

Application Process

1. Can a farmer who is a participant in the NPWS Farm plan scheme become a participant in ACRES on his remaining land?
Yes, but to avoid double funding this may lead to a reduction in payments.
2. In a partnership where the two partners have Tier 1 priority assets, if only one partner chooses the Tier 1 options will the other partner also get Tier 1 access.
Refer to 10.9 of the T&Cs Tier 1: Eligibility of a partnership to apply as Tier 1 applicant will be based on one of the holdings forming a partnership or on the entire RFP holding meeting the pre-defined criteria referred to in Annex 2a.
3. ACRES Training: will this be available for farmers in q1 of 2023 as it would greatly help in the implementation of actions on farms.
The ACRES Training Scheme is currently being developed and, subject to sanction from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the target opening date is as early as possible in Quarter 1 of 2023.
4. How will the DAFM know that applicant has an Organic Licence?
The registration of a farmer as an organic operator will be verified by the Department internally as part of the pre-approval validation process.
5. When will we be able to print off documents/maps/plans to give to our clients?
The Department will issue an approval summary to all successful applicants showing approved actions and the parcel on which these actions are to be carried out
6. Can a participant in NPWS Farm plan scheme join ACRES, and take the Dry-stone wall maintenance action on a field where there is an area-based action under the NPWS Scheme?
This must be checked out by the farmer/adviser with NPWS to ensure there is no double funding firstly. NPWS farm plan payments may be reduced where double funding issues arise
7. For farmers in the **Native Woodland Establishment Scheme** – will DAFM pick that up internally for Ranking and Selection purposes?
Yes

ACRES Co-Operative Approach

8. Is commonage paid first under CP? If a farmer has a large area of commonage and private CP lands, could they draw down full ACRES payment on CP commonage, and put CP private into Organics?
All owned CP forage parcels that were declared in the applicant's 2022 BPS must be included in the ACRES contract and be scored in years 1, 3 and 5. If ACRES CP applicant is in OFS, they will receive OFS payments on the privately owned CP forage parcels and results-based CP payment is reduced by €250/ha. Refer the Appendix 6 of spec. Commonage would receive the full results-based payment rates in ACRES as commonage is not eligible for OFS payments.

9. Where an Organic farmer is entering Acres with Non commonage CP lands, is the ringfencing calculation done at €300 / ha or €50 / ha on the Private CP lands? Since the Organics reduce the Acres payment by €250 / ha (spec page 116) E.g. A farmer going into Organics now, with 20 ha of CP private land - is his Acres ring fencing calculation $20 \times €300 = €6,000$ or $20 \times €50 = €1,000$?

Ring fencing rule is calculated using same calculation regardless of whether a farmer is in OFS or not. Refer to Specifications and Terms & Conditions for Ring Fencing Calculation.

10. What happens when CP groups delineate all parcels within the CP zone i.e., will the parcels that are not suitable for scoring be rejected from the CP even though ring fencing was required? Is there a risk that farmers will be stuck with land rejected from the CP zone and not available for general actions?

Land will not be rejected from CP zone, if land scores below 4 it will not receive a results-based payment, but it is still eligible for NPIs and Landscape actions. All CP forage parcels farmed and claimed in participant's 2023 BISS and that were declared in the participant's 2022 BPS as owned must be included in the ACRES contract and be scored in years 1, 3 and 5.

11. Will the boundaries of CP zones be digitised if part of an ACRES application?

No

12. If the farm has less than the required 3 Ha but is still considered as a CP plan. Will it be scored as a CP plan or as a general application? It would be very unfair if it was scored under CP, as the main thrust of the matrix will favour the bigger Co-op farms. Considering that they don't have the requisite land to even meet the min threshold, this would be a grave anomaly? Any guidance please?

The largest proportion of marks in RASS for ACRES CP are for the Proportion of holding within a combination of specified high value habitat mapped layers based on 2021 BPS, (maximum score 1,000). Regarding Area of land within any of the eight Co-operation Zones on 2021 BPS to a maximum of 100ha, maximum score achievable is 100.

13. If a farmer has all land in a CP 50 Ha for example with 10 Ha commonage and other 40 ha all newly reseeded and arable land improved. They are entitled to €145/Ha on the commonage depending on score. Obviously 0/ Ha on improved land. So, do we prepare a FSP and submit a plan on the 40 Ha to bring up his payment? Or is the improved land 0 and ringfenced so then we have to wait for CP team to give us direction?

Ring fencing calculation dictates if funding is available for general actions. If no funding is available for general actions and the farmer scores below 4, then the farmer can apply for Non-Productive Investments on a yearly basis. Each farmer still has the capacity to be paid €52,500 over the 5-year contract. Refer to specifications for further detail on Ring fencing calculation.

14. Plot that got farmer into ACRES co-op may not be available in 2023, what happens in this situation?

Applicant must apply under the CP approach in Tranche 1, Ring fencing applies if the privately owned forage CP land was included in 2022 BPS and was declared as owned, all commonage owned leased and rented that was declared on 2022 BPS is relevant to ring fencing calculation. If Parcel was not declared in 2022 and no commonage was declared in 2022 BPS then the full €7,000 will be available for General actions plus an additional allowance of €3,500 for NPIs and Landscape actions. If the parcel was in the 2022 BPS but will not be declared in the 2023 BISS then the application is still valid as an ACRES CP

application but funding available for General actions are still reduced as per the Ring-Fencing calculation. ACRES payments are limited to the General actions that are eligible for payment subject to the ring-fencing rule and any possible Non-Productive Investments that would be approved.

Area Based Actions

15. Over winter stubble. Can roundup be sprayed on this in springtime?
Yes, but only after 1 February
16. If a farmer has a riparian zone parcel that does not need to be re-digitised. Does it still have to be 20m back from riverbank?
The 20m minimum width only applies to split parcels. It will be stated in a revised spec that will issue. If the action is being selected on a whole LPIS parcel it just has to meet the minimum area of 0.04 ha.
17. Geese & Swans: Is it only Parcels with MEA's > 0 Ha that are used in the calculation of the Geese & Swans Habitat Area? Yes
e.g., Is a commonage parcel that is not grazed and has an MEA of 0.00 Ha taken into account to calculate the 50%?
it is only the area under the mapped layer in arable or grassland LPIS parcels that should be taken into account. Commonage parcels or CP forage parcels are not included in the calculation.
18. Are the same field suitability requirements required for LIGP as for LIG, or is the only requirement that it intersects the raised bog buffer zone?
Site suitability for both actions is set out in the specifications.
If only part of the field is in LIGP can the whole field be selected?
If part of a parcel intersects the Designated raised bog 500m buffer map the whole field can be selected.
19. Riparian zone: 20 meters minimum width please clarify what this means or should look like on the ground? The Riparian Buffer Zone must extent at least 20m out from the watercourse or boundary feature at the widest point along the zone see example below.



20. Tree planting Ammonia Capture: for a single shed - can the tree belt be planted at the side of the shed (width of shed) or does it have to be planted facing the length of the shed?
Can be planted at any side of the shed but is most effective if located taking the prevailing wind into account. See additional guidance point 1.
Can the tree belt be any shape or size?

Can be square, rectangle, L or U shape surrounding 3 sides as long as it is at least 30m in dept at all points.

How close to the shed can we start the belt - must it be a minimum 10 metres?

It has to start within 50 m of the shed, but the optimum is starting between 10 to 20 m from the shed.

Facing the shed - does this mean it has to be facing the front of the shed or can it be at the back of the shed?

Either

Within 50 metres from a shed - is this the start of the tree belt, or the whole belt has to be within the 50 metres of the shed?

Start of the tree belt.

21. Riparian Zone - Could you please confirm which advise as received from the Department is correct in relation to Tree planting in Riparian Zones. At the recent on-line training we were clearly instructed that trees could not be planted in a R Zone >1ha to gain Tier 2 access. It was advised quite clearly that we could separate 2 riparian zones by a gap if we wished but on no uncertain terms would be gain TIER 2 access by tree planting if it was in a zone >1ha. I note your opinion of this has changed and Q28 in FAQ as dated 17th October contradicts this and suggests that you can plant trees in a R Zone >2ha so long as the trees are in a group <0.1ha. You might please confirm which of these is correct. We have been submitting smaller R Zones due to the initial clear instruction and the answer on detailed in Q28 just confuses the matter.

If planting a small number of trees (10-50) in a 1Ha Riparian Zone or in small groups under 0.1 ha within the zone, there is no issue as these will not be considered or have to potential to be considered a forest. It is only if there is planting of 200 trees in a 1 Ha area over that are evenly spaced to cover the entire area that there is no provision to do so.

The planting of trees in any area greater than 0.1 hectare which has tree crown cover of more than 20 per cent of the total area, or the potential to achieve this cover at maturity is considered a forest. To remain in line with the Amendment of Forestry Act 2014 under Animal Health and Welfare and Forestry (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022) which facilitates planting of native trees in areas not less than 0.1 hectare and not greater than 1 hectare without an afforestation licence, the total cumulative area of forest that can be planted on a holding is limited to 1 hectare. This would apply to the combination of all tree planting actions in ACRES that could be considered forests depending on planting layout and density i.e., Planting trees in riparian buffer zones, Tree planting and Tree belts for ammonia capture from farmyard.

If choosing Planting trees in Riparian buffer zone action, it is best to plant small groups of trees that are less than 0.1 hectare. If trees are planted in a group under 0.1 hectare, they would not count towards the 1ha cumulative total.

22. If a parcel is within the 500 meters of a bog SAC, can EGP be selected instead of LIPG?

Yes, if the field is suitable for EGP

23. Where a parcel is under the Layer for Raised Bog 500M Buffer but does not consist of peat soil, Can LIG be chosen instead of LIPG?

Yes, if the parcel meets the site suitability requirements for LIG

24. RZ grassland – can they be created adjacent to small streams, surface drains, rivers, lakes, or ponds. Must these streams be on the OSI Glams legend purple or green?

Refer to previous Q&A documents and the specifications.

25. Winter Bird Food - spec says not to put near dwellings but no min distance is specified. If farmer is selecting a site near his own house or has permission from the dwelling owner is this ok?
This is guidance not a requirement
26. Planting trees in RBZ - For tier 2 entry are we required to map both the RBZ action (area) and tree planting in RBZ action (point) as two separate actions or just the point action?
Need to be mapped as 2 separate actions. Planting of trees in Riparian Buffer Zones is only allowed in areas selected for the RBZ action
27. Extensively Grazed Pasture (EGP): can farmer claim Riparian Buffer strip grassland payment on split parcel with the other part of the parcel claimed as Extensively Grazed Pasture (EGP)?
Yes, but any LPIS parcel(s) that is split for area actions will receive a new LPIS number once digitised in the 2023 BISS application. Several split parcel actions can be selected on each existing LPIS and other actions can be selected in the remaining area.
- Note: When splitting parcels, do not create a parcel that is less than 20 metres wide. Parcels less than 20 metres wide will not be digitised and consequently will not be deemed eligible as split parcels (all actions on the parcel may also be deemed ineligible). Participants should note that where a fence is erected to delineate the boundary of a split parcel, this fence cannot be used as part of the fencing requirements for the follow actions: Coppicing of hedgerows; Grass margins – Grassland; Laying of hedgerows; Planting a new hedgerow; Planting a traditional orchard; Riparian buffer strip – Grassland and Tree planting.**
28. A parcel is mapped, and in an applicant's BPS for the last number of years, but has no MEA on the parcel? Also, the foresaid parcel would give the applicant a Tier 1 entry through Extensively Grazed pasture. On the T&C's for Tier 1 entry it refers to mapped area not MEA, how should I proceed with this application?
EGP cannot be selected on a parcel with zero MEA
29. Can you clarify to help advisors decide what areas to select for actions:
iv. Penalty is reduction of ACRES payment if there is a difference between eligible area found and area claimed using IACS rules. Clawback amount not delivered in previous years. ACRES payment in successive years will be limited to delivery found.
- **Example 1:** Where 8 ha of EGP selected, and 1 ha is lost during the contract (e.g., site) What is the penalty?
Clawback of payments made on 1ha for each year. If over declaration penalty applies it will be IACS rules that will be used to calculate penalty. These IACS rules will be issued at a later date by Circular
 - **Example 2:** Where 12 ha of EGP selected (full field selected to be paid on the max of 8ha) and 1 ha is lost during the contract What is the penalty?
No penalty or clawback if there is still 8 ha of EGP in parcel retained and eligible for payment.
30. Can Geese and Swan be selected on Natura?
Yes, if the Natura parcel can meet the requirements of the action
31. Where an Area Based Action EGP is selected in 2 LPIS parcels that are adjacent (with no boundary or fence on the ground) is there a need for a fence to separate the 2 parcels?

If both parcels are selected for EGP and are existing LPIS parcels, there is no need to put up a fence. If they were separate actions, then they would require a fence. Each parcel must meet the site suitability requirements for the action chosen

32. The 2 parcels could be merged on the 2023 BPD into one new parcel. [No need to merge parcels once both parcels are farmed as one management unit and the same area-based ACRES action is in each parcel](#)

33. For the **Management of Intensive Grassland next to a watercourse** there is a conflict between 2 requirements regarding fencing:

Where a watercourse is present on or adjacent to the parcel, bovines are not permitted to access the watercourse. Where no natural barrier exists, the watercourse must be fenced at least 1.5m from the top of the bank when bovines are present (drinking points are not permitted.) This implies Temporary fencing - similar to all other Area Based actions
[Yes, temporary fencing will suffice](#)

Fencing must be fit for purpose, fenced with permanent stakes, and wire appropriate for the livestock type.

[This will be corrected in revised spec. There is no requirement for permanent fencing for this action](#)

34. Is the fencing of watercourse requirement for the Management of Intensive Grassland next to a watercourse the same as for Extensively Grazed Pasture?

[Yes](#)

35. Is over winter stubble allowed on Protein cereal Mix 50/50 cropped area? Has it to be maintained from Jan 1st to Feb 1st, 2023 un grazed and un topped, may have already been grazed in autumn 2022?

[The requirements in the spec are clear. Following the harvest of a cereal crop, oilseed rape or linseed \(but not maize\) to encourage the emergence of green cover conduct shallow cultivation in line with the requirements set down in SI No 113 of 2022 \(as amended\). This cultivation must take place within 14 days following harvest and no later than 30 September Grazing or topping of the stubble is not permitted from date crop is harvested to 1 February the following year. The stubbles must remain in situ until 1 February of the following year. There are no requirements in 2022 as the contract commences in 2023. There are no requirements for Jan or Feb in 2023.](#)

Linear Based Actions

36. Can you include more than 4000 metres of stone walls? When drawing out walls on the map, I re-entered a new figure on the edit box to account for gates e.g., for one gate 4 metres I changed the overall finding from 54 metres to 50 metres. Is this ok?

[More than 4000metres of stone walls can be submitted on the application but the max length for payment is 4000m. If you have entered a length less than the drawn length, it will allow you to enter the lower length in the quantity box, but this **will not** be saved back to the mapped action summary on GLAM. Therefore, the full 54 m will go forward on the application. EXAMPLE: You can draw up to the gap and leave 4m blank and then start to draw again or draw a continuous line but stop 4m before you get to the full length to allow for the gaps of 4m in the length.](#)

37. RBZs - Where a hedge exists next to a surface drain, and the base of that hedge has an intact clay bank, does this clay bank render the site unsuitable for installing a buffer strip or zone?
 No, The Riparian Buffer Strip will be measured from the top of the bank or from the edge of an existing boundary (i.e., Hedgerow, treeline, stone wall, or earthen bank) into the field. Where a parcel intersects a vulnerable status river basin, but shows no presence of Phosphorous PIP maps (1-3), and that parcel also has a land drain running along its length that intersects the vulnerable status water area, is it acceptable to place a riparian buffer strip alongside the land drain?
 Yes, ideally the most high-risk areas should be addresses first (i.e., here High-Risk flow paths cross PIP-P rank 1-3 CSA) but a riparian buffer strip can be placed along land drain as described above.
38. If there is a mound or track (exclusion on BPS) running contiguous to a watercourse, can the farmer fence 1.5m back from the mound/track for Riparian Buffer Strip?
 The RBZ cannot be selected where there is a farm roadway or other roadway between the field and the watercourse
39. When mapping a new hedge along a newly built laneway (not yet shown as exclusion) it is not possible to map this on GLAM with 100% accuracy. Will it be a problem if there is some overlap between the planting hedge action and exclusion once updated on BISS?
 It should be planted in the same place as indicated on the GLAM map. If it is a small bit offline but in same parcel, same general area and running the same direction it should be fine.
40. In a 2-farm partnership which is under 170 kgs / ha Org N, with one partner over 170kgs / ha Org N, if choosing 1.5m riparian strip on the farm over 170kgs/ha does the farmer have to fence 3m out from water course.
 Yes
41. Is it necessary to have bovine enterprise to apply for riparian strip or zone?
 No
42. Grass Margins: where a tillage client entered organics in 2021 and subsequently laid down their entire farm to a red clover/ryegrass sward in 2022 for the purpose of building fertility for two years, and the intention (as outlined in his organic farm plan) is to follow this sward with tillage crops in 2024, can he continue with his GLAS AGM's as ACRES AGM's in an ACRES contract. Was he not in organics the sward would have been declared as Grass Y1 which would have been deemed "arable" rather than the "grassland" classification his parcels now have? Alternatively, if this is not possible, can he request that his BPS for 2022 be changed for each parcel to GY1, and if this is possible and does not contravene any organic contract requirement, would this be sufficient to allow him to opt for ACRES GMA's in an ACRES plan.
 ACRES Grass margin Arable can be selected on both forage and arable parcels
43. Riparian Margins: a pond exists on one side of a parcel next to the hedge, and a PIP Phosphorous critical source area rank 1 extends from this pond out into the adjoining parcel. This PIP extends over approx. 40% of the length of the parcel boundary on which the pond exists. Is it acceptable to place a riparian margin along the full length of this boundary or can you only place it along the length over which the PIP Phosphorous rank 1 layer exists?

The PIP layer is just a guide in where the best place to locate a Buffer zone may be. The Riparian Buffer can extend the full length of the waterbody even if the PIP-P Rank 1 does not take in the full area. The buffer zone must be adjacent to the waterbody (small streams, surface drains, rivers, lakes, or ponds)

44. Are grass margins arable and unharvested cereal headlands allowed side by side on a parcel?

YES

45. Further to Answer to No 57 on Monday 24 Oct: Planting a New Hedgerow: How far out does the new hedge have to be planted from an existing hedgerow?

For this example, there must be a field or farm roadway between the 2 hedgerows.

Is it also ok to have a watercourse or drain between 2 hedges whether boundary or internal as a hedge each side may be useful to reduce overland flow into the watercourse?

Yes, this would be fine as well

46. On a Derogation farm - because there can be an existing hedge within the area 1.5 m width fenced off from a watercourse - Can a new ACRES hedge be planted within the area 1.5 m width fenced off from a watercourse?

As long as there is no other ACRES action claimed along that watercourse that requires fencing that would be fine. The same fence cannot be used to fulfil the fencing requirement where an applicant has chosen to select two actions in the same parcel or same location and each action incorporates a fencing element. In this case, each action is required to have its own fence.

47. Can there be a number of linear actions placed side by side provided all requirements including fencing as specified for each?

Yes, they can be side by side. The same fence cannot be used to fulfil the fencing requirement where an applicant has chosen to select two actions in the same parcel or same location and each action incorporates a fencing element. In this case, each action is required to have its own fence.

Example: Arable /field on 2022 BPS going into Ryegrass

- Riparian Buffer Strip Arable
- Grass Margin Arable
- Ryegrass Seed Set

All Other Questions

48. Monuments. If there are 4 shaded areas/features on map (2 in same area) must we include all monuments on the GLAMS? Is it 1 payment per feature as there can be 2 or 3 labels on the 1 feature?

The action is voluntary, a minimum of one monument must be chosen. Only one payment per visible monument that meets the requirements of the action.

49. Fencing of Callows- Where there are traditional stone markers on the ground to delineate boundaries, and these areas were never fenced, is this acceptable?

Not clear what fencing of Callows refers to?

50. LESS - if a farmer is above 100kg N for one year of the scheme, will they just forego the payment for that year, or will there be clawbacks?

DAFM will carry out prepayment validations each year to ensure the participants have a grassland stocking rate of less than 100kg of Nitrogen per hectare from grazing livestock manure prior to export of Livestock manure from the holding in the previous calendar year to be eligible for payment for this action. If exceed the action is ineligible so clawback may apply.

51. A farmer entered the organic farming scheme in 2021 and has his producer's licence since April 2021. At the start of that calendar year, he had conventional cereal crops (which he obviously applied no artificial inputs to from the date of his organic application) and he was also a GLAS participant and had arable grass margins on all his parcels, which under the 2021 OFS T&S were eligible for both the GLAS and OFS payments. After the 2021 harvest he sowed a red clover ley to boost soil fertility for the following two years as part of his organic farm plan. This was entered on his BPS as "red clover" which has a "grassland" classification. He now wishes to retain these margins in ACRES, but there are a few issues.

Clarification

Firstly – just for clarity –

If he retains these GLAS GMA's as ACRES "grass margins arable" going forward, the terms of the 2023 organic farming scheme state that he will only receive the ACRES payment and not the OFS payment. However, is there any risk that he would have to repay the organic payment he was paid on these margins in 2021 and 2022 (which was allowable under the 2021 Organic Farming Scheme).

No

Secondly, the big problem-

As his declared parcel use with red clover now renders those parcels "grassland", he can only select "grass margins grassland", even though his organic plan states he is a tillage farmer and only sowed the red clover for the reasons stated above. Under the 2023 OFS T&C it states that such swards sown for fertility building purposes can be declared on the BPS as "environmental management of arable fallow" which has an "arable" classification and would therefore allow him to retain his grass margins as arable grass margins" which have no fencing requirement. I have contacted the BPS section to see if we can change his declared crop use at this stage but have had no reply.

So, the question – given the fact his parcels will be sown with cereal crops next year (or at the very least declared as an "arable" crop), can I opt for Grass Margins Grassland on his ACRES plan now, and get permission from ACRES to change this option to Grass Margins Arable in 2023 – which is in reality, what they are. Basically, the problem is all down to the declared crop use in 2022 being grassland not arable – and had the T&C of the 2021 scheme been the same as the 2023 scheme we could have used the arable crop classification. I had a somewhat similar problem back in my first year of GLAS many years ago and the GLAS section themselves got the BPS section to change the parcel use and thereby solved the issue, so I'm hoping similar could be achievable now.

ACRES Grass Margin-Arable or Grass Margin-Grassland can be chosen on a parcel declared as Red Clover. Please provide agent aga/agr number, herd number and LPIS if there is a case where the parcel was Red clover in 2022 and it is not allowing them to choose Grass margin arable or grassland.

Riparian Strip and Zones in parcels with Natura

52. Further to Answers 33 from 17 Oct and 65 from 31 Oct there is still confusion

We understand the Riparian Zone is not allowed on areas under the Natura layer.

- Is it the Riparian Strip **OR** the associated fence that is not allowed in Natura areas?
[The fence cannot be on the designated Natura area of land](#)
- If it is only the fence – can the fence be located outside to include Natura land?
[Yes, for RB strip grassland action](#)
- Where part of a parcel is Natura, is the Riparian Zone and Strip allowed in the areas of the parcel not under Natura?
[The Riparian Buffer zone can only be selected in an area adjacent to a watercourse. If you split the parcel the split parcel that doesn't contain the Natura layer must be adjacent to the watercourse for that split parcel to be eligible for RBZ](#)

53. Providing the overall area of newly planted trees on the farm does not exceed 1 ha - is there any issue planting the excess trees in the Riparian Buffer zone over and above the 200?

[No issue if overall area of newly planted trees on holding is less than 1ha](#)