



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Agri Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES)

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What is ACRES?



Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme

Replaces the Green Low Carbon Agri-Environment Scheme (GLAS)

Builds on learnings from GLAS, the **Results-based Environment Agri Pilot Project (REAP)** and EIP projects



Objectives of ACREs



Key features



- More environmentally ambitious, more targeted and more innovative
- **Broader range** of actions
- Move from species specific focus to **habitat establishment and enhancement** of habitat quality
- **Hybrid based scheme** (prescription based measures and results based measures).
- **Introduction of a farm sustainability plan (FSP)**

Key features of scheme



- One Scheme two measures - a farmer can only apply for one measure and therefore have one contract
 - **General measure**
 - **Co-operation measure**
- An eligible farmer in any part of the country may apply to participate in the Scheme – **must submit a Farm Sustainability Plan.**
- **Intake** on a **phased basis via tranches** for **both** measures subject to DAFM and advisor capacity
- Tranche 1 opened Q4 2022, Tranche 2 Q4 2023, possibility of a Tranche 3 depending on uptake
- **Tiered structure** - applicants receive priority entry based on which tier they are eligible for

Payment Rates and Funding for ACRES

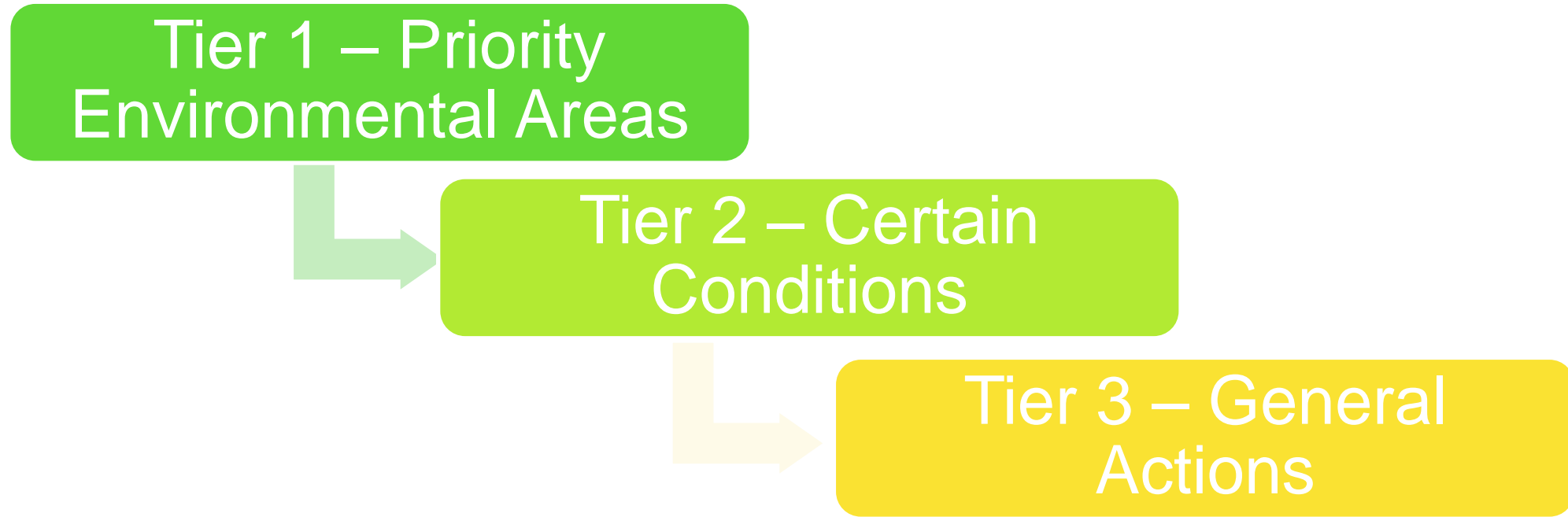


€1.5bn Scheme

| | Farmer Payment (est. average) | Farmer Payment (maximum) | Measure cost (per year) |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| General Measure (target 30k farmers) | €5,000 | €7,311 | €150m |
| Cooperation Measure (target 20k farmers) | €7,000 | €10,500 | €150m |
| Scheme Cost per year | | | €300m |
| Total Scheme Cost 2023-2027 | | | €1.5bn |

There may be scope for a bonus payment in excess of the maximum payment in exceptional circumstances and subject to T&Cs

Structure of ACRES General



ACRES General actions



Area Based Actions

- Winter Bird Food plot
- Over Winter Stubble
- Environmental Management of Arable Fallow
- Minimum Tillage (Min-till)
- Catch crops
- Management of intensive grassland next to a watercourse
- Tree Belt for Ammonia Capture at farmyard
- Brassica Fodder Stubble
- Low input grassland (results based)
- Low input peat grassland(results based)
- Commonage
- Extensively Grazed Pasture
- Riparian Buffer Zone - Arable/Grassland
- Geese and Swans

Whole Farm Actions

- Low Emission Slurry Spreading
- Conservation of Rare Breeds

Linear actions

- Unharvested cereal headlands
- Grass Margins – Arable
- Grass Margins - Grassland
- Winter Bird Food Strip
- Hedgerow Rejuvenation Coppicing
- Hedgerow Rejuvenation Laying
- Traditional dry stone wall maintenance
- Planting New Hedgerow
- Ryegrass Seed Set for birds
- Riparian Buffer Strip - Arable/Grassland

Unit based actions

- Tree Planting
- Planting Trees in Riparian Buffer Zones
- Planting a traditional Orchard
- Barn owl box
- Protection and Maintenance of Archaeological Monuments
- Grassland/Arable

Commonage in ACRES



- Mandatory action for all commonage
- Tier 1 access:
 - >0.50 Ha declared in 2021 BPS
 - continue to farm in 2022 BPS
- Min. stocking rate – CMP process in GLAS-
subject to review by CP teams
- In CP zones – additional actions applicable to
aid habitat restoration – NPI's, landscape
actions
- Agreement not to hinder or block works

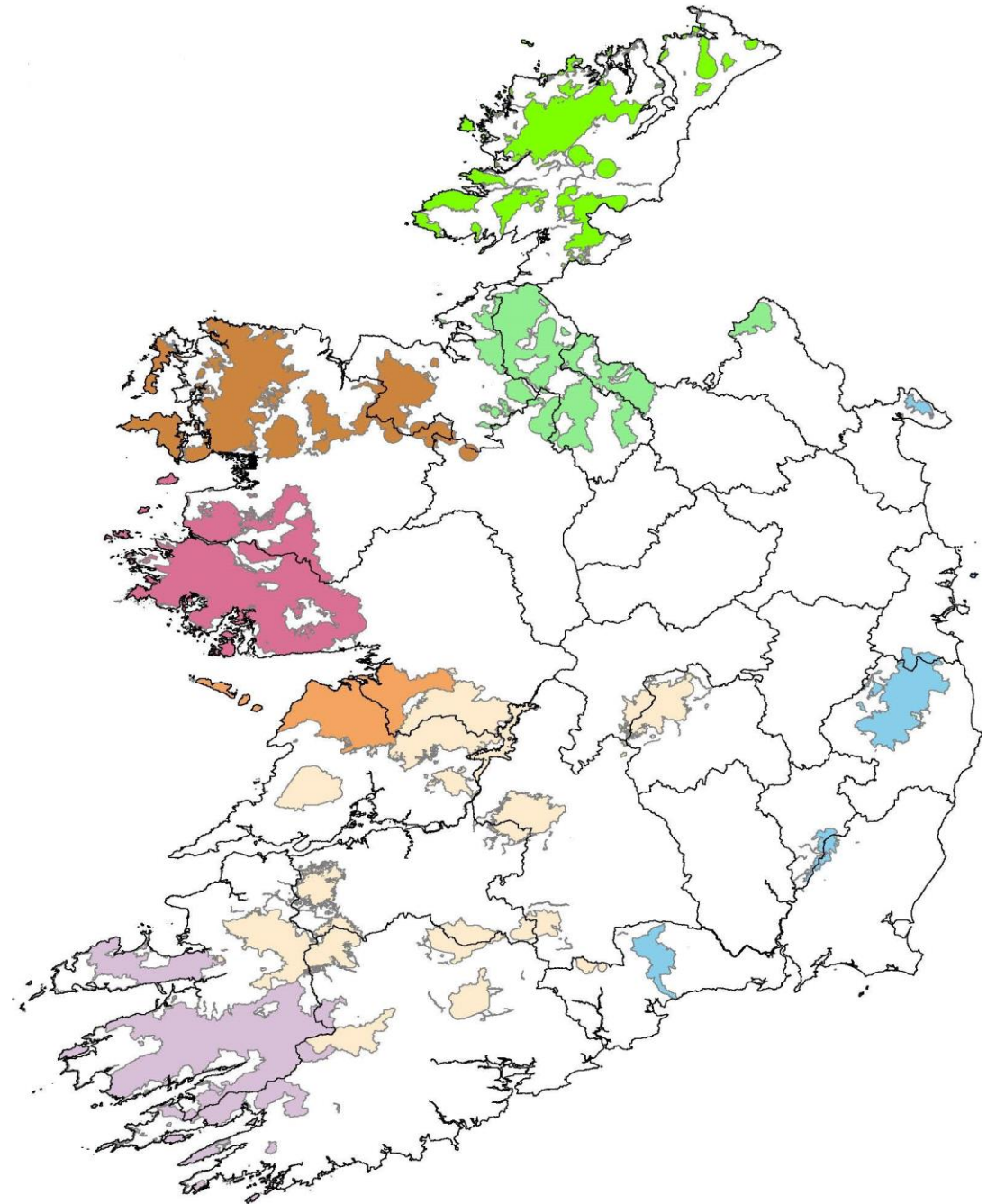




ACRES Co-operation

Co-operation Areas

| CP Area | CP Team | Approx. Herd numbers |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Donegal | ACRES Donegal | 4,366 |
| North Connaught Ulster | ACRES Breifne | 4,586 |
| North West Connaught | ACRES West Connacht | 4,682 |
| South Mayo Connemara | ACRES West Connacht | 4,208 |
| Burren & Aran Islands | ACRES Burren Aran | 2,188 |
| Mid West Southern Uplands | ACRES Munster South Connacht | 8,270 |
| West Cork Kerry | ACRES West Cork Kerry | 5,117 |
| East South East | ACRES Leinster | 1,319 |
| Total | | 34,796 |
| Farmer uptake expected 60%-70% | | |



Co-operation Measure – structure and actions



Delineation of land areas - to identify high environmental priority area – management assisted by co-operation groups

Results-based payments:

10 scorecard to assess different habitats types e.g.,

- peatlands
- grasslands
- woodlands

10 scorecard

Landowner: _____ Surveyor: _____
Callow: _____ Plot: _____ Date: _____
Total Marks: Final Score:

A. Ecological integrity and species composition

A.1. Number of positive indicators present in the grassland (circle ALL present on list below)

| No. of indicators: | 6+ | 8+ | 10+ | 12+ | 14+ | 16+ | 20+ |
|--------------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Marks | 4 | 6 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 35 |

A.2. What proportion of the meadow are positive indicators ABSENT from?

| ABSENT from: | >90% | 75-90% | 50-75% | 25-50% | <25% |
|--------------|------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| Marks | -10 | 5 | 15 | 25 | 35 |

A.3. What is the cover of DENSE Meadowsweet and/or DENSE grass in the sward?

| DENSE COVER: | Very High (>90% cover) | High (70-90% cover) | Medium (35-70% cover) | Low (<35% cover) |
|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Marks | -20 | -10 | 0 | 10 |

A.4. Cover (total) of negative indicator species &/or agricultural 'weeds' (ignore docks on rise near riverbank if rest of meadow is fine)

| Circle: | Rye grass | Nettles | Thistles | Docks | Bindweed | Other (specify): |
|---------|-----------|---------|----------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| COVER | High >50% | 26-50% | 11-25% | <10% | Negligible (<1%) | |
| Marks | -30 | -20 | -10 | 0 | 10 | |

B. Threats, pressures and future prospects

B.1. What is the level of dead vegetation (litter)? *Identify main rank/woody species:*

| LEVEL | High (rank veg., with briars & woody plants) | Med-High (Dead vegetation thick throughout (not mown & collected last year)) | Dead vegetation negligible (mown annually) |
|-------|--|--|--|
| Marks | -20 | 0 | 10 |

B.2. Are there any damaging activities to vegetation, soil or water? *If yes, list all activities:*

Co-operation Measure – structure and actions



Non-productive investments (NPI)

- Water provision for livestock
- Grazing infrastructure
- Invasive species
- Shepherding (on the basis of timesheets)
- Introduction of new grazers i.e. cattle
- Bracken management

Landscape Actions:

- Fire prevention
- Targeted water quality projects
- Flood prevention measures

ACRES & BISS



- Annual claim for payment

Role of advisor

- Review ACRES Screens
- Crop code checks - area based actions
- Check linear/ point actions/Whole farm actions
- Assign rotational actions

Becoming an ACRES Approved Advisor



- Must be FAS approved
- Complete ACRES Advisor Training
- Notified of next training dates



Take Home Message



Right Action in the Right Place!





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