


**NI COUNTRYSIDE
MANAGEMENT
SCHEME**

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**Agri-environment Schemes
– some successes to date**

- Approx 42% of NI land area under agreement
- 13,000 participants
- 6,500 ha breeding wader habitat
- 625 ha native trees planted
- 1,717 ha of crops grown to feed seed eating birds over winter



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NI Countryside Management Scheme

- Developed under EC 1698/2005
- Control and governance framework 1975/2006
- Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, Axis 2
 - RDP funding total = £500 million
 - NICMS and OFS funding total = £219 million
 - Schemes developed to meet environmental targets and provide value for money for RDP funding
 - Public funds for public goods



NI Countryside Management Scheme

Targets

NI Programme for Government 2008-2011 - increase to 50% land under environmental enhancement agreements

Contribute to delivery of Biodiversity Strategy, Natura 2000 management, Water Framework Directive and conservation of genetic diversity



NI Countryside Management Scheme

Objective

To support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging farmers and other land managers to apply agricultural production methods compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, the landscape and its features, natural resources, the soil and genetic diversity.

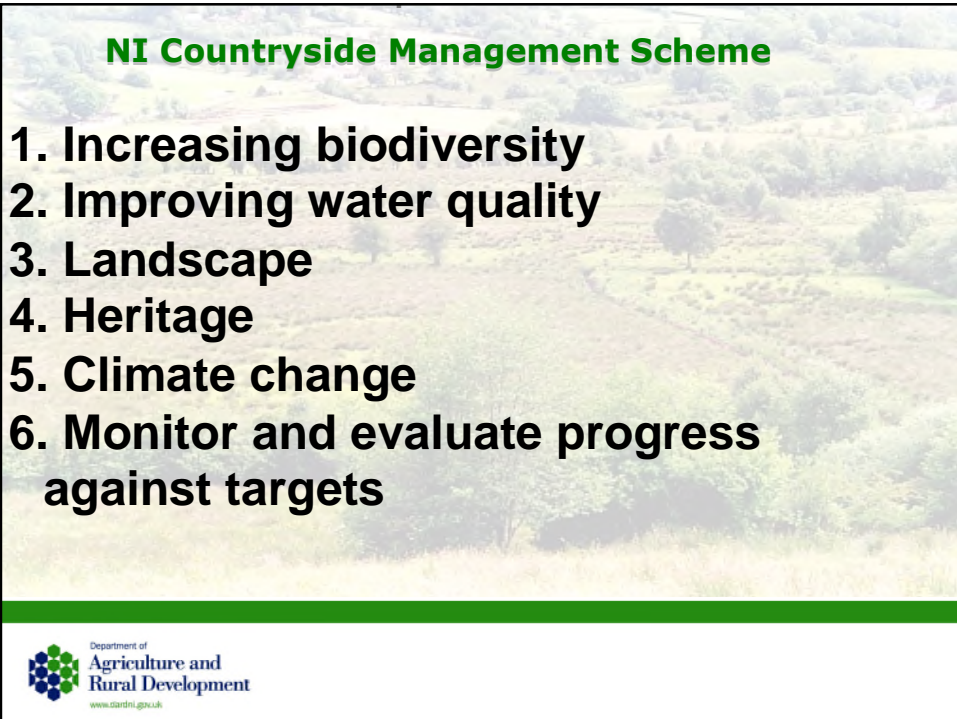


NI Countryside Management Scheme

The main aims of this agri-environment scheme are:


- To enhance biodiversity in line with the **Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy (NIBS)** by maintaining species diversity through the positive management of wildlife habitats
- To assist implementation of the **Water Framework Directive** and the protection and enhancement of **Natura 2000 sites**
- To enhance **landscape and heritage features** by integrating their management into the everyday workings of the farm

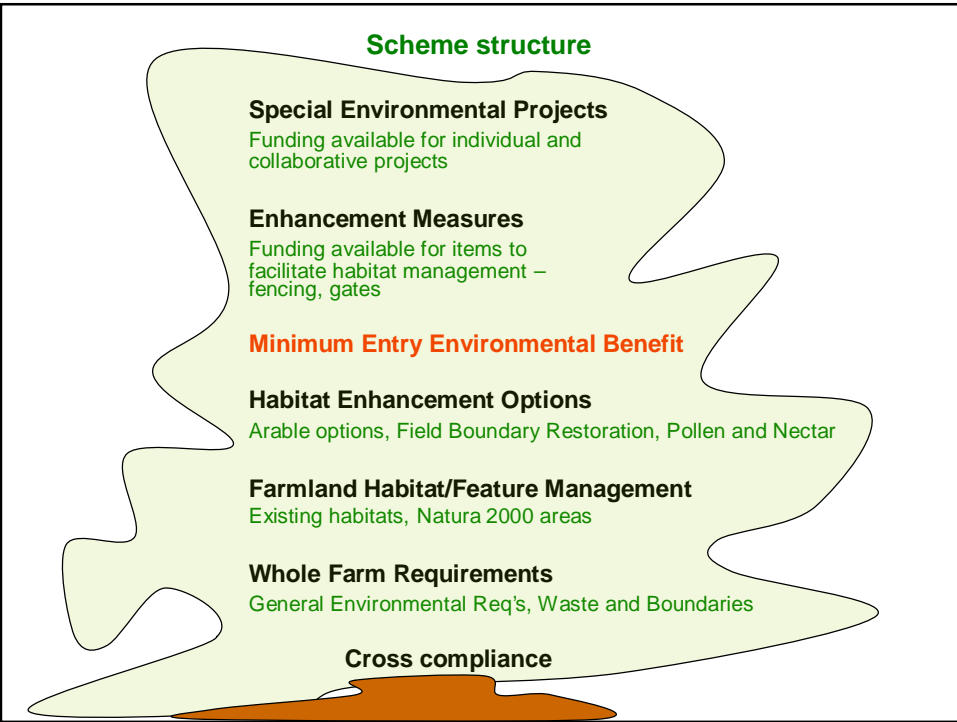




NI Countryside Management Scheme

1. Increasing biodiversity
2. Improving water quality
3. Landscape
4. Heritage
5. Climate change
6. Monitor and evaluate progress against targets



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**Management requirements
for the Whole Farm Payment**

General Environmental Requirements


Field Boundary Management



Farm Nutrient and Waste Management

Agreement management




Cross compliance



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Farmland habitats / Features

- Grasslands
- Breeding wader sites
- Woodland, scrub and parkland
- Wetlands
- Moorland and lowland raised bog



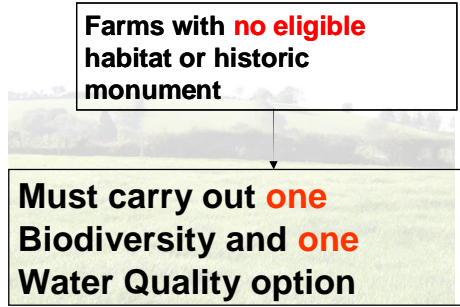
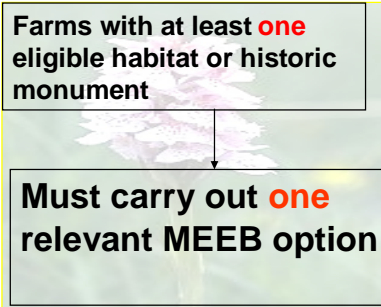
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Habitat Enhancement Options

- Optional
- Contribution to MEEB
- Target relevant HAPs/SAPs
- Examples:
 - Wild bird cover
 - Field boundary restoration
 - Riparian zone management



Minimum Entry Environmental Benefit (MEEB)



MEEB – farms with habitat/historic monument

- Woodland habitat
- MEEB must be relevant to habitat
- For example fencing to exclude livestock
- If habitat in good condition, can select another option



MEEB activities on habitats

- Leggy heather moorland requiring burning or flailing
- Bracken control on species rich grassland





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Wild Bird Cover



Three types:

- Cereal crop/s
- One-year mixed crop
- Two-year mixed crop



Field boundary restoration

- Annual allowance
- Claim for work done



- Landscape

Field boundary restoration

Riparian zones

- Riparian zone – standard
- Riparian zone – native tree planting
- Riparian zone – enhanced
- Must add stone or aquamats to riverbed
- Removal of non-native species

Riparian zones – enhanced Non-native species and riverbed enhancement



Delayed cutting and grazing of grassland



- No grazing April and May
- Cutting after 1 July
- No disturbance to hares and leverets from machinery and livestock

Pollen and nectar mixes

- Bumblebees
- Legume and fine grasses
- Flowering March-September



Organic Management – encourages farmers to remain in organic farming system

- Not in receipt of OFS payment
- Land to be certified by approved organic sector certification body



Enhancement Measures

- Works to meet the requirements of Scheme and enhance landscape
- Traditional pillars and gates
- Plastic recycling bin



Special Environmental Project

- Limited amount of funding available
- Must meet aims of the Scheme
- Individual or joint
- Higher payment for joint project
- Maximum grant £5,000 (£6,000 joint)



Special Environmental Project

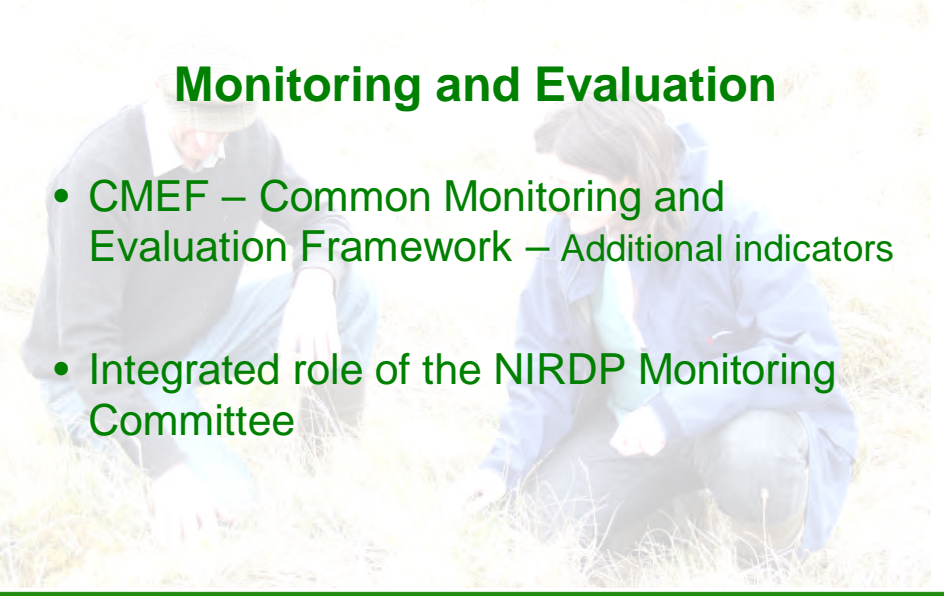
Possible examples:


- Priority species/habitat
- Water protection projects
- Designated site
- Access



Monitoring and Evaluation

- CMEF – Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework – Additional indicators
- Integrated role of the NIRDP Monitoring Committee

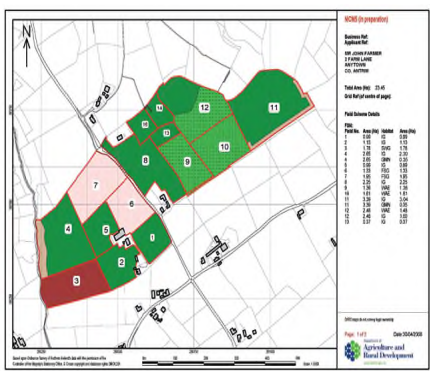





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Scheme agreement processing, information and advice

- End to end computerisation
- Farmer agreement pack
 - management maps
 - scheme schedule
 - scheme agreement
 - Farm Nutrient and Waste Management information
 - Relevant management notes
- Compulsory attendance at training
- Ongoing advice and guidance
- Annual claim made on IACS SAF





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