

Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme

NICMS

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Countryside Management Branch

National REPS Conference 2008

Department of
Agriculture and
Rural Development
www.dardni.gov.uk

Agri-environment Schemes

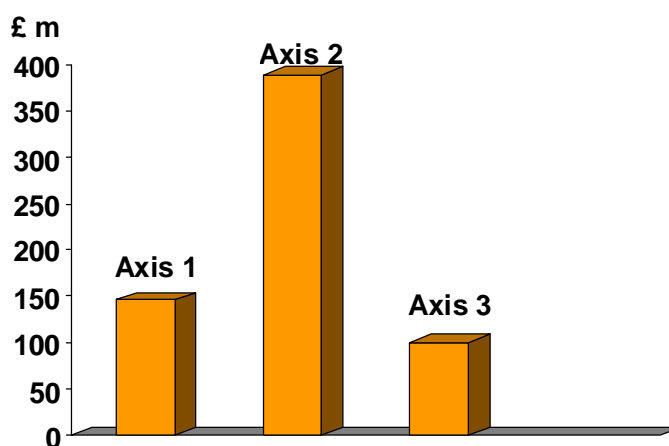
Environmental Sensitive Areas (ESA)

Countryside Management Scheme (CMS)

Over 12,500 participants - 448,000 ha - 40% approx of NI

Department of
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NIRDP Budget 2007-2013

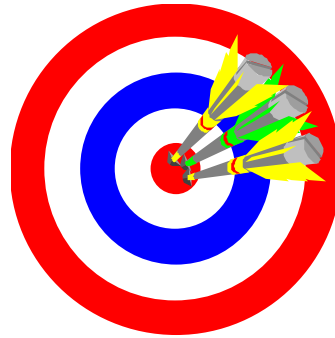


Targets

- NI Programme for Government increase to 50% land under environmental enhancement agreements
- Proposed to have 5,000 new entrants and retention of existing numbers with a target of 18,000 in schemes by 2013
- £220 m Budget for agri-environment and organic scheme

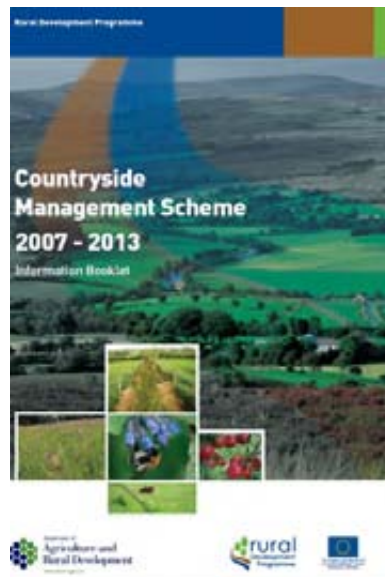
NICMS aims

- Biodiversity
- Improving water quality
- Landscape
- Heritage



Background

- One scheme
- 7 year agreements
- End-to-end computerisation
- Raising the benchmark
- New options



Who is eligible to apply?

Scheme open to farmers:

- With a trading DARD Farm Business Reference Number
- 3 ha owned eligible land
- Leased in land entered on IACS
- Conacre land not eligible

Farm Audit



During the audit:

- Whole Farm Requirements discussed
- Farm Nutrient and Waste Management assessed
- Habitats and Features identified
- Minimum Entry Environmental Benefit agreed
- Habitat Enhancement options chosen
- Enhancement measures agreed

Management requirements for the Whole Farm Payment

General Environmental Requirements

Field Boundary Management



Farm Nutrient and Waste Management

Cross-Compliance

Participants must take part in environmental training



Farmland habitats



Minimum Entry Environmental Benefit (MEEB)

Farms with at least **one**
eligible habitat or historic monument

Must carry out one
relevant MEEB option

MEEB activities on habitats

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



**Minimum Entry
Environmental Benefit (MEEB)**

Farms with **no eligible**
habitat or historic
monument

**Must carry out one
Biodiversity and one
Water Quality option**

**MEEB – farms with improved or semi-
improved only**

- One Water Quality
and
One Biodiversity
option
- If no suitable water
quality option, **two**
biodiversity options
must be carried out



Habitat Enhancement Options

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



Example of New Options

- Delayed cutting and grazing of grassland
- Pollen and nectar mixes
- Semi-improved and semi-natural low input
- Riparian zones
- Organic management option
- Special environmental option

Special Environmental Project

- Gives flexibility to scheme
- Must meet aims of the Scheme
- Individual or joint
- Maximum grant £5,000 (£6,000 joint)
- Based on standard costs or 60% approved actual costs



Enhancement Measures

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



Scheme Application

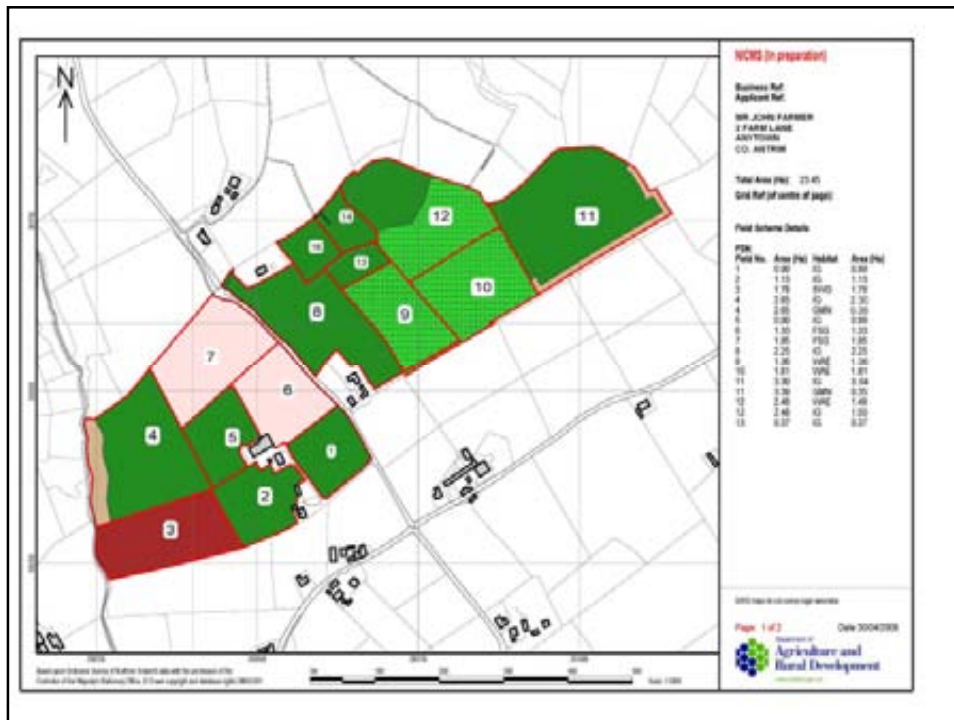
- Applications 30 June – 29 August
- Telephone call
- Business ID
- Eligibility Report
- Brief explanation of scheme requirements
- Proceed?
- 4500 Applications accepted
- Applications prioritised



NICMS Computerisation

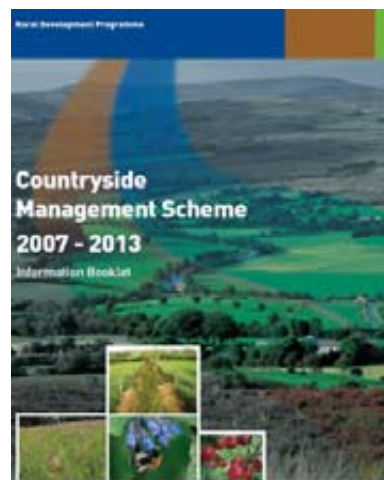
- Application Process
- Preparation for farm audit
- Farm audit
- Input Audit Details
- Referrals
- Quality control





Summary

- Built on previous schemes
- Raised the environmental “bar”
- More targeted options
- Greater flexibility
- Must deliver environmental results and value for money



Riparian zones – enhanced Non-native species and riverbed enhancement

