

Implementing Results-oriented AECM: Adapting the concept to EAFRD 2014 – 2020

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Department of
**Agriculture,
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An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**

Overview

- Locally-led Schemes in Ireland's RDP
- Burren Programme
- Controllability and verifiability
- Other Challenges



Locally-led Agri-Environment Schemes in Ireland

- Burren Programme (Art. 28)

European Innovation Partnerships (EIPs)

- Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Hen Harrier Schemes (Art. 35)
- Others EIPs – competitive call process (Art. 35)

Burren programme

- Article 28 measure in RDP 2014-2020
- Maintain and enhance Natura habitats (SACs)
- “Locally-led” approach



Burren Programme

- Delivery is through a **project team** and steering group of relevant stakeholders
- Specialist training for advisors and farmers
- Two interventions (**hybrid approach**)
 - Result-based payments for grazing management i.e. performance-based
 - Capital investments, such as scrub removal, track/stonewall repair, installation of water troughs etc



Burren Grassland Payments

- Performance-related payments based on habitat indicator
- Stepped payments based on field scoring system, for a range of environmental quality parameters related to biodiversity, soil and water quality (10 point scale)
- Banded payments i.e. degressive rates applied >40ha, >80ha and >120ha
- Rates from €60 to €180 per hectare (1st band)

Field assessments



Burren Scoring Criteria

Grazing and plant litter levels

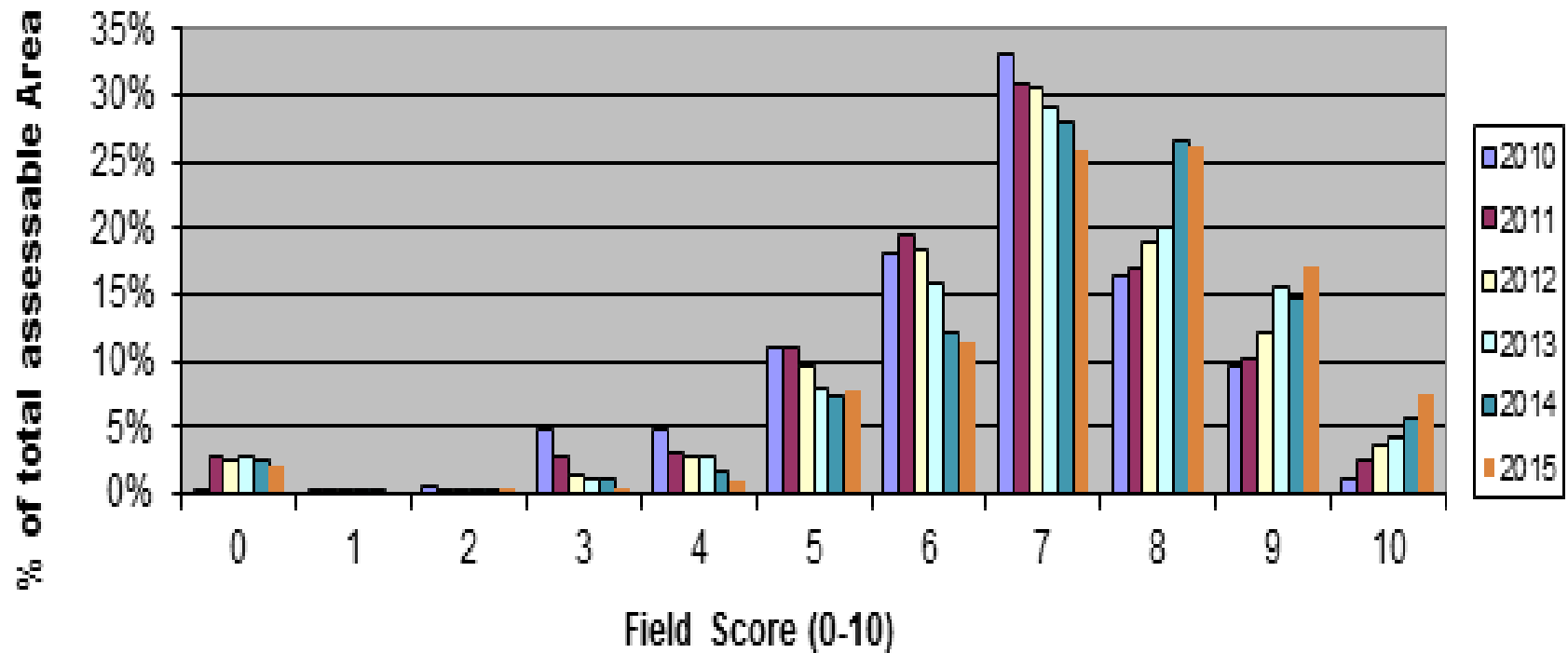
Damaging activity, e.g. bare soil, erosion, water contamination, unauthorised activities

Bracken, purple moor grass, encroaching scrub, other noxious weeds.

Ecological integrity of the field – diversity and conservation value maintained

Burren Scoring data

Variation in Field Scores 2010-2015



Controllability and verifiability

Project team

- Training farmers and specialist advisors
 - Initial and annual refresher training
- Reduce Administrative burden on farmers
- Harmonisation of assessment/scores
- Farm plan screening

Controllability and verifiability

Project team

- Min. 10% on farm checks on claims to ensure standards and terms and conditions are met
- Penalties where scores drops by more than a certain threshold then proportionate penalties will be applied
- Penalties for false claims, training not completed, damaging activities

Controllability and verifiability

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- Oversight role and through steering group
- Baseline and Cross-compliance
- Area and eligibility checks
- Dual funding cross checks other AECMs
- Capital investment claim cross-checks

Challenges and changes

- to meet regulatory requirements
- 1 year *versus* 5 year plans
- Limited flexibility in longer term plans
- Payment on results *versus* Penalty regime
- January start dates
- Payment structure (degressivity, banding)



Challenges and changes for new locally led schemes

- Developing community involvement
- Building confidence in the bottom-up approach
- Being adaptable to change
- Dealing with farmers, advisors, scientists and designing schemes to suit needs of multiple stakeholders



Advantages

- ✓ Payments only where environmental dividend achieved
- ✓ Stepped scoring system motivates farmers & encourages optimum environmental management
- ✓ Not counting individual species – more understandable for planners/farmers
- ✓ Result indicator updated and available on-ongoing basis

Disadvantages

- ❖ 100% field assessments/scoring each year (Scalability?)
- ❖ More difficulty in budgeting & variable payments for farmers
- ❖ Higher administrative/running costs



Key points

- Regulatory challenges – Art. 28 versus Art. 35
- 100% assessments by advisors
- Well defined target areas
- Project teams and stakeholder engagement
- Specialist trained advisors



Thank you



<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/farmerschemespayments/locallyledschemes/>

<http://burrenprogramme.com/>

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