



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

# River Basin Management Plan 2023 – 2027

Water Policy Advisory Committee

- 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Water Division

# Document Structure



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

## Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland

2022 - 2027



Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage  
[www.gov.ie/Housing](http://www.gov.ie/Housing)

## Chapters

1. Introduction
2. Ireland's River Basin
3. Our Water Resources
4. Implementation of Second Cycle Plan
5. Programme of Measures – how we protect & restore water
6. What happens next?

Appendix 1 – Correlation table with Annex VII and Directive Text

Appendix 2 – Full List of Proposed Measures

Appendix 3 – List of Areas for Action

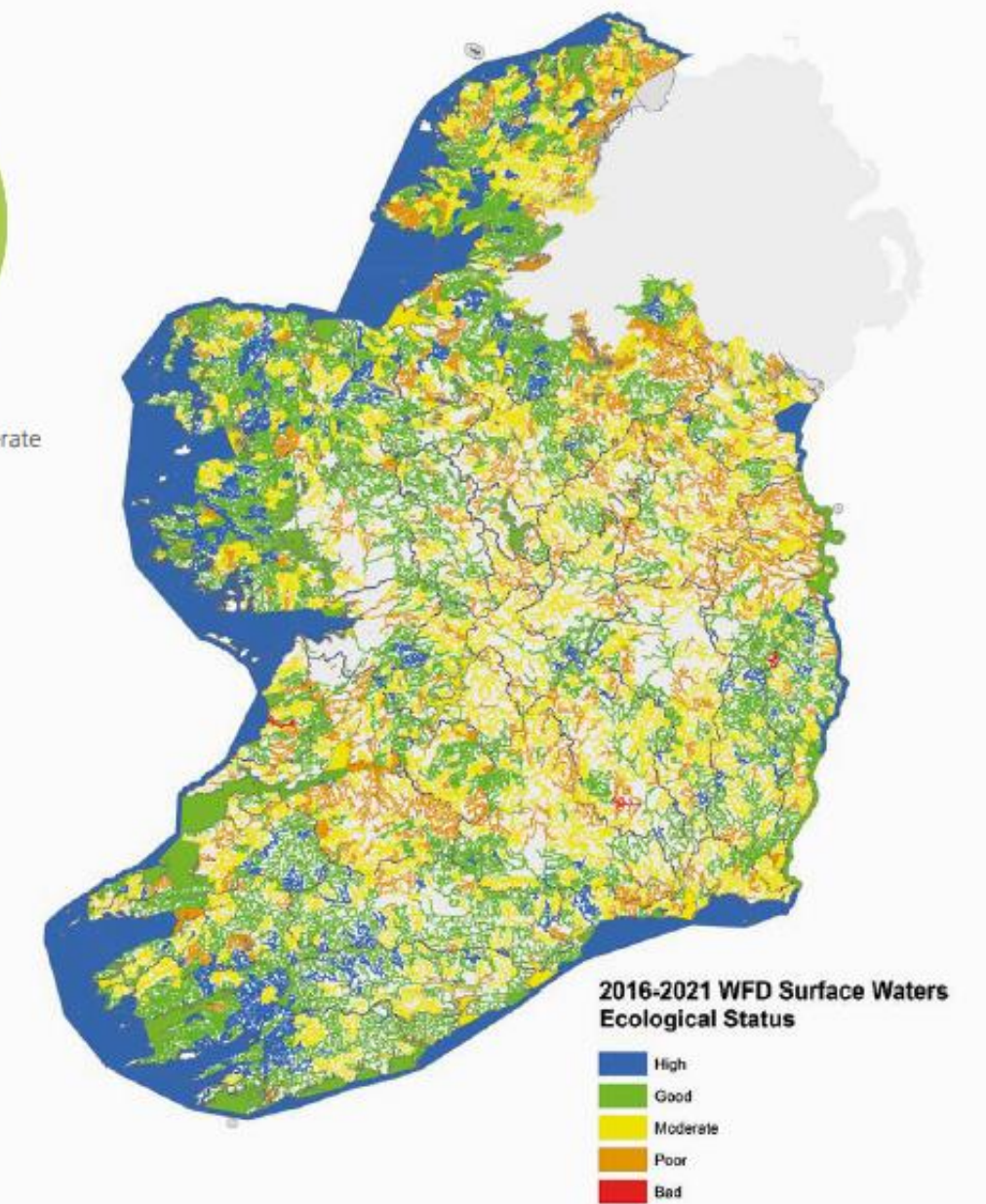
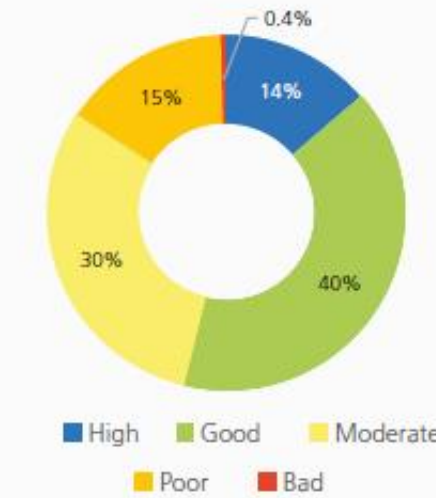


# Water status

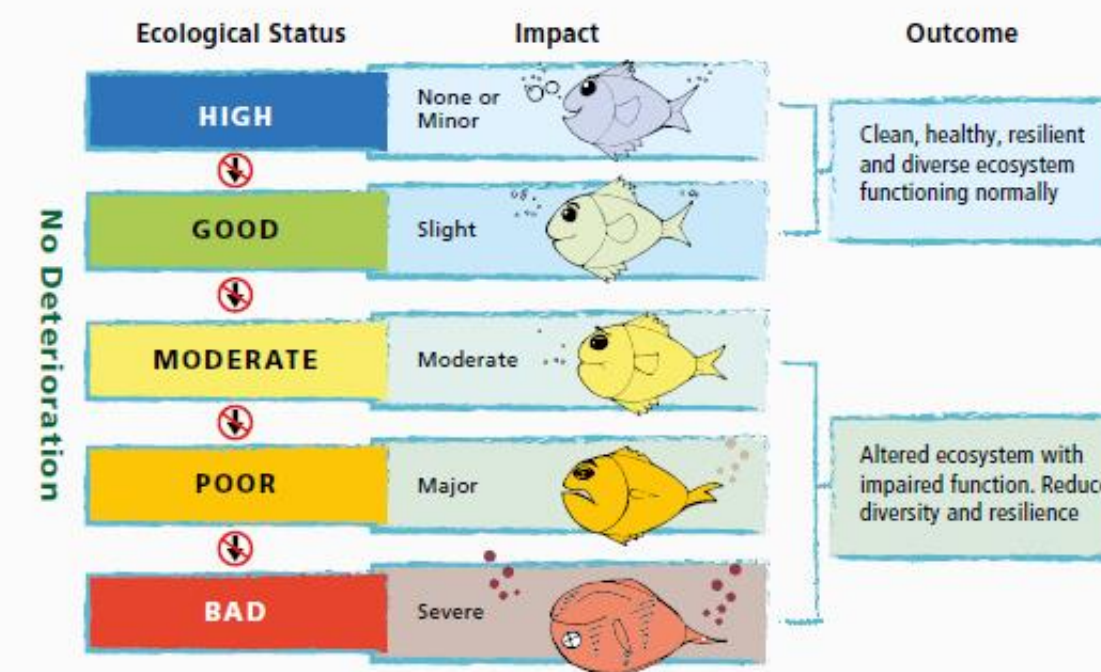
- 54% of surface waters satisfactory
- 91% of groundwater satisfactory
- Net declines nationally (- 1% to 16%)
- In Areas for Action, where measures are targeted – Net improvement in river status (+10%)

## Is water quality improving or declining?

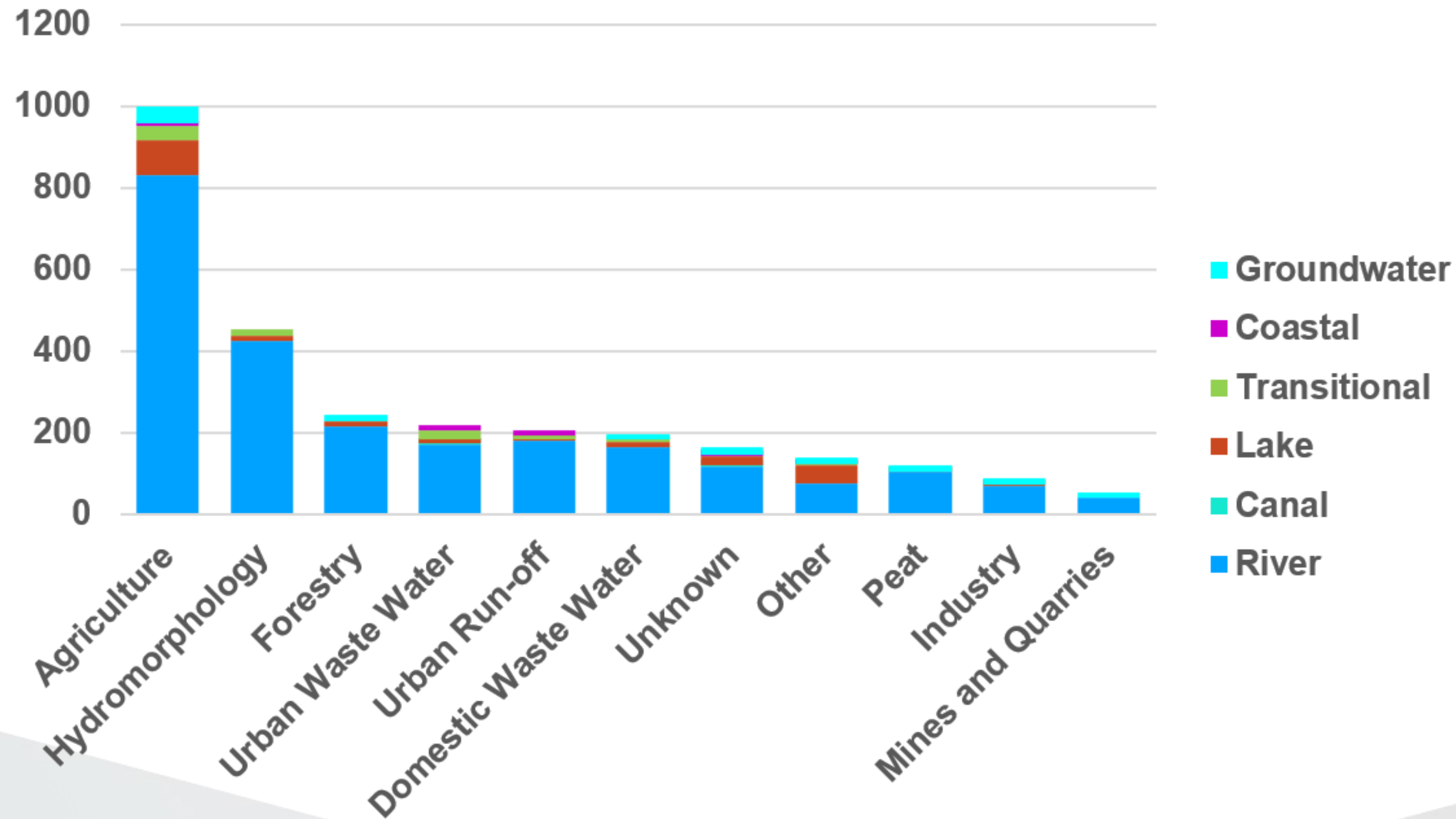
This assessment shows that over half (54%) of our surface waters are in good or better ecological status which means that nearly half (46%) are in unsatisfactory condition. Overall, our water quality has declined. The number of water bodies in satisfactory condition in our estuaries and coastal waters has declined by almost 16 percent and 10 percent respectively since the last assessment (2013-2018). There has also been a relatively small decline in the water quality of our rivers and lakes.



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# Water Quality: our most significant pressures



**Table 6.** Number of waterbodies in each waterbody type per significant pressure category.

Significant pressure category	Waterbody Type						Total
	River	Canal	Lake	Transitional	Coastal	Groundwater	
Agriculture	831		84	35	6	44	1,000
Hydromorphology	424		14	4			442
Forestry	215		14			4	233
Urban Waste Water	172	1	10	22	3		208
Urban Run-off	179		3	11	3		196
Domestic Waste Water	163		13	6		6	188
Unknown	118	1	22	2	3	18	164
Other*	75		45	2	1	16	139
Peat	103		2			1	106
Industry	70		1			18	89
Mines and Quarries	41					4	45
<b>Total Significant Pressures</b>	<b>2,391</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>2,810</b>

\*Includes a range of other smaller pressures such as aquaculture, historically polluted sites and invasive species.

# River Basin Management Plan - Key consideration



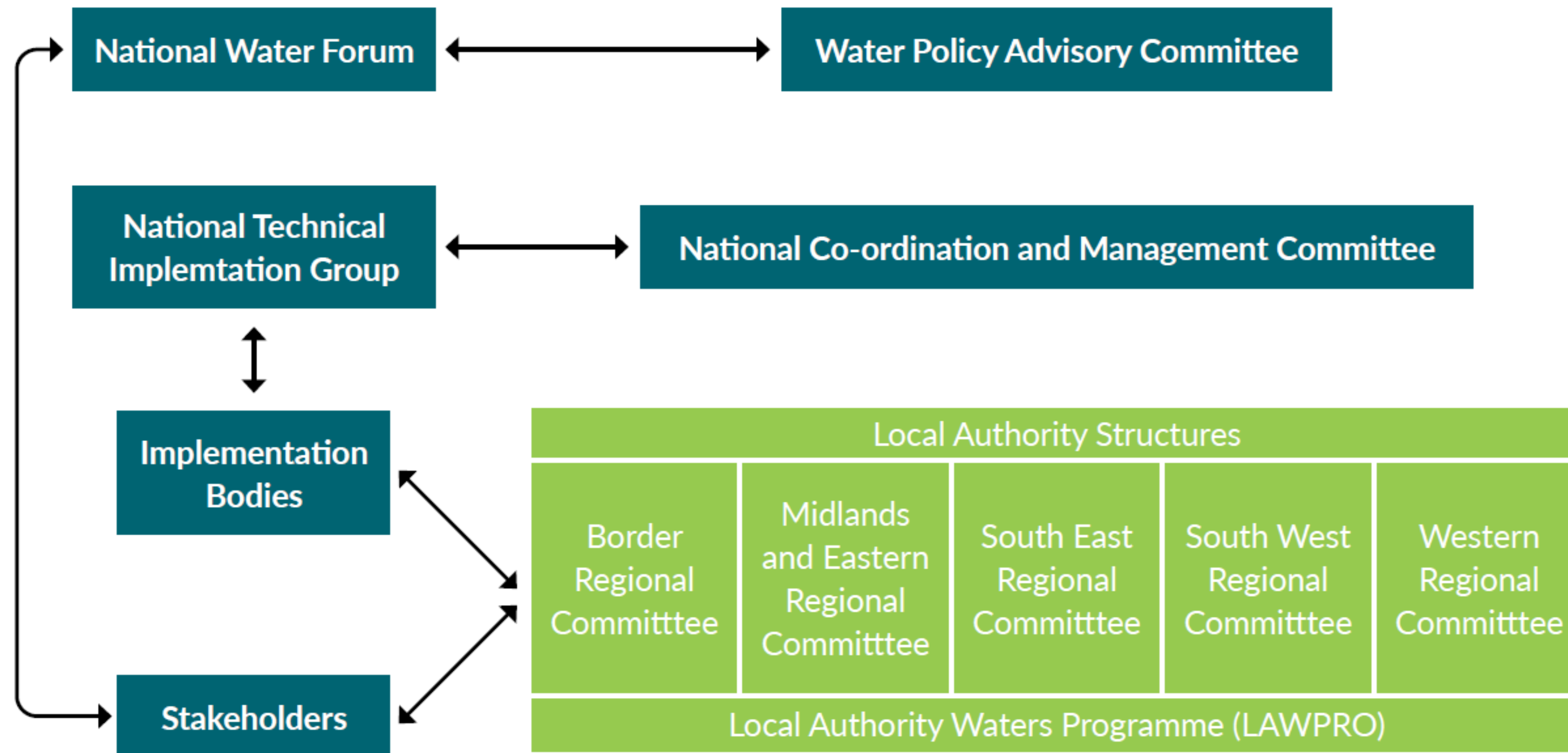
1. The high level of environmental ambition committed to in the Programme for Government
2. Set quantitative targets for the deployment of measures
3. The updated characterisation / risk assessment outcomes
4. Lessons from the implementation of measures to date
5. Feedback from a wide range of stakeholders (1,400 submissions + 2,000 received through LAWPRO).
6. The scientific evidence for the purpose of targeting '*the right measures, in the right place, at the right time*'

# River Basin Management Plan - Key consideration



7. Deliver integrated, multiple policy objectives for water, biodiversity and climate, wherever possible
8. The evolving governance and implementation structural needs for the next cycle
  - E.g. Local authorities / LAWPRO review and ASSAP review
9. The need to increase environmental enforcement and compliance
10. Opportunities to strengthen links between the WFD and other regulatory processes
11. The need to replace outdated and deficient regulatory regimes with more comprehensive, robust and streamlined management regimes.

# WFD Implementation Structures

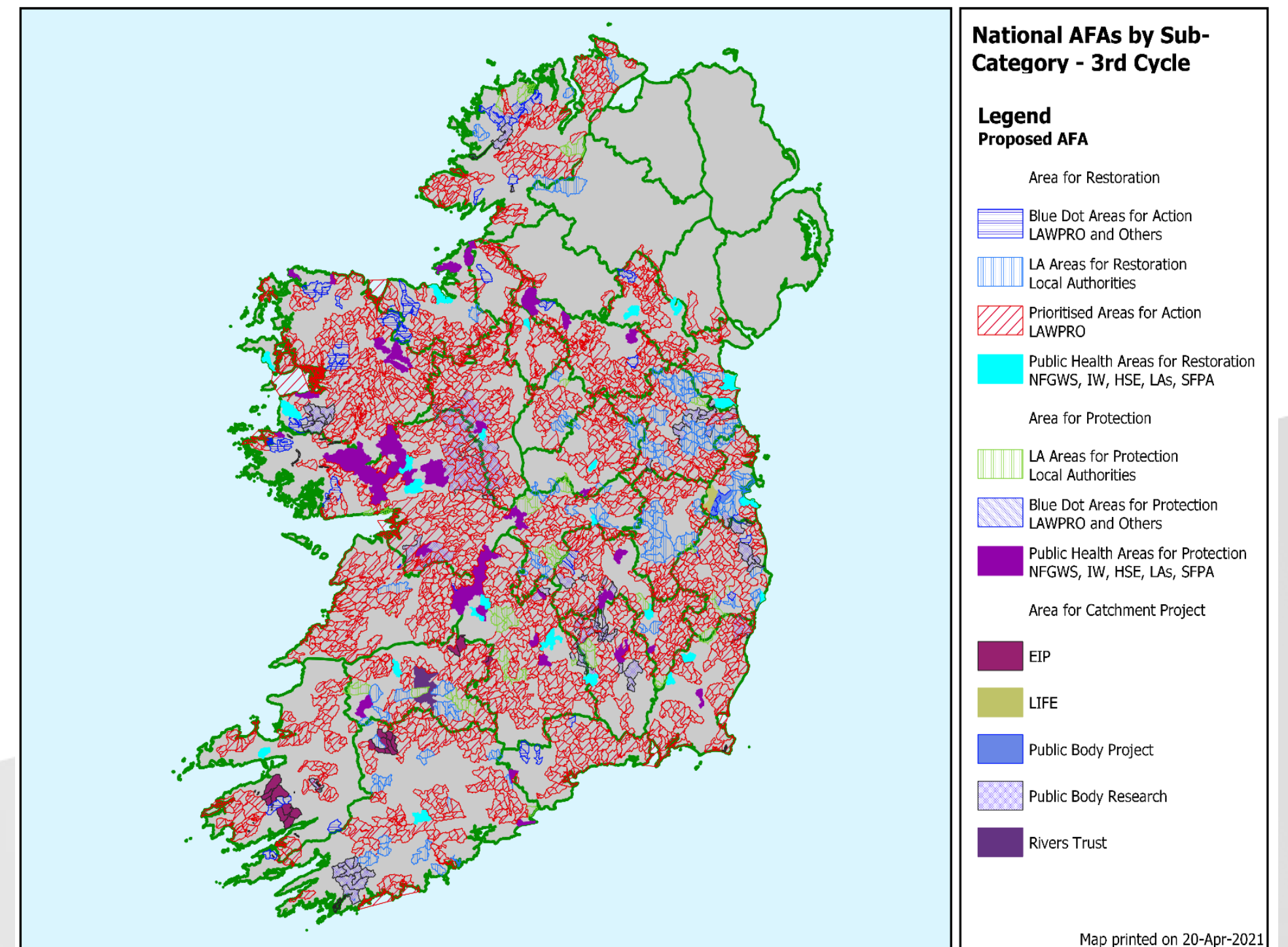
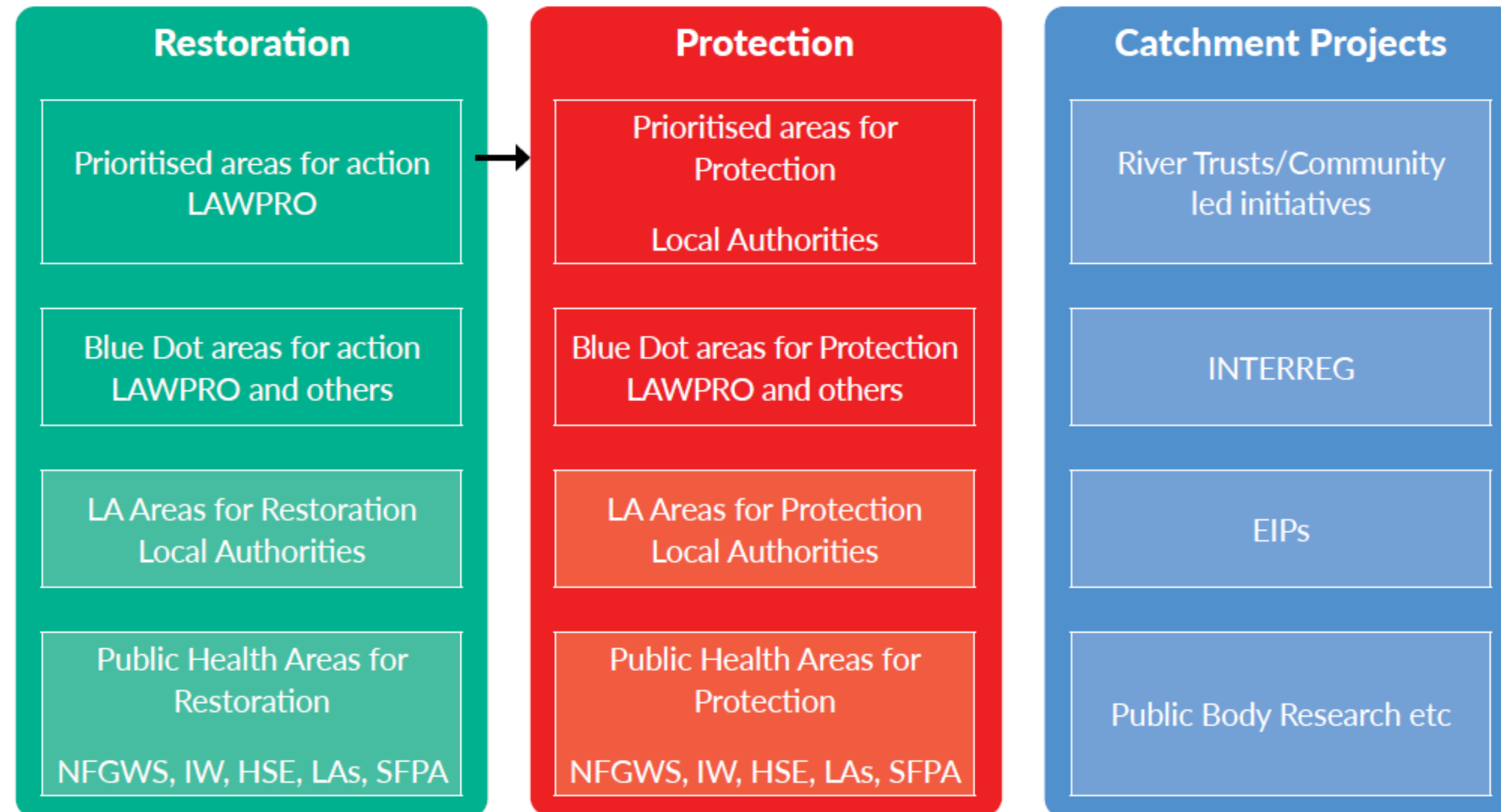


# Additional focus – Areas for Action (527)



## 3rd Cycle Areas for Action:

Process evolved to also capture on-going work that's not in the 2nd Cycle RBMP







# Programme of Measures

# Programme of Measures – Most significant pressures



- Agriculture
- Hydromorphology
  - Barriers
  - Arterial drainage, land drainage, urban modifications, flood protection
- Forestry
- Urban wastewater discharges
- Urban runoff
- Domestic wastewater discharges

# Significant new developments



- Water EIP now in place (LAWPRO / Teagasc / Dairy Industry) - €60m
- National Agricultural Inspection Programme (EPA / Local authorities)
- National Land Use Review – implications for Arterial Drainage practices
- Nature Restoration Law
- New Infrastructure, Nature and Climate Fund - €3.15bn
- National Barriers Removal / Mitigation Programme (IFI) - €100m
- HMWB review
- Development of 46 Catchment Management Plans and Sectoral Action Plans

# Plan ambition



<b>Total Surface Water Bodies</b>	<b>4,328</b>
<b>Water bodies that achieved their environmental objectives by 2021</b>	2,309 (53%)
<b>Water bodies expected to achieve their environmental objectives by 2027 based on the current planned Actions for Cycle 3</b>	2,509 – 2,709 (58% - 63%)
<p><b>Remaining water bodies that in the 4<sup>th</sup> cycle, will;</b></p> <p><b>(1) require additional targeted actions during Cycle 3 with the aim of achieving their environmental objectives by 2027, or</b></p> <p><b>(2) require an extension of time beyond 2027 due to the impact of ‘natural conditions’ on the rate of recovery, or</b></p> <p><b>(3) require a phased recovery over a more sustainable timeframe of one or more river basin management cycles beyond 2027 because it would be technically infeasible and/or disproportionately expensive to achieve any sooner.</b></p> <p><b><i>(Note: this will be the subject of the interim review of progress in 2025)</i></b></p>	1,612 - 1,812 (37 - 42%)
<b>Less Stringent Objectives</b>	7 (related to historic mines)

# Next Steps



1. Editing and finalising the text of RBMP & POMs
2. Review by the Water Policy Advisory Committee
3. Complete statutory environmental assessments (SEA and AA)
4. Ministerial and government approval of the plan
5. It is anticipated that the plan will be published in Q1 2024