



Project overview

EPA Water Conference, Galway

Derek McLoughlin, 18th June, 2026



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



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An tSeirbhís Páircanna
Náisiúnta agus Fíothúlra
National Parks and Wildlife
Service





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- Project management, coordination and governance
- Land and ecosystem management
- Surveys
- Ecosystem monitoring and evaluation
- Socio-economic monitoring and evaluation
- Communication and dissemination
- Complementary projects and exploitation of results

Bord na Mona

- Training of contractors
- Peatland restoration 250ha (Co. Mayo)

Coillte

- Forest to bog restoration 175ha (Co. Mayo/Galway)

DAFM

- Development of Results-based Agri-environment Scheme

Teagasc

- Development of knowledge exchange groups for upland farmers

The Heritage Council

- Communication strategy
- Schools programme

USC

- Networking with other blanket bog project in southern Europe

Northern and Western Regional Assembly

- Liaison with INTERREG programmes

RTÉ

- Production of nature TV programmes

Fáilte Ireland

- Guidelines for sustainable access to Natura 2000
- Community workshops



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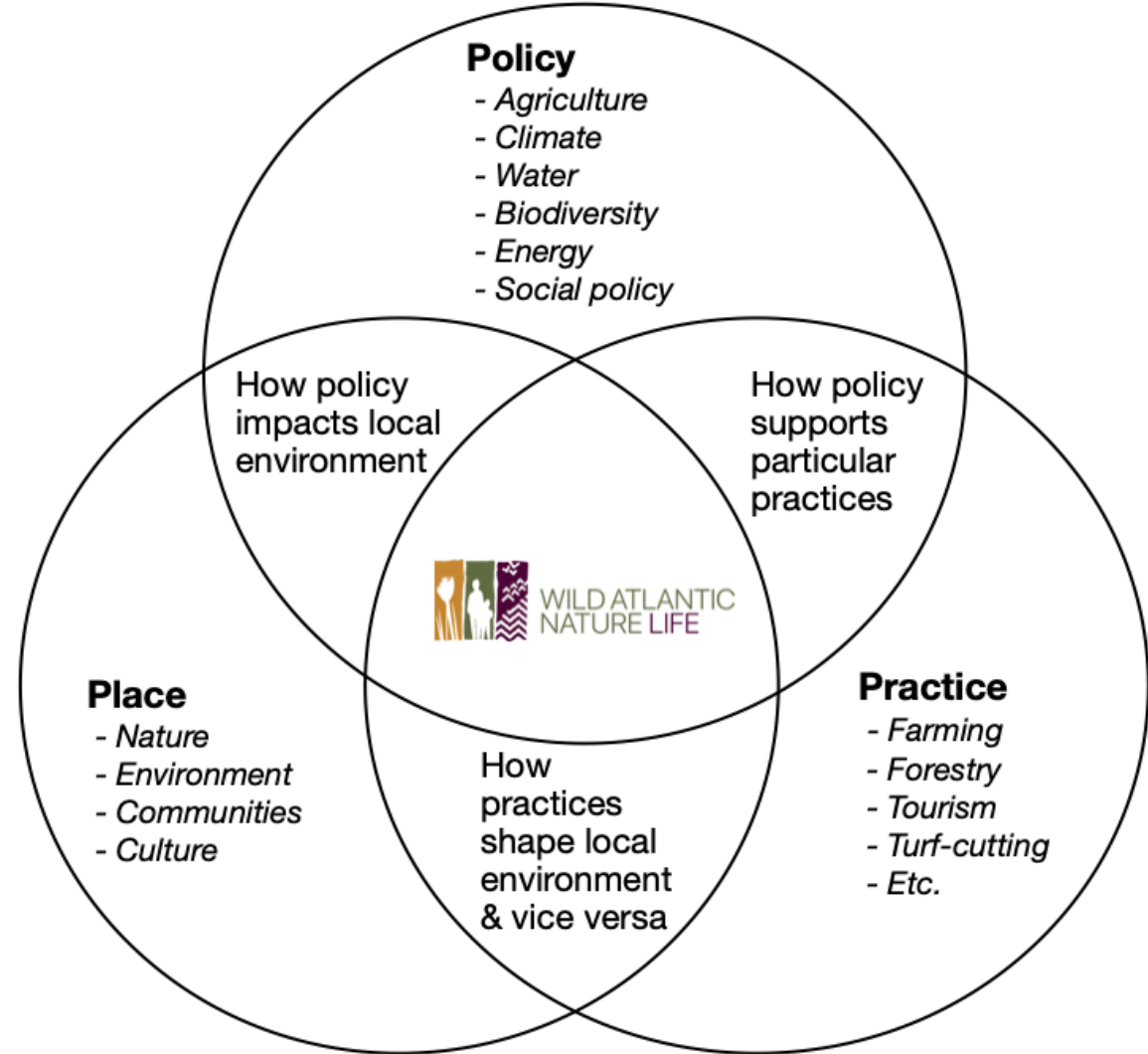
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WILD ATLANTIC
NATURE LIFE

LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature

- Key objective = high **quality** habitats, sensitive to local contexts that deliver for the environment, farmers and local communities



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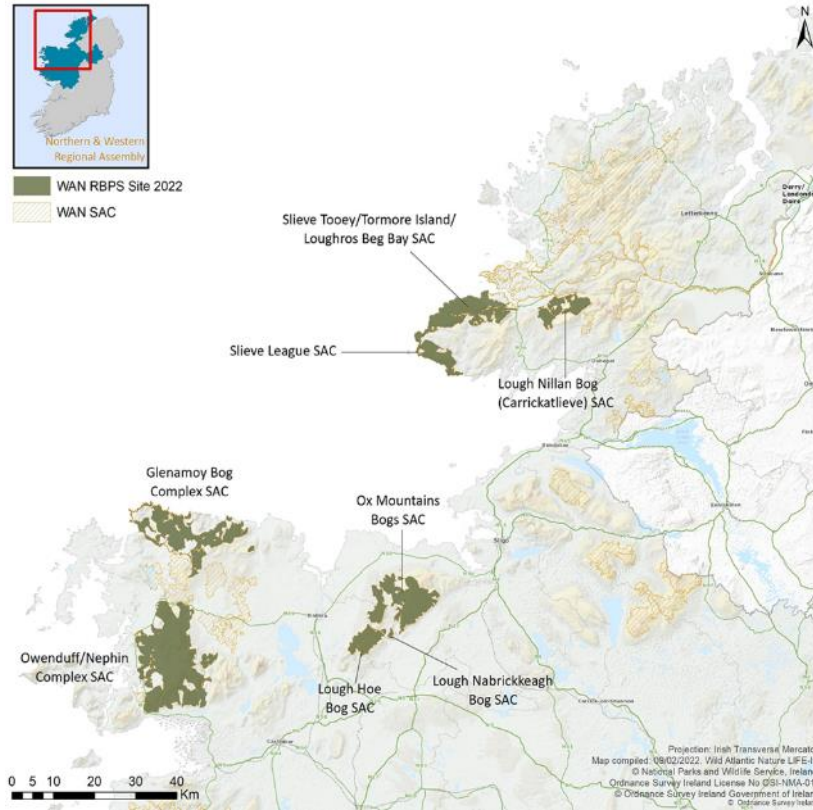


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LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature Results-based Agri-environment Payment Scheme (RBPS) 2021/2022



- 823 farmers (>85% uptake)
- 52 advisors trained
- 63,000ha land surveyed
- ~ €3m direct farmer payments
- >100 restoration actions
- Lessons for CSP (2023-2027)
- Goggins *et al.* (2026)



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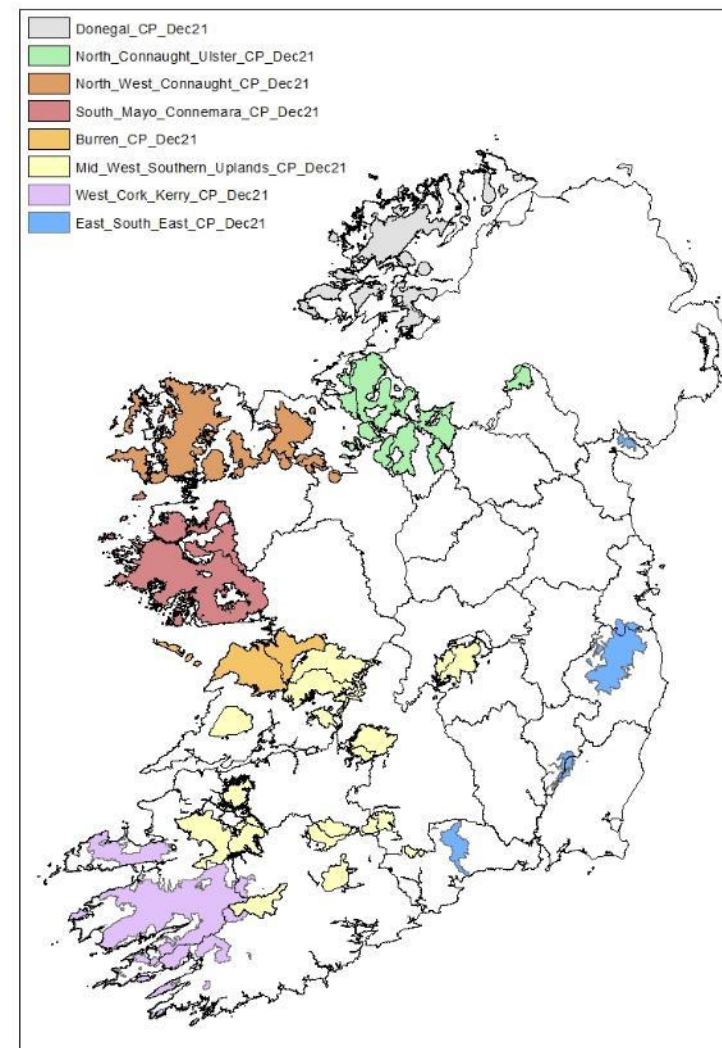


Upscaling of RBPS approach in CSP

- Eight ACRES Cooperation Project teams (€750m)
- Delivery of results-based model to 20,000 farmers
 - Results-based, supporting actions & landscape scale payments
 - Funded via CSP AECM, NPIs, Cooperation Articles

*** We now have an implementation mechanism for conservation measures & restoration actions ***

- Integration of land use policies
- Incentivises delivery of environmental services (food, fibre, water, nature, climate)



See Douthwaite *et al.* (2026) Pilots, proponents and policy windows: How Results-Based Payment Schemes (RBPS) became mainstream in Irish agri-environmental policy, *Agricultural Systems*, 233, 104621



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Upskilling of ACRES Cooperation Project teams

- Peatland training delivered to key members of all teams including Scottish and local training
- Restoration planning at demonstration sites in six CPs
 - Several of the teams are managing these under our supervision to gain peatland restoration experience



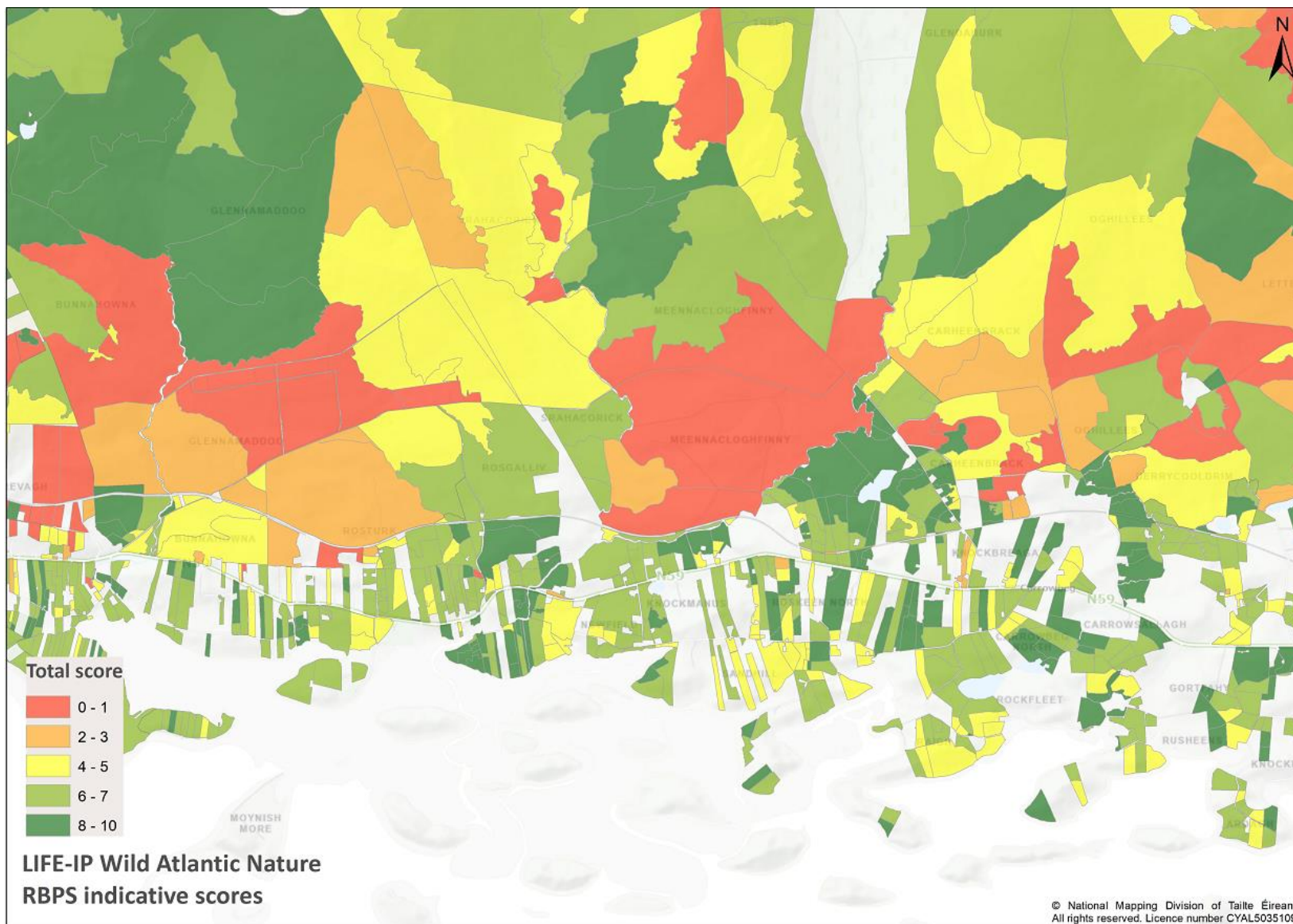
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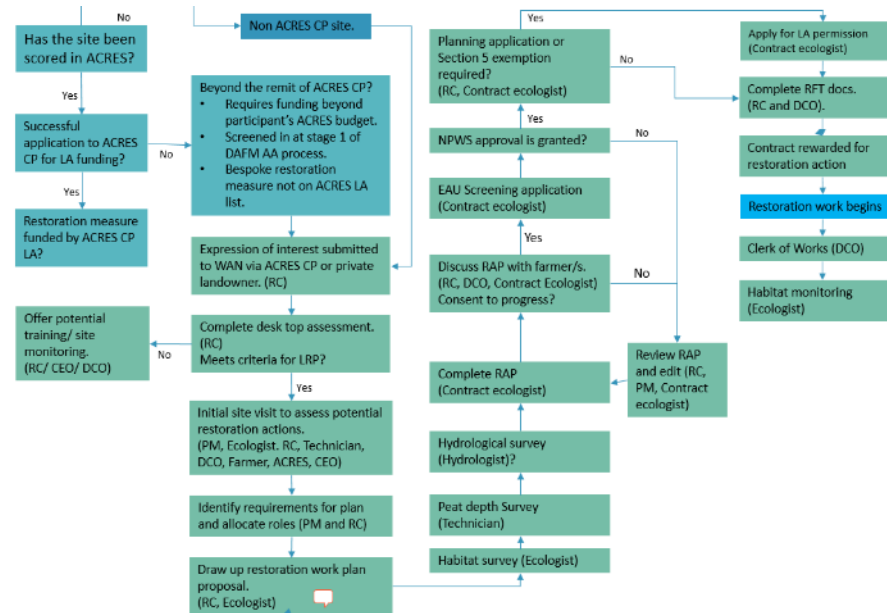
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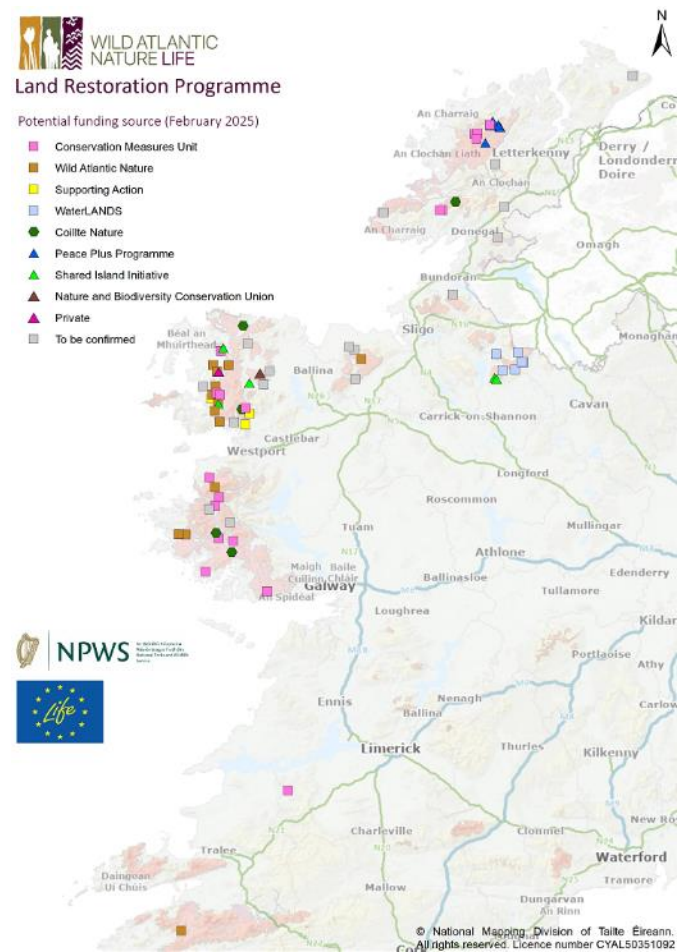
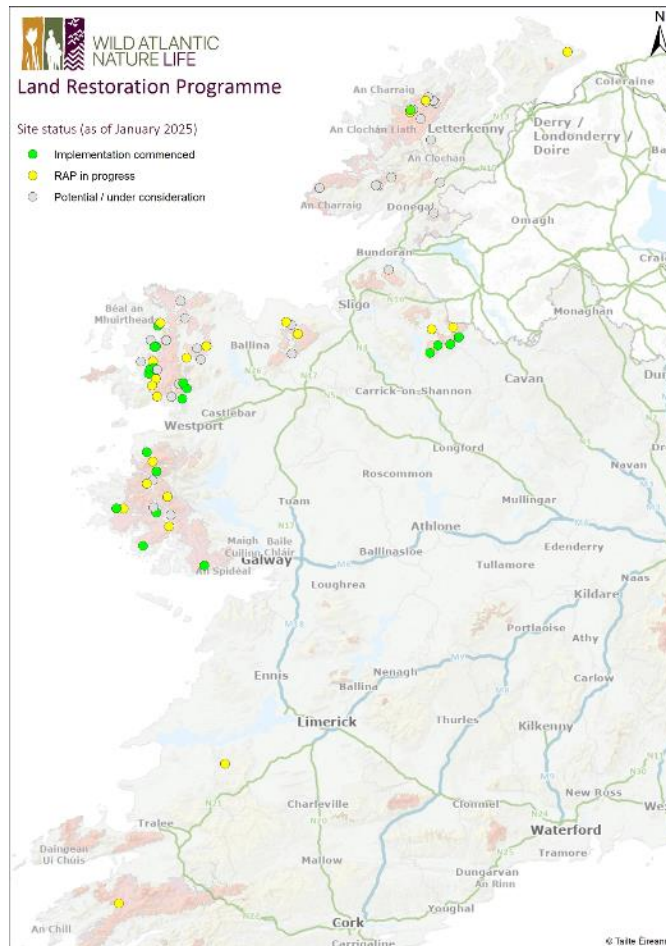


**WILD ATLANTIC
NATURE LIFE**

Land restoration programme



Land restoration programme & funding sources (2024)



- **2024** (Direct and via leverage funds): **1031ha**
- **2025** (Direct): **c.1000ha**
- Constantly increasing capacity (>1200 people trained since 2021)
- If supported, this model can deliver **3,000-5,000ha/annum**



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Complementary funding (assisted) – Bangor Erris Bog (NPWS) & Merlin Rock



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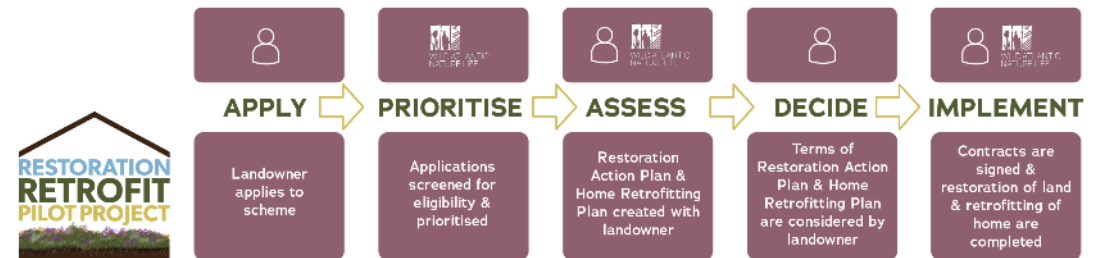
Restoration – Retrofit pilot programme

- Retro-fitting programme
 - Links turbary rights in SAC to home energy retrofit
 - Restoration of turbary plot
 - Revocation of turbary rights
- Addresses several national/EU policies
 - Habitats Directive
 - Climate Action Plan
 - Air Quality; Energy poverty; Rural development
 - Steering Group: NPWS, DECC, SEAI



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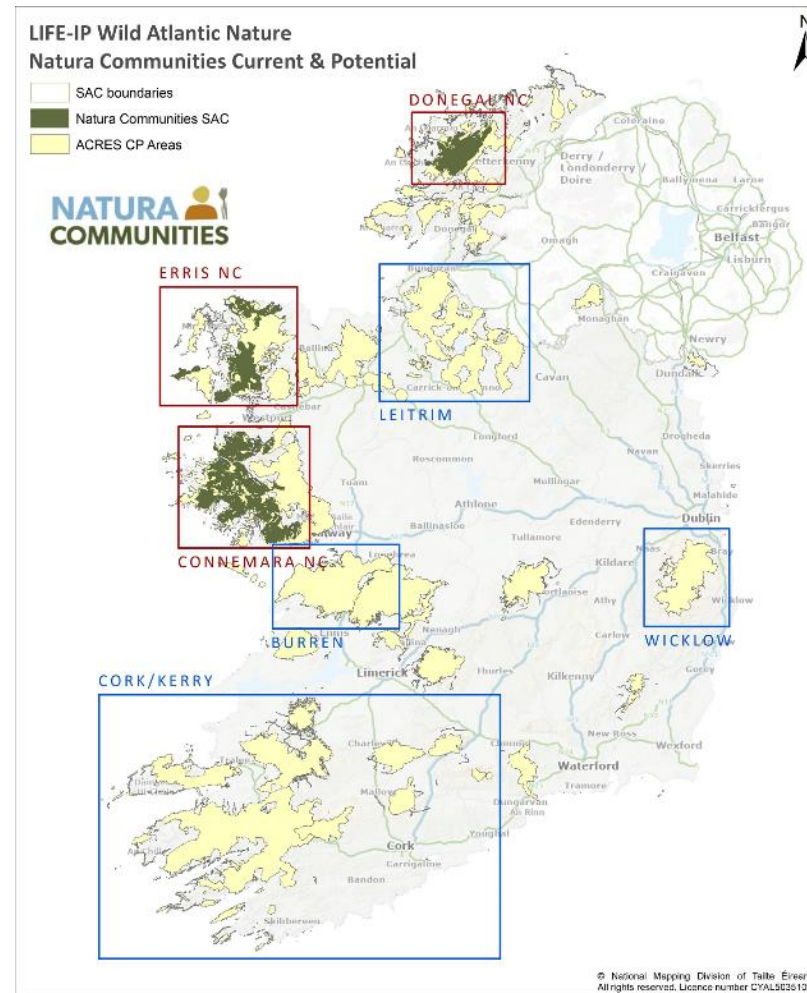


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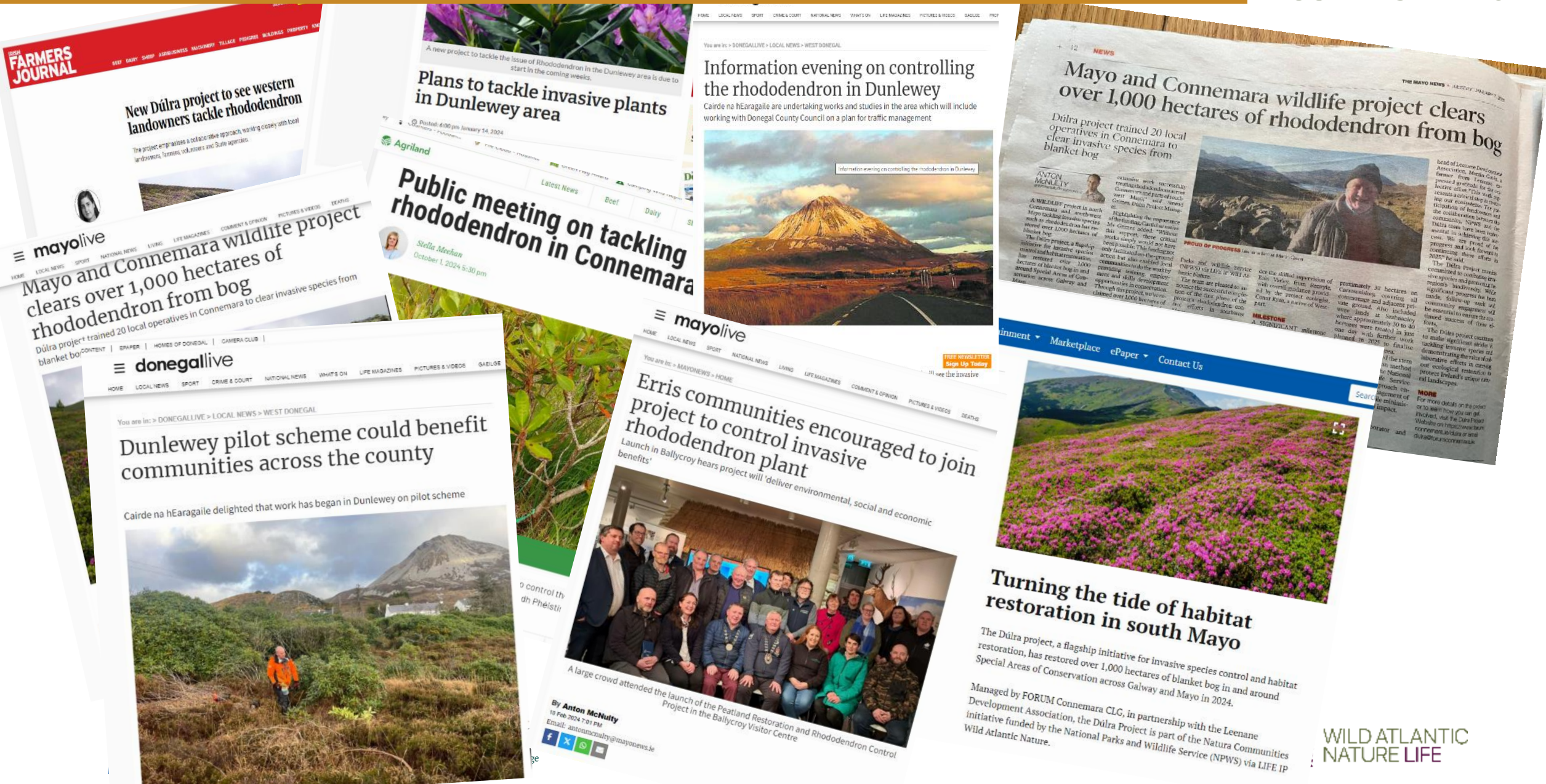
Building capacity to enable community-led nature conservation



Building capacity to enable community-led nature conservation



Building capacity to enable community-led nature conservation



Monitoring – site selection

ERODING BLANKET BOG



DRAINAGE (ARTIFICIAL)



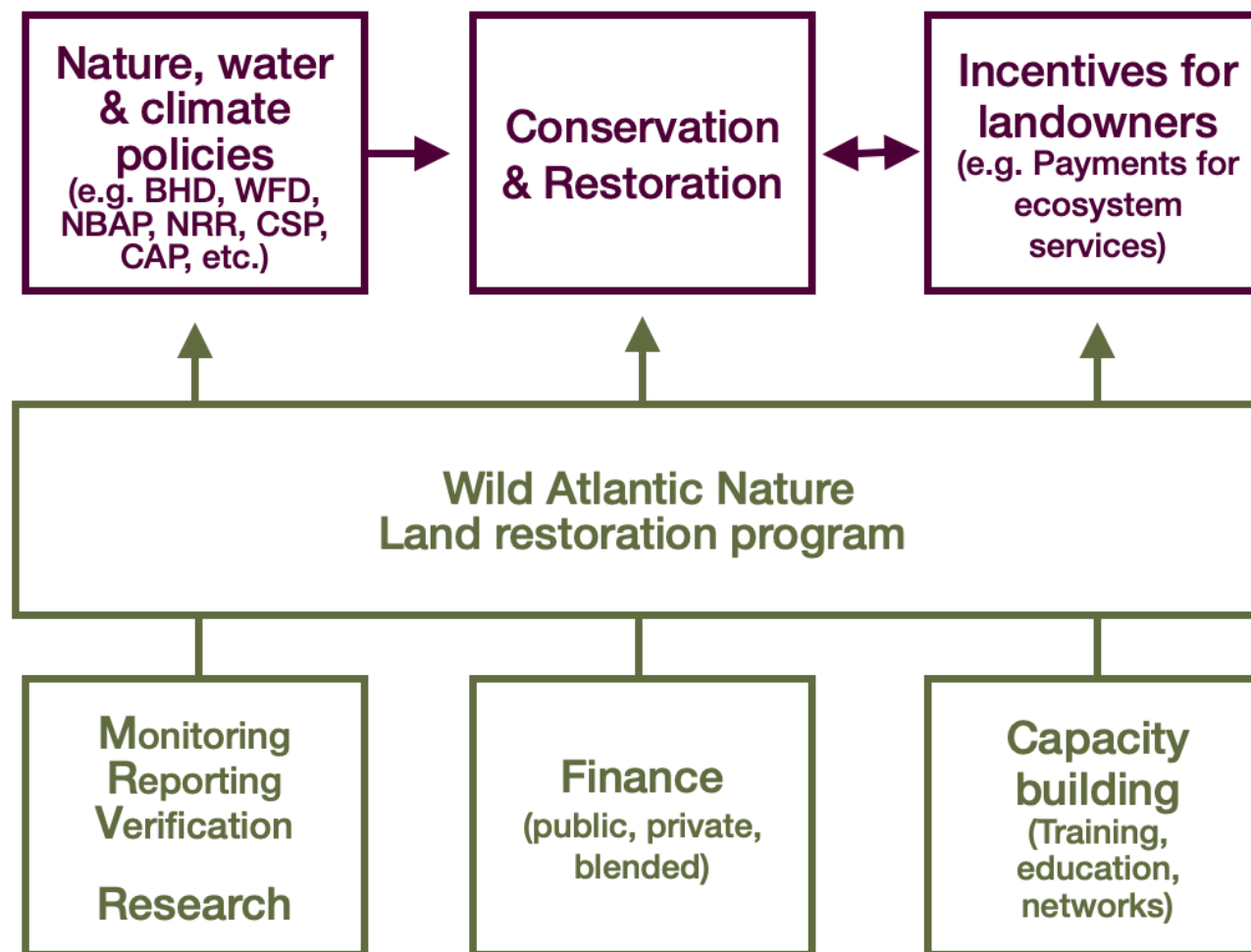
FOREST TO BOG



TURF BANKS



Towards an integrated approach to (peatland) conservation



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