



vibrant communities | catchment assessment | healthy waters

Community Information Meeting - Mullingar MD
Lough Ennell Catchment Westmeath
Thursday 22nd May 2025



Meeting structure

- **Presentation**
 - 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**



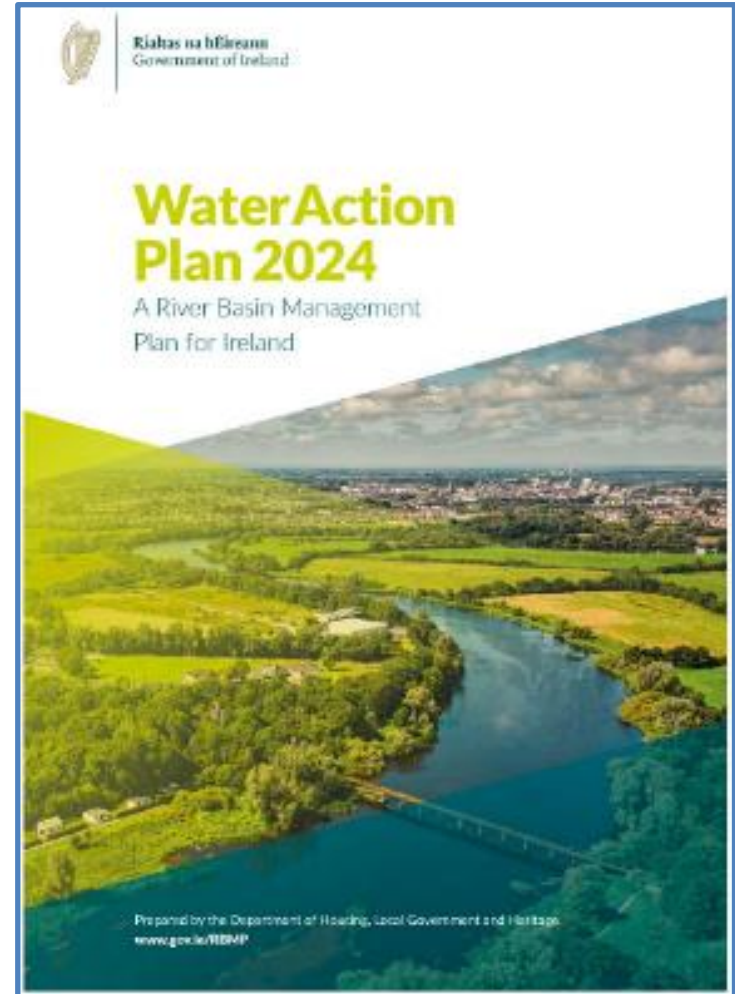
Catchment Science



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



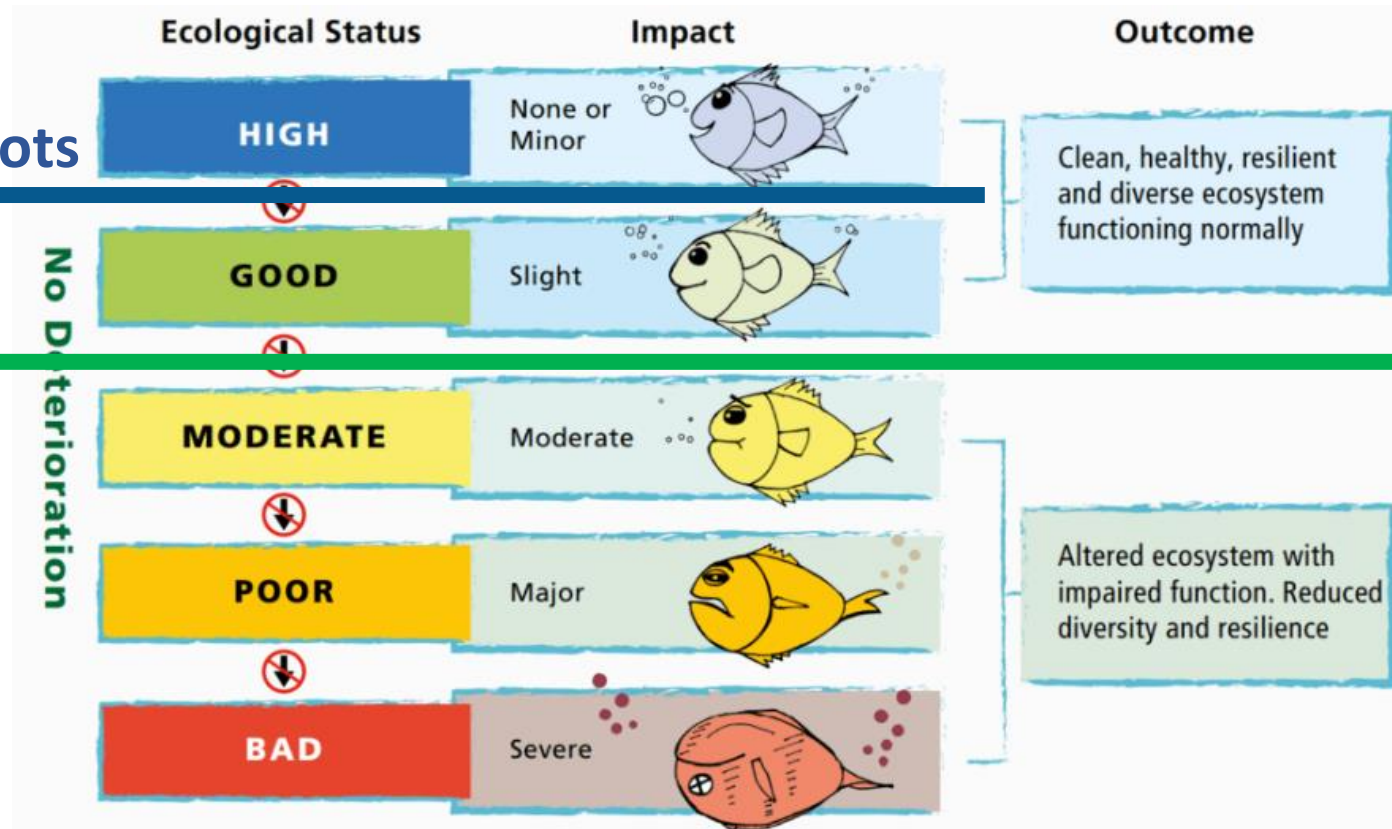
gov.ie - River Basin Management Plan 2022 - 2027

What do we mean by water quality?

EU Water Framework Directive

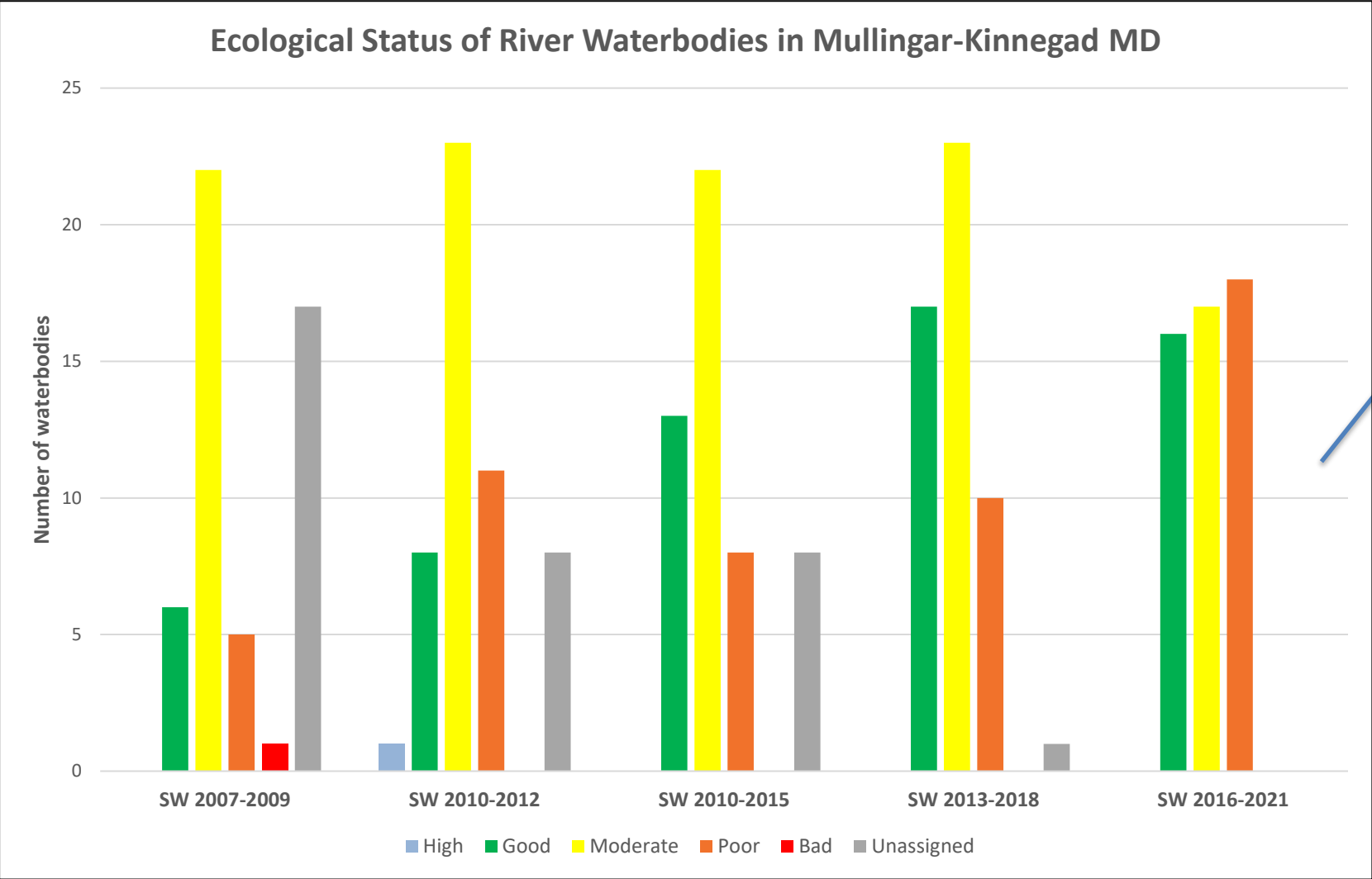
No Decline – Blue Dots

At least Good



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

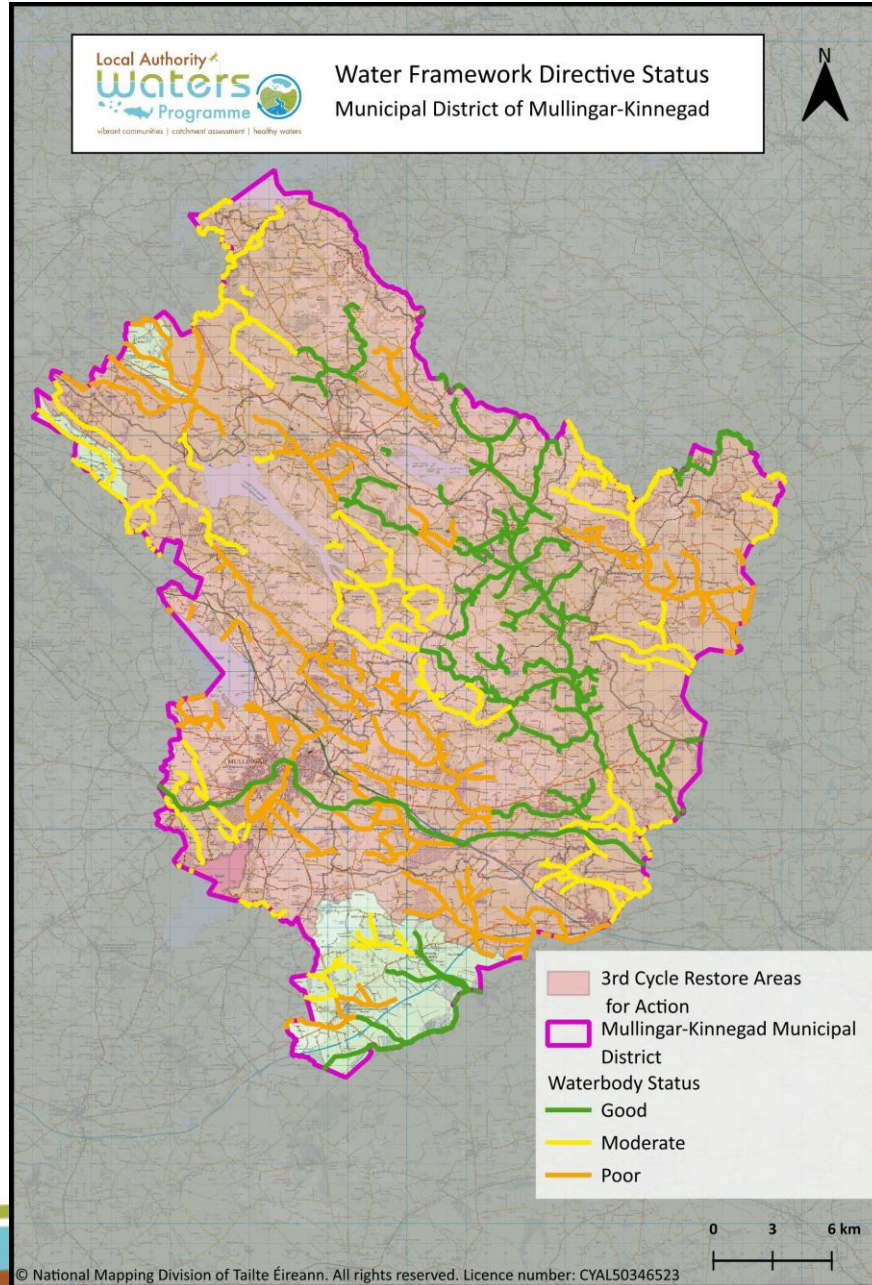
River Water quality in Mullingar-Kinnegad MD



Most recent WFD Status Assessment (2016-2021) of river waterbodies in the Mullingar-Kinnegad MD (51 Waterbodies)

- **Good** – 16 waterbodies
- **Moderate** – 17 waterbodies
- **Poor** - 18 waterbodies

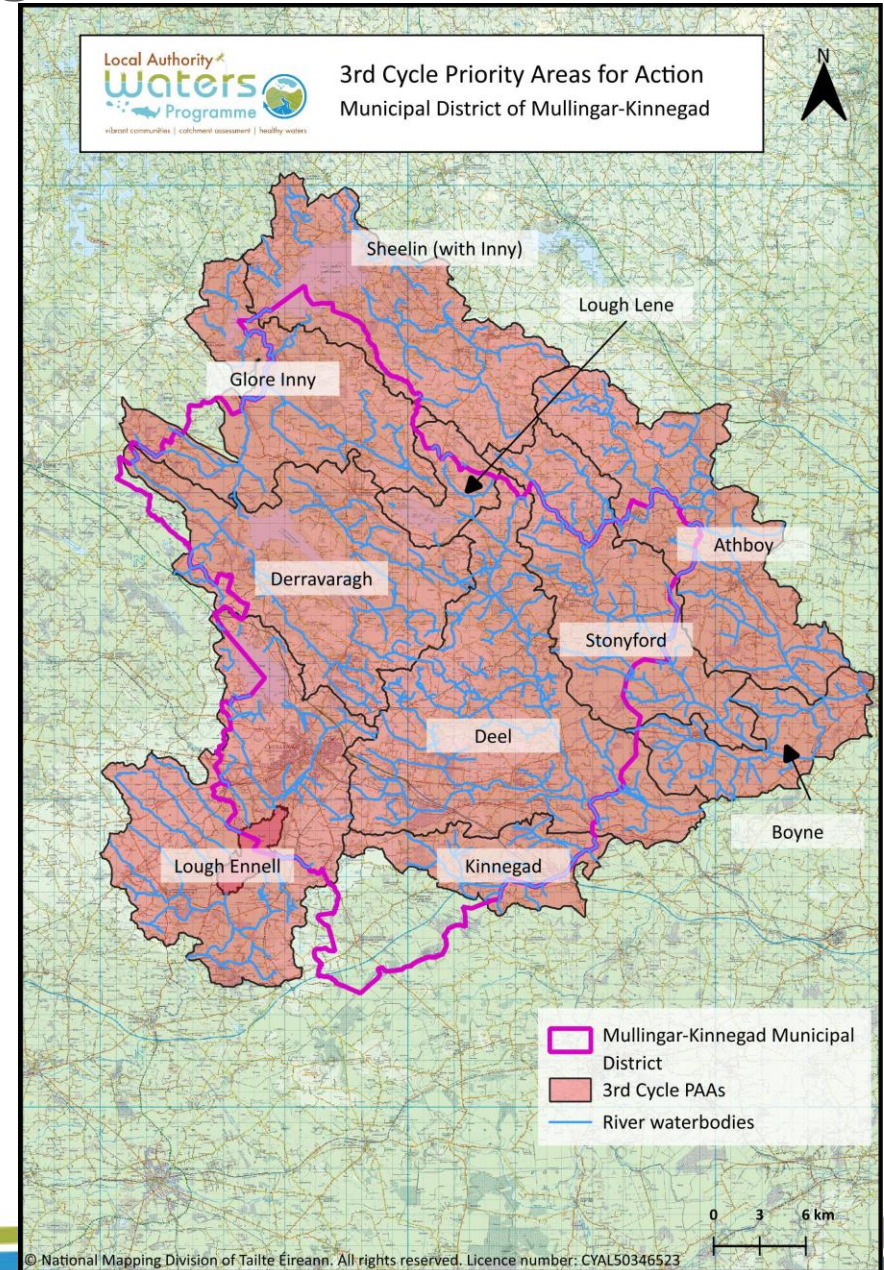
Ecological Status - Mullingar-Kinnegad Municipal District



- **Good** – Upper Deel, Royal Canal
- **Moderate** – lower Deel, Inny
- **Poor** – Gaine, upper Brosna, upper Kinnegad, Stonyford

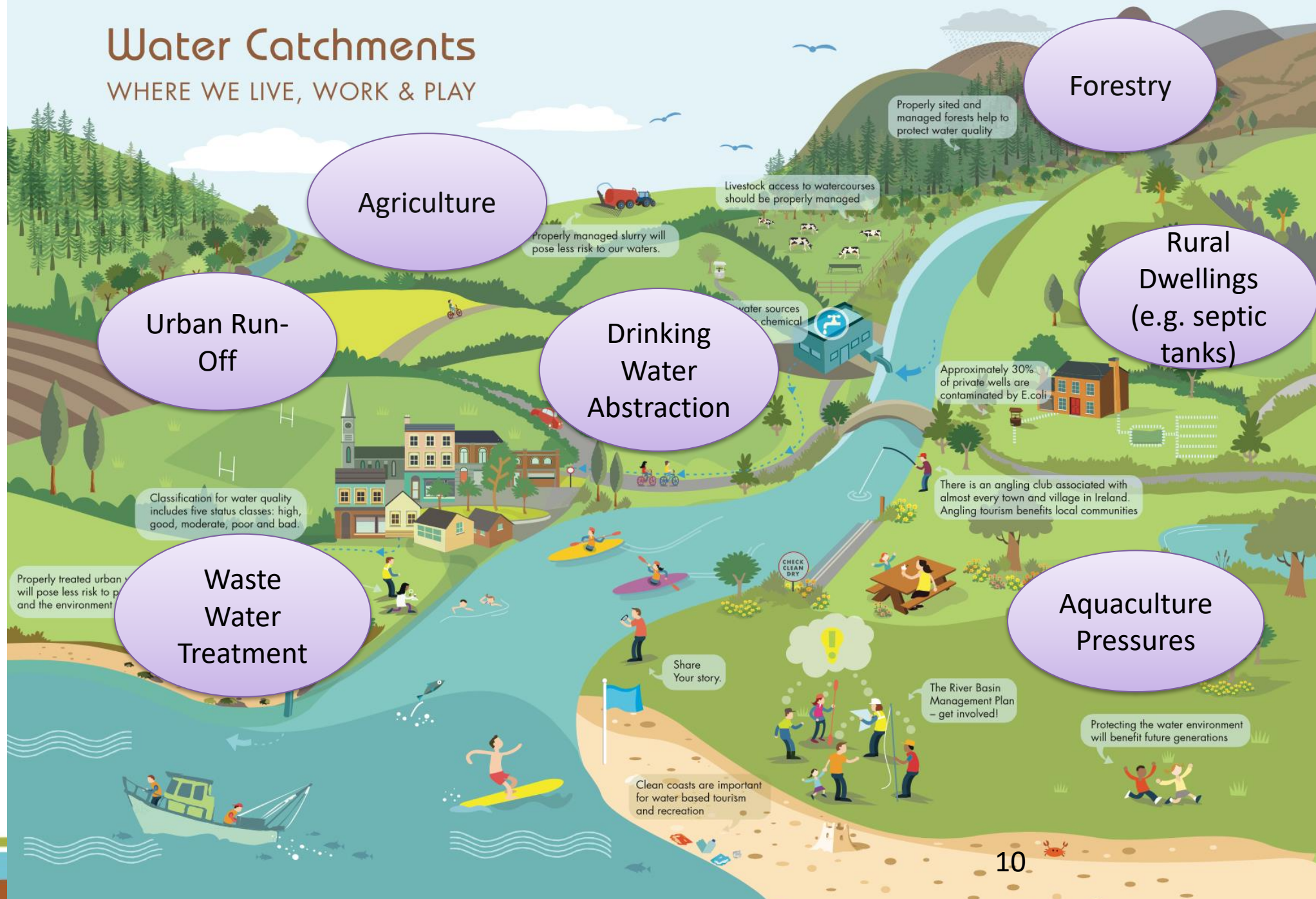
Priority Areas for Action in the Mullingar-Kinnegad Municipal District

- 51 river waterbodies (including the Royal Canal) intersect with or are contained within the Mullingar-Kinnegad MD
- LAWPRO are the lead organisation on eight Restore Priority Areas for Action including:
 - Lough Ennell – current focus for 2025
 - Derravaragh, part of which was examined as part of the 2nd cycle of the Water Framework Directive.
- Westmeath Co.Co. are the lead organisation on the Stonyford Area for Restoration



Water Catchments

WHERE WE LIVE, WORK & PLAY



Agriculture

Properly managed slurry will pose less risk to our waters.

Livestock access to watercourses should be properly managed

Forestry

Properly sited and managed forests help to protect water quality

Urban Run-Off

Classification for water quality includes five status classes: high, good, moderate, poor and bad.

Drinking Water Abstraction

Water sources should be properly managed

Rural Dwellings (e.g. septic tanks)

Approximately 30% of private wells are contaminated by E.coli

There is an angling club associated with almost every town and village in Ireland. Angling tourism benefits local communities

Waste Water Treatment

Properly treated urban wastewater will pose less risk to people and the environment

Aquaculture Pressures

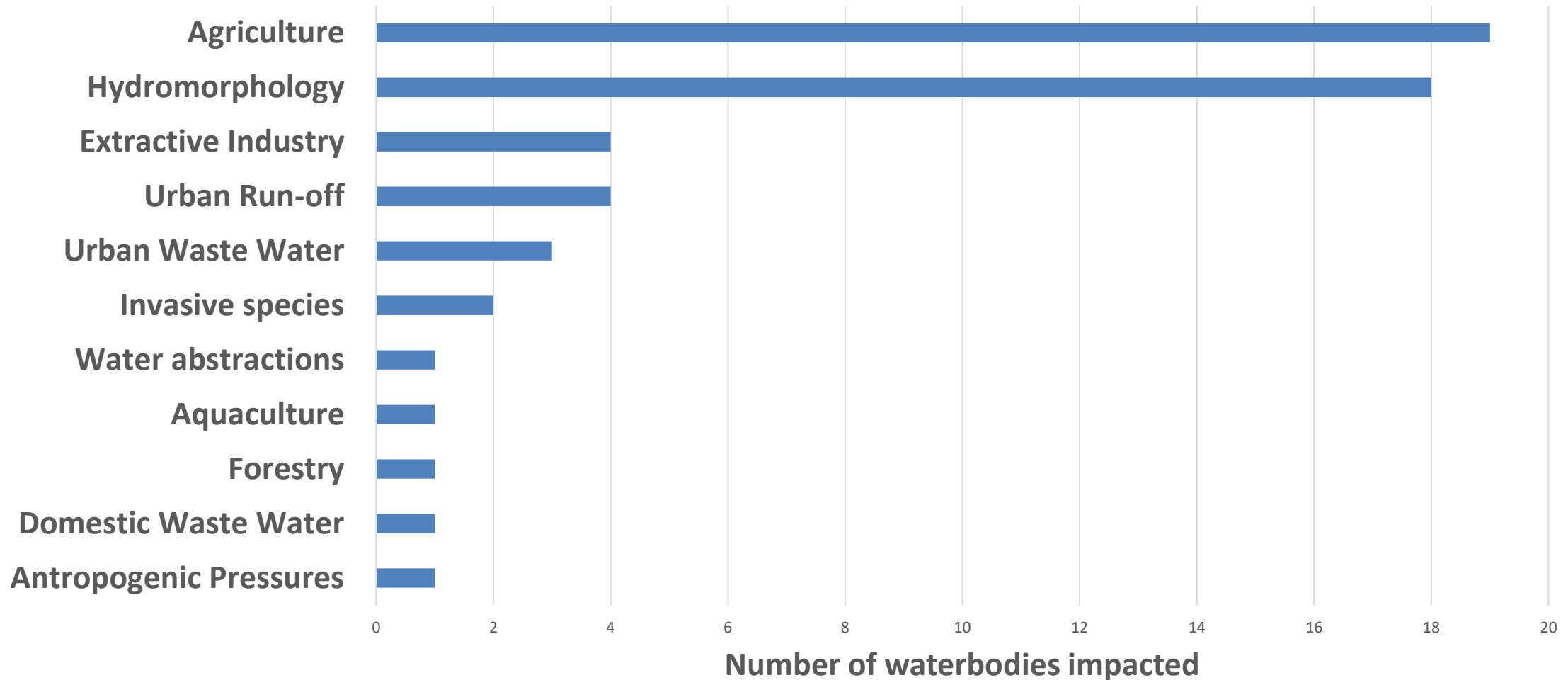
Protecting the water environment will benefit future generations

Share Your story.

The River Basin Management Plan – get involved!

Clean coasts are important for water based tourism and recreation

EPA Preliminary Assessment of likely Pressures in the Mullingar-Kinnegad MD



Local Catchment Assessment Finding issues on the ground



Field chemistry and field observations



Biological sampling - invertebrates



River walks



Chemistry sampling



Biological sampling - vegetation

Referrals Process

- 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

ASSAP Programme & Water EIP



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

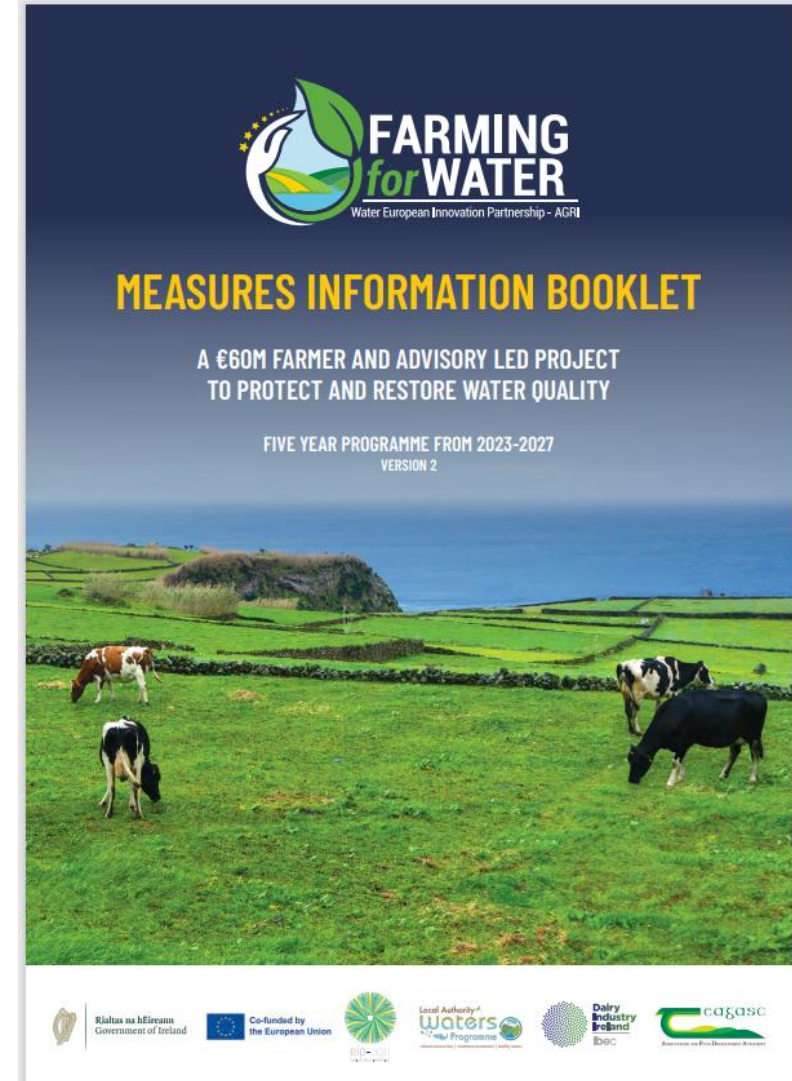


An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



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.



Prioritisation of Entry into the Project

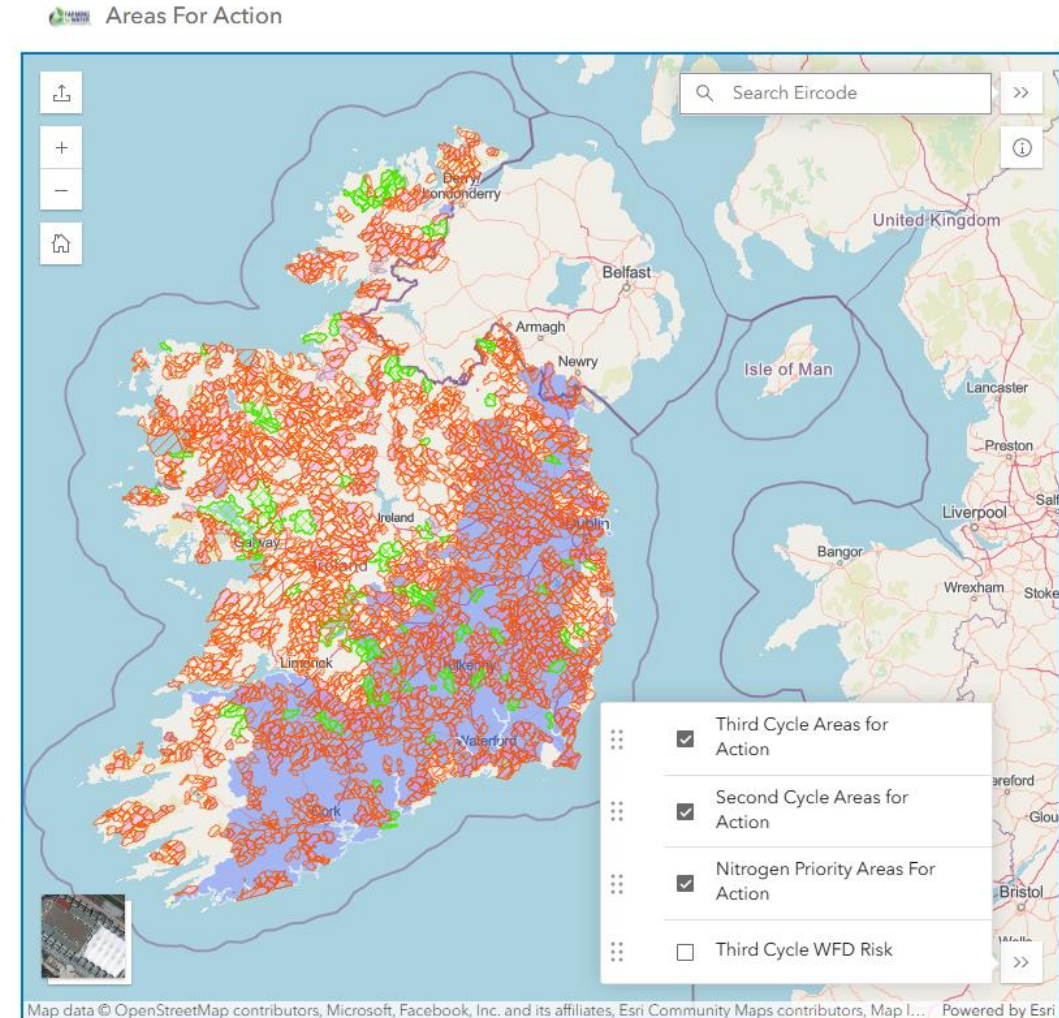
-focus on specific areas based on risk levels.

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/>



Collaborative multi-agency approach to improve Water Quality



A scenic view of a lake with reeds and trees. The water is a deep blue with gentle ripples. In the background, there is a dense line of tall, golden-brown reeds. To the right, some green and yellowing trees are visible, with a branch hanging over the water. The overall atmosphere is calm and natural.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement

- Community Water Officer for Westmeath
- Our work with Communities
 - Funding
 - Events and Outreach
 - Walks and Talks
 - Capacity Building
 - Project Delivery
 - Citizen Science



LAWPRO Funding

1. Community Water Development Fund
2. Catchment Support Fund
3. Small Grants and Events Scheme



Community Water Development Fund 2025

- €17,507 awarded to projects in Westmeath
- €1,047,265.26 awarded across 54 projects in 24 counties



Ballinahown Water Management Plan

Ecological Water Management Plan
for Ballinahown Village

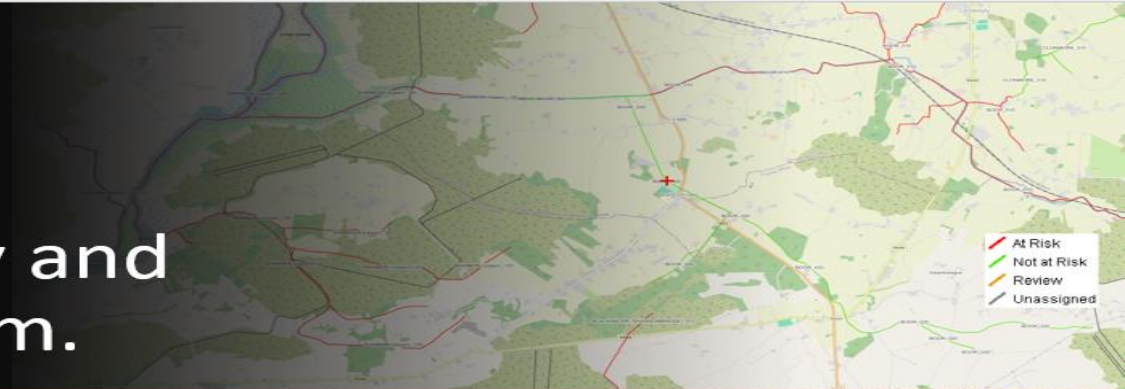
Prepared for
Ballinahown Community Development Company Ltd.

November, 2023



A plan for actions in water conservation &
protection ●

Water Quality and the river Worm.



Engagements in County Westmeath:

- Mullingar Tidy Towns, Mullingar Town Council and Westmeath County Council – Nature Based Systems for the River Brosna in Mullingar
- A CWDF funded collaboration project on the banks of the River Brosna.



LAWPRO Catchment Support Fund 2025

- **Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), working on behalf of Ireland's 31 local authorities to protect and restore good water quality in our river catchments, awarded €5,000 to the Lough Ennell Catchment Association in Westmeath.**
- **Overall, €856,260 in funding to 40 community groups in 19 counties**



Lough Ennell Catchment Management Plan steering group and public launch.



LAWPRO Small Grants Scheme

- Multyfarnham TT - €4059 – Nature Based Systems Project
- Athlone Canal Heritage Group - €5000 – NBS and sustainable drainage
- Mullingar Shamrocks - €5800 – Watercourse protection measures



Storm grate diverting road runoff into Athlone Canal

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



Q & A

Meet the room

- LAWPRO – Linda, Basil, Éanna, Ruth, Eoin, Éanna
- ASSAP/Farming for Water – David Webster (Teagasc)

www.lawwaters.ie

www.catchments.ie



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Contact Details

- Basil Mannion Snr, CWO – bmannion@lawaters.ie
- Linda Heerey, Catchment Scientist - lheerey@lawaters.ie



Thank you!



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Photo: Juha Kinnunen [Flickr]



Positives from work done so far:

- Bathing Waters improvements
- PAA WQ improvements noted
- Nitrates reduced in WBs – EPA data
- Commencement of Project Development Office within DHLGH for oversight of WAP implementation
- CSF roll out and funding
- Additional funding for CWDF
- Dept funding for 57 Ag inspectors for LAs
- Improved training programme for LA Env Section Staff
- Catchment Community Fora ongoing development
- Additional staffing for LAWPRO
- Increased River Trust and Catchment Assoc development
- Water EIP programme and addition funding for implementing farming measures and Community animators working with Pilot Catchments to help recruit farmers to the EIP
- Blue Dot Programme funding

Grant Scheme Criteria

- Previous Qualifying criteria
 - Registered DWWTS on www.protectourwater.ie by 1st Feb 2013
 - DWWTS not working properly
 - Maintenance issues e.g. de-sludging does not qualify
 - Primary residence etc.

85% of the approved cost

- Maximum of €5,000
- Min of €750

No means testing

NOTE: Check terms and conditions

- New Criteria
 - **Does not need to be registered**
 - DWWTS not working properly
 - Maintenance issues e.g. de-sludging does not qualify
 - Primary residence etc.

85% of the approved cost

- Maximum of **€12,000**
- Min of €750

No means testing

Engagement and Awareness

- High Status Objective Catchment Areas
 - Pre-requisite to be within the catchment area
 - Risk to the environment
 - Meet qualifying criteria
 - **Engagement and Awareness programme required – Opportunity for Community Groups**
- National Inspection Plan (NIP) and Priority Areas for Action (PAA)
 - Householder will be informed of their eligibility to apply for the grant
 - **Advisory notice** issued by LA following NIP inspection (Risk to Human Health and Environment) or
 - Letter of potential eligibility from LAWPRO (Environment)
 - Meet qualifying criteria
 - **No awareness programme needed as cannot self-declare interest in grant in these areas**