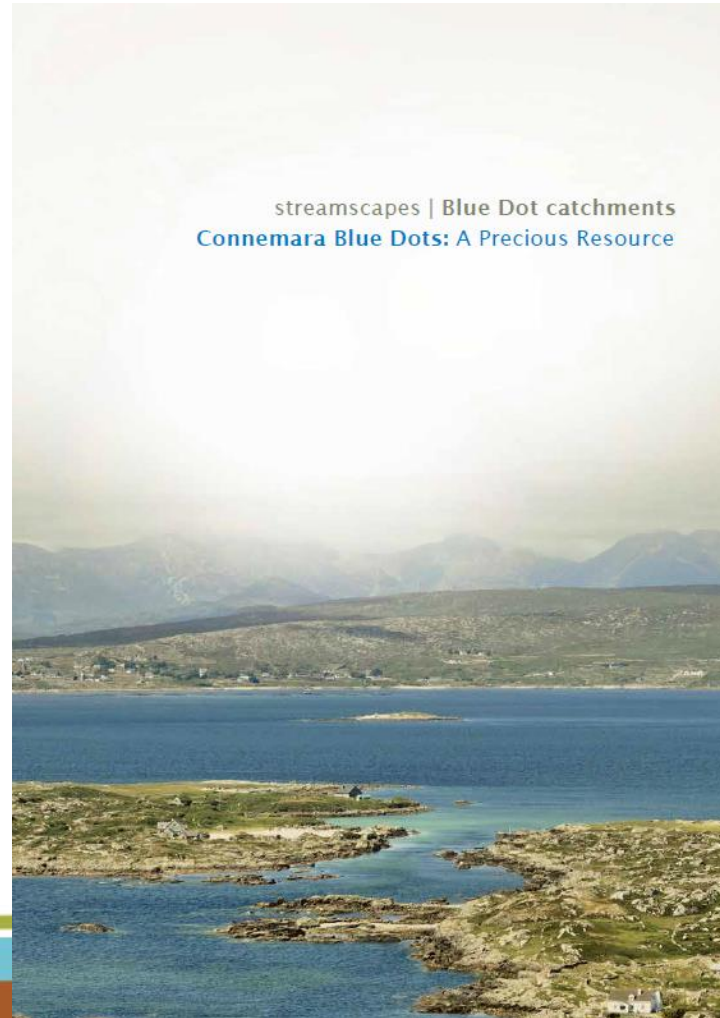
 - Capacity Building
 - Project Delivery
 - Citizen Science Stream Index

 - Talk to Éanna for more info

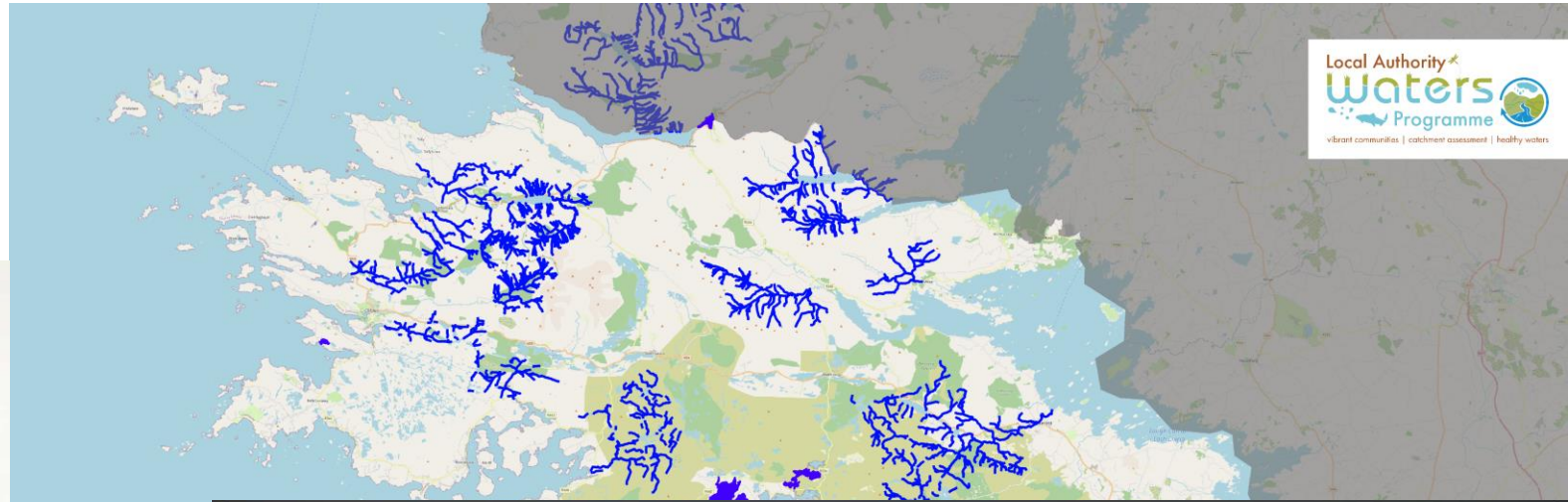


Blue Dots in Connemara

Blue Dot waters are our best quality waters, of which Connemara has many, including rivers, lakes, estuaries, and coastal waters!

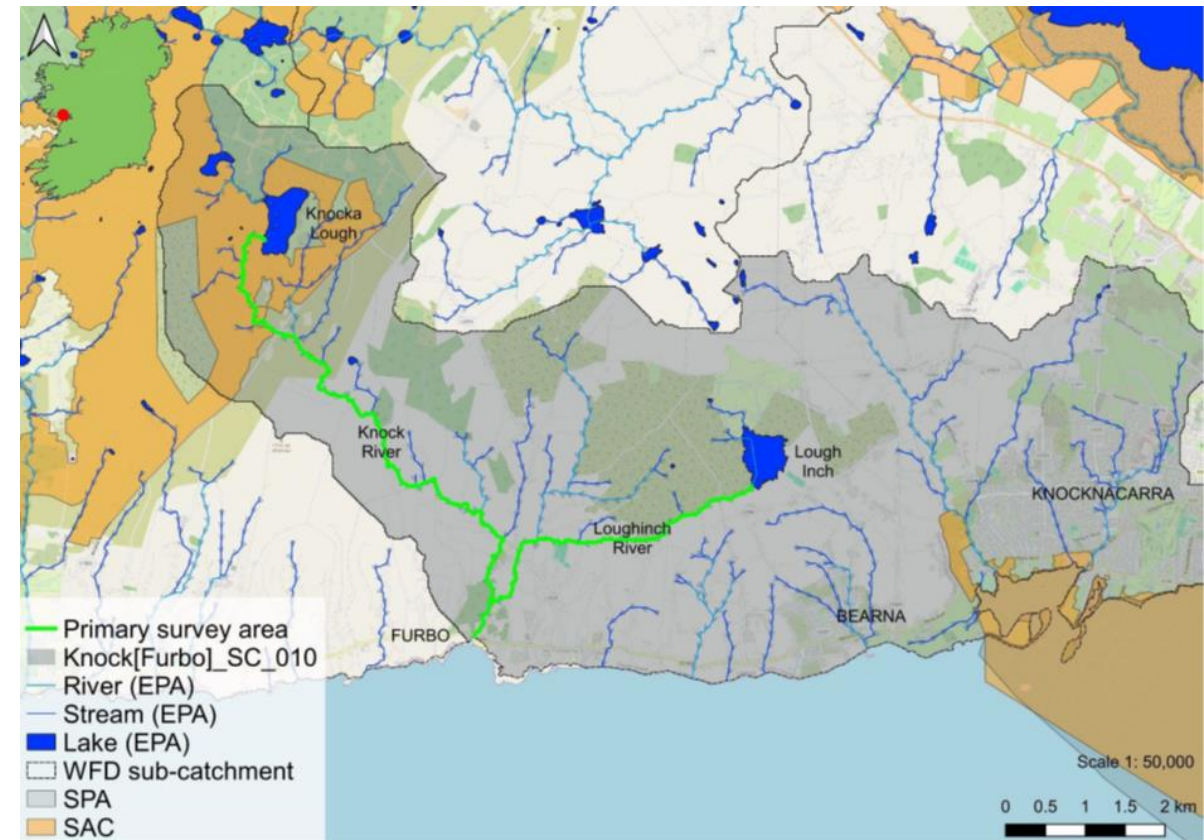


streamscapes | Blue Dot catchments
Connemara Blue Dots: A Precious Resource



Furbo Tidy Town

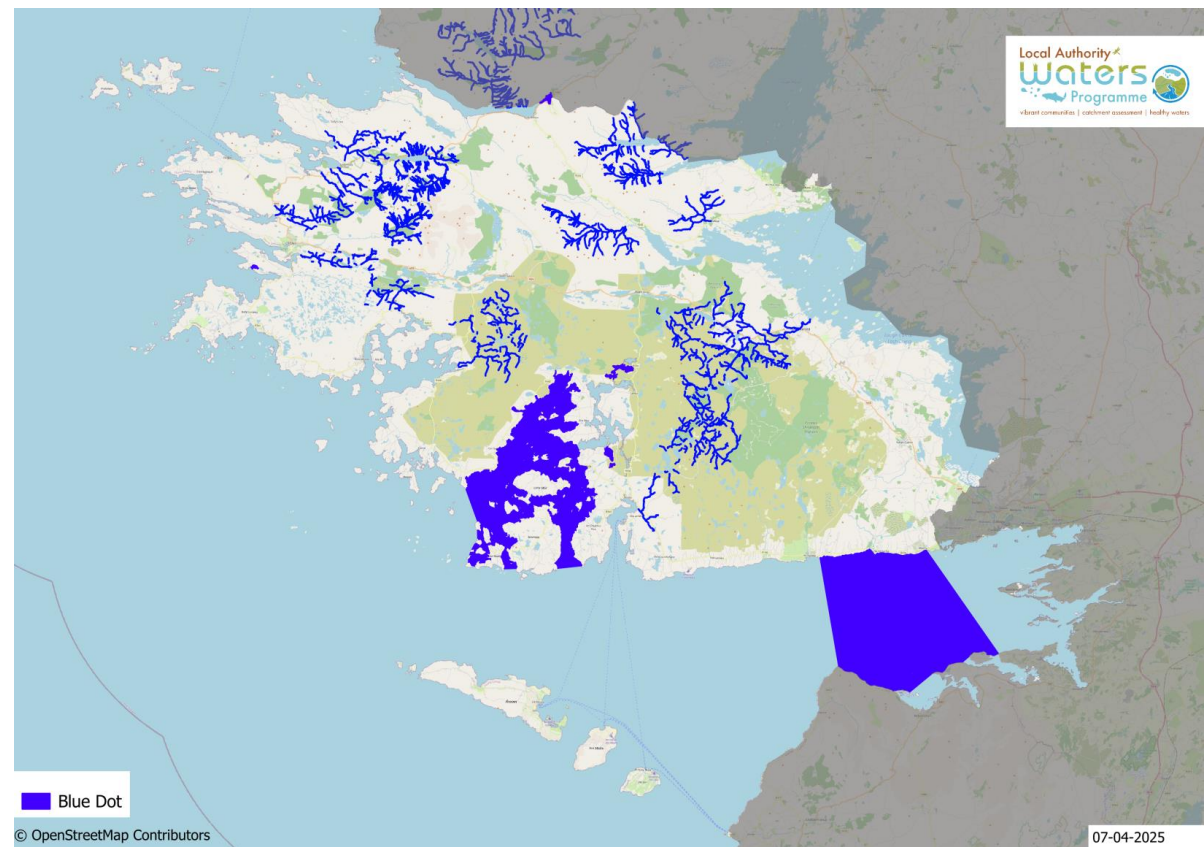
- Ken Whelan and Ross Finlay
- Assessment of the Knocka Lough System
- Mid-June start date for Phase 1.
- Will be looking for public engagement in this to get as much info as possible about the area





Blue Dot Catchment Programme

- Blue Dots are waterbodies that SHOULD achieve high ecological status i.e. WFD objective is high status
 - Blue Dots = High Status Objective
- Currently there are 402 Blue Dots
 - Present in most counties – over 30 in Connemara
 - Majority along the Western seaboard, Wicklow and mountainous areas of the Midlands and South
- Why Should we Protect Blue Dots?
 - Protect some of our most iconic and threatened species Salmon, Arctic Char, Freshwater Pearl Mussels among many others
 - Act as an arc, sensitive species can recolonise other waterbodies as we improve water quality
 - Societal wellbeing, ecosystem services like clean water or vital natural sites for recreation





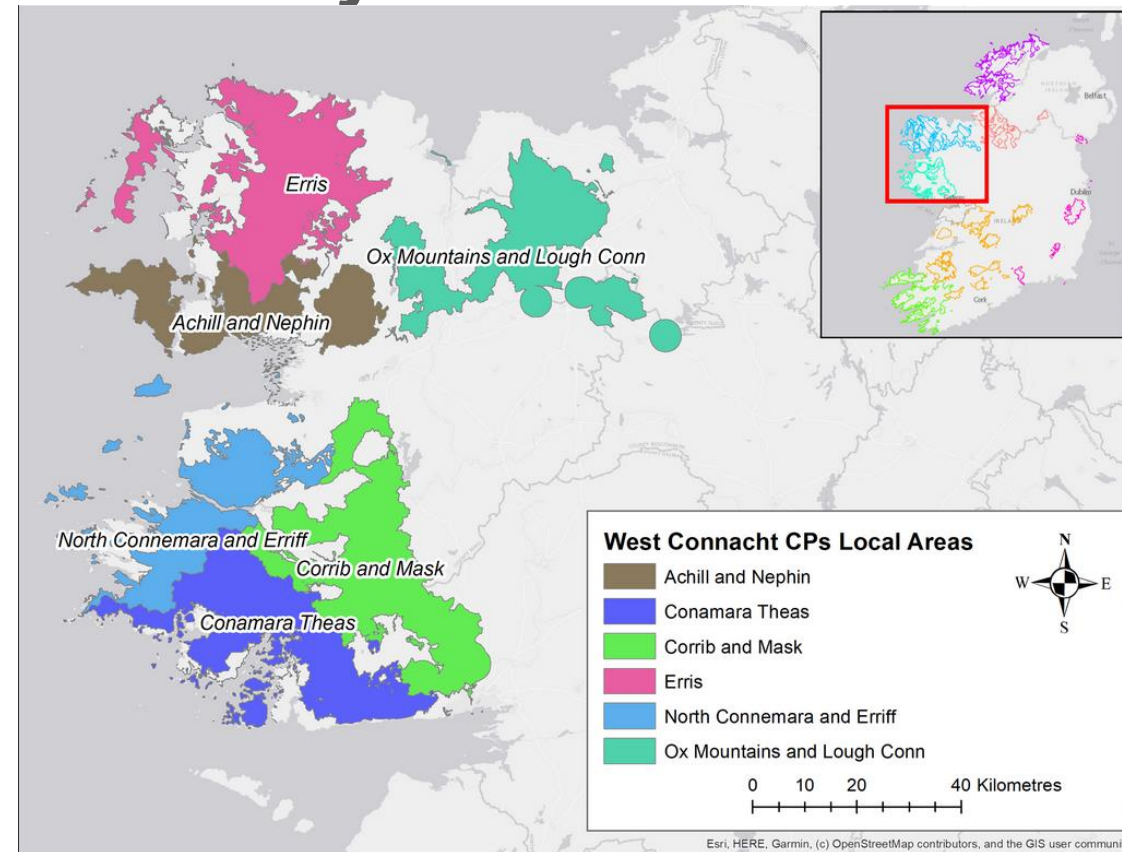
**ACRES WEST
CONNACHT**



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

- [ACRES Co-operation approach](#), available to farmers in eight high-priority geographical areas, who opt to undertake measures, as well as bespoke farm, and landscape actions.
- Much of Connemara in an Area
- <https://www.acreswestconnacht.ie/>

ACRES Cooperation Projects



Mainstreaming of Nature-based Solutions (NbS)

- 2 No. Nbs Engineers appointed in LAWPRO working in this area since 2024:
 - Tom Brennan SEE Tbrennan@lawwaters.ie
 - Eamonn O’Connell SEE eoconnell@lawwaters.ie
- Local Authority Engagement / Supports include
 - *Guidance Document for Planners Developers & Developer Agents*
- *Rainwater Management Plan – Guidance for Local Authorities 2024*
- Progression of National Strategy for NBS



2-day Conference - 4th and 5th of June 2025

Collaboration is key to success



Q and A



Meet the room

- LAWPRO – Éanna, Francis, Luke
- ASSAP/Farming for Water EIP - Sinéad
- ACRES - Máirtín
- Galway County Council – Fintan, Colm

www.lawwaters.ie

www.catchments.ie



Contact Details

- Community Water Officer
 - Éanna Hyland - ehyland@lawaters.ie
- Catchment Manager
 - Cormac Mc Conigley – cmcconigley@lawaters.ie
- ASSAP advisor for the area
 - Sinead Devaney Sinead.Devaney@teagasc.ie