

Proposed Areas for Action – 3rd Cycle Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022- 2027

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Table of contents

Table of Figures.....	ii
Tables.....	ii
List of Appendices.....	ii
Glossary.....	iii
Executive Summary.....	vi
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Background: Overview of 2 nd Cycle approach for selecting Areas for Action.....	1
3 3 rd Cycle Approach.....	2
3.1 Overview.....	2
3.2 Framework for 3 rd Cycle Area for Action Selection.....	3
3.2.1 Areas for Restoration.....	4
3.2.2 Areas for Protection.....	4
3.2.3 Catchment Projects.....	4
3.3 Process for 3 rd Cycle Areas for Action Selection for the Draft Plan.....	7
4 Areas for Action Shortlist.....	9
4.1 Areas for Restoration.....	9
4.2 Areas for Protection.....	13
4.3 Catchment Projects.....	16
4.4 Summary.....	19
5 Concluding Remarks.....	22

Table of Figures

Figure 1: The 3 rd Cycle Area for Action Framework	3
Figure 2: Map of Areas for Restoration (showing surface waterbodies).....	12
Figure 3: Map of Areas for Protection (showing surface waterbodies).....	15
Figure 4: Catchment Projects.....	18
Figure 5: National Area for Action Map Proposed for the 3 rd cycle RBMP	21

Tables

Table 1: Area for Action types, owners and details	5
Table 2: Breakdown of waterbody risk category selected as Areas for Restoration.....	10
Table 3: Breakdown of Areas for Restoration in each Local Authority Area	11
Table 4: Breakdown of waterbody risk category selected as Areas for Protection.....	13
Table 5: Breakdown of Areas for Protection in each Local Authority Area	14
Table 6: Breakdown of waterbody risk category related to Catchment Projects.....	16
Table 7: Number of Catchment Projects in each Local Authority Area	17
Table 8: Total numbers of water bodies proposed to be included within an Area for Action for the 3 rd Cycle RBMP	19
Table 9: High Status Objective Waters Bodies proposed to be included within an Area for Action for the 3 rd Cycle RBMP	20

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Areas for Action (excel)

Glossary

Areas for Action: This is a term used to capture all focused activity that may lead to water quality protection and improvement and to further promote collaborative engagement and knowledge exchange. The framework is divided into three overarching Area for Action categories as follows:

- Areas for Restoration,
- Areas for Protection, and
- Catchment Projects.

Catchment Projects: These are waterbodies where there are existing large scale, community-led initiatives, projects or research ongoing within a catchment, or funding has been already committed and plans are in place for the project to begin. New projects recently successful in achieving funding (up to end of May 2021) are not included but can be over the lifetime of the River Basin Management Plan 2022 – 2027. These water bodies may overlap with Areas for Restoration or Areas for Protection.

Integrated Catchment Management (ICM):

A new approach to implementation of the Water Framework Directive known as ‘integrated catchment management’ is being used to support the development and implementation of the River Basin Management Plan, using the catchment (an area that contributes water to a river and its tributaries, with all water ultimately running to a single outlet) as the means to bring together all public bodies, communities and businesses.

ICM is based on the concepts of i) catchments as biophysical units in which natural resources use, and ecological and water protection takes place, ii) integration of local community and scientific involvement, and iii) appropriate organisational structures and policy objectives.

Specifically, ICM is:

- A philosophy – to foster an organisational culture and associated attitudes that view i) cooperation and collaboration as essential and ii) interactions between natural resources and human activities or responses in a holistic way.
- A process – an overarching planning framework and implementation process that reflects the philosophy of ICM and provides the ‘vehicle’ through which ICM is delivered. The process needs to provide a flexible, adaptive, on-going and dynamic integrated mechanism, which coordinates the activity of many people, both in the public sector and the community.
- An outcome – the planning and implementation of sustainable resource use practices, which will vary from place to place, depending on conditions and needs, and the achievement of planned environmental outcomes, which are based on environmental, regulatory, economic and social considerations.

Local Authority Areas for Action: There are two types of LA Areas for Action.

LA Areas for Restoration: These are areas where local authorities are working to restore water quality as part of their existing work programme reported under the RMCEI plan. These activities may include farm inspections, section 4 licences, and domestic wastewater treatment system (DWWTS) inspections, other water quality related projects and

programmes, and additional responsibilities under the Water Pollution Act. It is acknowledged that some local authorities will have capacity to propose areas under this category while others' resources may be more restricted.

LA Areas for Protection: There are two types of Areas for Protection:

a. **Prioritised Areas for Protection**

These areas will be focused on sub-catchments that were Prioritised Areas for Action (PAAs) in the 2nd Cycle with LAWPRO as the lead and where waterbodies have since achieved their water quality objectives. A LA may wish to allocate some resources under existing work programmes to target activities such as farm, section 4 licence and DWWTs inspections into these areas to ensure there is no decline in water quality.

b. **Ongoing Areas for Protection**

These are areas where local authorities are already active as part of their existing work programme. These activities include their agricultural, section 4 licence and DWWTs inspections and their additional work under the Water Pollution Act. Again, it is acknowledged that resource availability will differ between local authorities.

Local Catchment Assessment (LCA):

LAWPRO scientists, on completion of a desk study and community information meeting for each Priority Area for Action, start their next phase of work by undertaking local catchment assessments (LCAs). LCAs, involving catchment walks, are an essential means of locating all pressures that are significant and, as a follow-on, in deciding on the mitigation actions needed. The LCA might include biological assessments using macroinvertebrate, macroalgae and macrophyte indicators; water sampling for nutrient analysis; use of field probes to record dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity and temperature, and observations on local soil, geology, hydromorphology, invasive species and impacts during catchment walks. Locating critical source areas for diffuse nutrient loss is an example of outcomes from local scale fieldwork, and allows for delivery points into drains, streams and rivers to be identified so that measures and actions are targeted to ensure they are effective.

Prioritised Areas for Action (PAA):

These will be focused on sub-catchments where most waterbodies are *At Risk*. LAWPRO are the lead for these areas. Some proposed PAAs include 2nd Cycle PAAs which the Regional Operational Committees felt needed to be retained for several reasons e.g. significant issues and pressures have been identified and actions have been or are being taken to improve water bodies, however time is required to see the water quality outcome, or the PAA work started in 2020 or 2021 and therefore additional time is required to complete the local catchment assessment and referral work. Some 2nd Cycle PAAs may also have been amended to include or exclude waterbodies e.g. additional water bodies added downstream or upstream. New 3rd Cycle PAAs have also been selected.

Public Health Areas for Action: There are two types – Areas for Protection and Areas for Restoration.

a. **Public Health Areas for Restoration**

These are areas aimed at the restoration of bathing waters, drinking waters and shellfish areas, all of which are protected areas under the WFD. These areas may require multiple champions and will also include LAWPRO and/or a local authority as one of the key champions.

b. Public Health Areas for Protection

These are areas aimed at the protection of bathing waters, drinking waters and shellfish areas. These areas may require multiple champions and should also include a local authority as one of the key champions.

Executive Summary

This document outlines the methodology and selection of proposed Areas for Action for inclusion in the 3rd Cycle draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). These are areas for focused action and collaboration, as part of implementation of the 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022 - 2027. Areas for Action were selected and approved by each of the five Regional Operational Committees (ROCs) and the five Regional Water and Environment Management Committees (RMCs) which operate at Tier 3 of the Water Framework Directive Governance Structure.

The process for the selection of Areas for Action for the 3rd Cycle was an evolution of the methodology used for the 2nd Cycle River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). It was recognised during the 2nd Cycle that there was (and is) a significant amount of catchment management activity that was not captured in the RBMP. Therefore, for the 3rd Cycle Area for Action selection process, a new framework was developed to capture other catchment management activities being undertaken using the current resources available. The EPA, together with LAWPRO and each of the five ROCs agreed a shortlist of Areas for Action, which was approved by the RMCs. This shortlist was submitted to the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage in May 2021 by LAWPRO on behalf of the Regional Committees.

Of the 4842 waterbodies nationally, 2268 water bodies have been proposed for inclusion in a 3rd Cycle Area for Action. Of these 2268 water bodies, 1181 are *At Risk* (74% of all *At Risk* water bodies nationally), 471 are in *Review* (38% of all *Review* water bodies nationally) and 616 are *Not at Risk* (31% of all *Not at Risk* water bodies nationally).

These waterbodies are contained within three subcategories of Areas for Action as summarised below:

- **Areas for Restoration**
 - 310 Prioritised Areas for Action LAWPRO
 - 65 LA Areas for Restoration Local Authorities
 - 21 Blue Dot Areas for Restoration
 - 31 Public Health Areas for Restoration

- **Areas for Protection**
 - 32 LA Areas for Protection Local Authorities
 - 9 Blue Dot Areas for Protection LAWPRO and Others
 - 44 Public Health Areas for Protection

- **Catchment Projects**
 - 9 Public Body Research Projects
 - 1 Public Body Project
 - 1 LIFE Project
 - 1 Rivers Trust Project
 - 3 European Innovation Partnership Projects

1 Introduction

This document outlines the methodology and selection of proposed Areas for Action for inclusion in the 3rd Cycle draft River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). These are areas for focused action and collaboration, as part of implementation of the 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022 - 2027. These Areas for Action were selected and approved by each of the five Regional Operational Committees (ROCs) and the five Regional Water and Environment Management Committees (RMCs) which operate at Tier 3 of the Water Framework Directive Governance Structure.

The 3rd Cycle Area for Action selection methodology expands on the approach taken for the 2nd Cycle where the Areas for Action were managed by the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) and became known as Prioritised Areas for Action (PAAs). The 3rd Cycle approach is designed to provide 'a place in the plan for everyone' by including a wider selection of Areas for Action incorporating Areas for Protection, Areas for Restoration and Catchment Projects. It is also a means of capturing a greater extent of the work being undertaken in catchments that is expected to achieve water quality outcomes, by many stakeholders, in addition to that which is being carried out by LAWPRO.

2 Background: Overview of 2nd Cycle approach for selecting Areas for Action

In the 2nd Cycle RBMP, 189 Areas for Action were selected. The selection process is summarised as follows:

- The EPA Catchments Unit undertook a technical feasibility assessment in 2017 to determine the environmental objective for the suggested waterbodies in the Areas for Action. This assessment considered target status, pressures and measures being implemented and if the Area for Action was a short-term or long-term project.
- Regional Workshops were held to identify potential Areas for Action, informed by the technical feasibility assessment.
- At these workshops, priority was given to selecting *At Risk* waterbodies that met the key priorities of the river basin management plan, i.e.:
 - High status waterbodies or waterbodies with High status environmental objectives,
 - Waterbodies in Protected Areas, and/or
 - Waterbodies that had deteriorated or were at risk of further deterioration.
- In addition, the following principles were considered for each suggested Area for Action:
 - Areas for Action should be at subcatchment scale where practical,
 - Waterbodies in the headwaters should be addressed first,
 - Multiple pressures should be addressed together,
 - Areas for Action should build on existing programmes and community group initiatives where possible,
 - Areas for Action should build on improvements or measures already planned,
 - The Areas for Action should ensure a fair distribution of tasks between pressure owners, pressure types, bio-geophysical settings, and regionally, and
 - The Areas for Action should include a mix of 'quick wins' and longer-term challenges.
- Regional lists were collated based on the assessments and discussions during the workshops.

- An assessment of resources needed for each proposed area was also undertaken.
- These assessments informed the selection of the draft list of recommended Areas for Action and this list was agreed regionally at the Regional Management Committees.
- A short public consultation process was undertaken, and 189 Areas for Action were selected for inclusion in the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021 (here after referred to as the RBMP).

3 3rd Cycle Approach

3.1 Overview

The 3rd Cycle approach is an evolution of the approach taken for the 2nd Cycle. It was recognised during the 2nd Cycle that there was (and is) a significant amount of catchment management activity that was not captured in the RBMP. Therefore, for the 3rd Cycle Area for Action selection process, a new framework was developed to capture other catchment management activities being undertaken using the current resources available (see **Figure 1**).

In the 2nd Cycle, the implementation of the basic measures to achieve and maintain the objectives of the Water Framework Directive was assumed but was not specified or targeted in the RBMP. The RBMP focused on the supplementary measures that were needed to address waterbodies that had deteriorated and needed to be restored. However, based on feedback and discussion across the various WFD governance structure tiers, many felt that the protect and maintain (no deterioration) functions needed to be more strongly emphasised in the RBMP. Previous local authority experience has identified that an ongoing presence is required after improvements have been achieved to ensure that they are maintained into the longer term. It was also identified that many organisations including local authorities are undertaking work outside of the Areas for Action in terms of both the protect and the restore function and this should be captured in the RBMP. Furthermore, there was also an acknowledgement that there are multiple types of projects underway that may also benefit water quality, and this activity should also be captured in the RBMP.

As a conservative approach, it is currently assumed that the level of resourcing for the Areas for Action selected for 2nd Cycle will be maintained for the 3rd Cycle and will not be increased. The proposed approach is focused on targeting a proportion of the existing resources into Areas for Action. It also strives to align actions being carried out for other purposes, with the objectives of the RBMP, where possible, so that synergies can be identified, and multiple benefits can be achieved. For local authorities, this provides an opportunity to target some work captured under their Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) plans for water, into specified areas where they will contribute to protecting water quality based on a risk assessment, like the approach taken in the National Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS) Inspection Plan.

This process will facilitate a collaborative approach across agencies, where activities are being undertaken in line with the integrated catchment management approach and present opportunities for agencies to learn from one another. This will allow development of an evidence base nationally on approaches and actions that are successful.

3.2 Framework for 3rd Cycle Area for Action Selection

This proposed framework for Areas for Action has been developed to capture all activity that may lead to water quality protection and improvement and to further promote collaborative engagement and knowledge exchange. The framework is divided into three overarching Area for Action categories as follows (**Figure 1**):

- Areas for Restoration,
- Areas for Protection, and
- Catchment Projects.

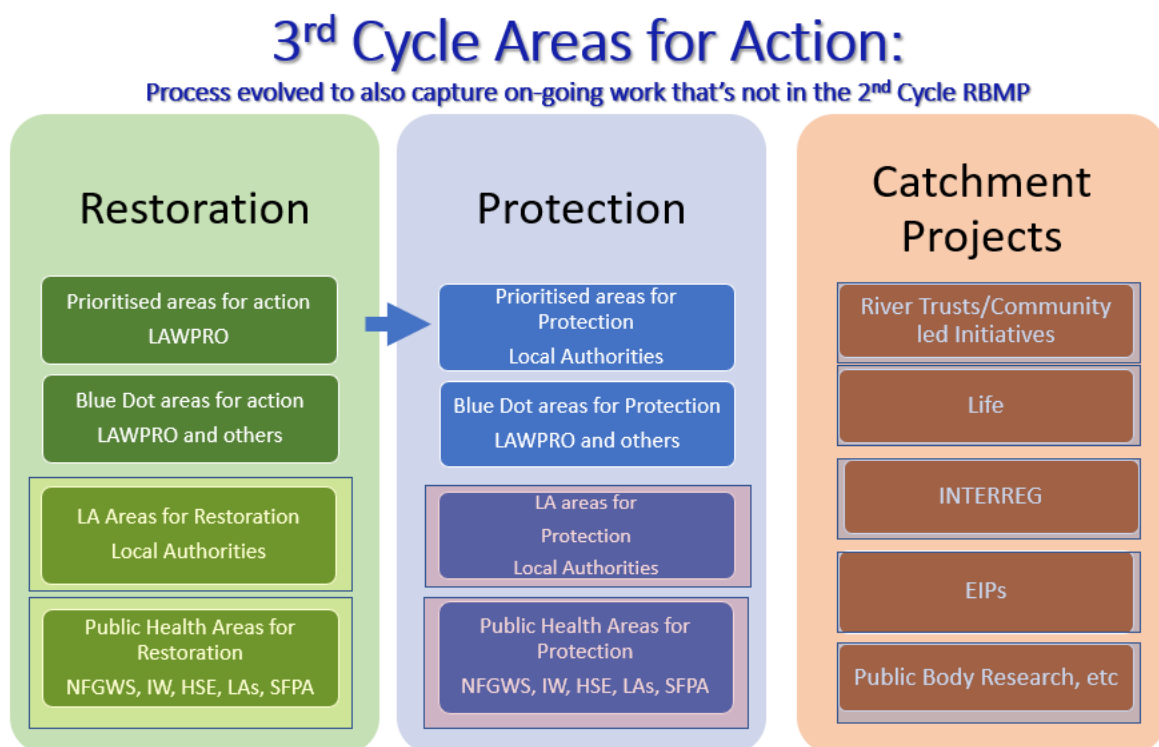


Figure 1: The 3rd Cycle Area for Action Framework

A detailed description of each subcategory is provided in **Table 1**.

Please note the following in **Figure 1**:

- The blue arrow indicates that when LAWPRO-led Prioritised Areas for Action achieve their environmental objectives, the local authorities may propose them as Prioritised Area for Protection (see **Table 1** below for more detail).
- The subcategories where there is an additional box around them, indicate activities that are already undertaken by local authorities, other public bodies, communities, and researchers. Resources are already allocated to these activities but have not been specifically referenced under the 2nd Cycle RBMP and should be considered as part of the 3rd Cycle RBMP.
- Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) and Local Catchment Assessment (LCA) training courses will be required for participants in some areas.

3.2.1 Areas for Restoration

Areas for Restoration are undertaken to target *At Risk* and sometimes *Review* waterbodies. Within these areas there may also be *Not At Risk* waterbodies that should be supported to ensure downstream waterbodies are restored. In the 2nd Cycle RBMP, focus was on supplementary measures within the PAAs: LAWPRO was assigned a further characterisation function and in areas where agriculture was a significant pressure, the Agricultural Sustainability, Support and Advisory Programme (ASSAP) was responsible for working with landowners to implement mitigation measures. Supplementary measures are actions in addition to those required under basic measures as set out in legislation e.g. the EU (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations.

Some local authorities are also undertaking restore activities, through application of basic measures, as part of their work programmes, and therefore it is important to capture this activity and account for any measures that have been implemented, especially those that have resulted in water quality improvements. These activities include, for example, Section 4 licence inspections under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts; agricultural inspections under the EU (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations, and domestic wastewater treatment system inspections under the Water Services Act. All local authorities undertake these activities currently as part of their work programmes and this is captured under the annual RMCEI plans.

Furthermore, multiple organisations undertake restore activities to improve, for example, drinking waters, and bathing waters, and again these activities should be captured in the RBMP (see **Table 1** for more detail on the subcategories listed under Areas for Restoration).

3.2.2 Areas for Protection

The Areas for Protection category covers activities being undertaken in line with legislative requirements referred to as basic measures under the 2nd Cycle RBMP and captured under RMCEI planning outlined above. The addition of this category in the 3rd Cycle affords the opportunity to account for a proportion of this existing current resource, to target the effort into Areas for Protection (see **Table 1** for more detail).

3.2.3 Catchment Projects

Catchment Projects are in areas where there are existing projects ongoing at a catchment scale that will continue into the 3rd Cycle, or where funding has been committed and plans are in place for projects, research or community-led initiatives (e.g. Rivers Trusts), to begin during the 3rd Cycle. LAWPRO and/or the relevant local authorities will act as a support for many of these Projects to guide the project teams on the Area for Action process.

Table 1: Area for Action types, owners and details

Areas for Action	Owner(s)	Area for Action Details
Areas for Restoration		
Prioritised areas for action (PAAs)	LAWPRO	These will be focused in subcatchments with a majority of <i>At Risk</i> waterbodies. Some of these PAAs may be carried over from the 2 nd Cycle where improvements have not been yet realised and some 2 nd Cycle PAAs may be amended to include or exclude waterbodies. New 3 rd Cycle PAAs will also be selected.
Blue Dot areas for Restoration	LAWPRO and others	These are Areas for Action where LAWPRO and LAs are working to restore High Status Objective Waterbodies and will be guided by the Blue Dot Catchments Programme.
Local Authority Areas for Restoration	Local Authorities	These are Areas for Action where local authorities are working to restore water quality as part of their existing work programme reported under their RMCEI plans. These activities may include agricultural, section 4 licence and DWWTS inspections, other water quality related projects and programmes, and also their additional responsibilities under the Water Pollution Act. It is acknowledged that some local authorities will have a capacity to propose Areas for Action under this category while others will not have a resource to do this. ICM and LCA training will be required for these participants.
Public Health Areas for Restoration	LAWPRO, Local Authorities, HSE, IW, NFGWS, SFPA.	These are Areas for Action aimed at the restoration of bathing waters, drinking waters and shellfish areas, all of which are protected areas under the WFD. These Areas for Action may require multiple champions and should also include LAWPRO and/or a local authority as one of the key champions. ICM and LCA training will be required for these participants and support required from either LAWPRO or LA.
Areas for Protection		
Areas for Protection	Local Authorities	There are two types of Areas for Protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prioritised Areas for Protection <p>These areas will be focused in subcatchments that were Prioritised Areas for Action in the 2nd Cycle and where waterbodies have since achieved their water quality objectives. A LA may wish to allocate some resources under their existing work programme to target activities such as agricultural,</p>

section 4 licence and DWWTS inspections into these areas to ensure maintenance of Good status waters.

b. Ongoing Areas for Protection

These are Areas for Action that have achieved their Environmental Objective and that local authorities are already active in as part of their existing work programme. These activities include agricultural, section 4 licence and DWWTS inspections and also additional work under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts.

It is acknowledged that some local authorities will have capacity to propose Areas for Action under this category while others may not have resources for this work.

Blue Dot areas for Protection LAWPRO and others

These are Areas for Protection that the Blue Dot Catchments Programme, Local Authorities and other organisations can work together on to protect High Status Objective Waterbodies. A LA may wish to allocate some resources under their existing work programme to target activities into these areas to ensure these waterbodies are protected.

Public Health Areas for Protection Local Authorities, HSE, IW, NFGWS, SFFPA.

These are Areas for Action aimed at the protection of bathing waters, drinking waters and shellfish areas. These areas will require multiple champions and should also include a local authority as one of the key champions. Other key champions may include, for example, Irish Water, Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, National Federation of Group Water Schemes, Health Service Executive. ICM and LCA training will be required for these participants and support from the relevant LA.

Catchment Projects

Community-led projects (e.g. Rivers Trusts)
LIFE
Interreg
EIPs
Public Body
Research

Project Teams

These Areas for Action are areas where there are existing community-led initiatives, projects or research ongoing at a catchment scale that will continue into cycle 3, or where funding has been already committed and plans are in place for the project to begin in cycle 3. LAWPRO and/or the relevant LA will support work in these Areas for Action to guide researchers on the approach taken and how to capture the relevant information under the Programme of Measures. ICM and LCA training will be required for these participants.

By working within this framework, it will be possible to capture all activities undertaken in relation to water quality and catchment management. In the long term, this approach will inform what activities are successful/ not successful and inform where more resources may be required. Ultimately, we all need to learn from one another in terms of activities and actions that lead to water quality improvement. This framework allows us this opportunity to work together, share information and get the best return on our investments by aiming to achieve multiple benefits.

3.3 Process for 3rd Cycle Areas for Action Selection for the Draft Plan

The approach for selection of the 3rd Cycle Areas for Action was as follows:

- ROC members submitted suggested Areas for Action to the EPA using the EPA subcatchment storyboard information as a foundation. These suggestions were based on what ROC members would ideally like to do, irrespective of resources.

When suggesting Areas for Action the ROC members were asked to consider the following:

- *At Risk* and *Review* waterbodies when selecting Areas for Restoration although some areas for restoration will also contain a minority of *Not At Risk* waterbodies.
- *Not At Risk* waterbodies and *Review* waterbodies (where measures have already been implemented but the waterbody has not yet had time to improve) should only be considered when selecting Areas for Protection.
- Priority for Areas for Restoration should be given to water bodies that:
 - Were 2nd Cycle Priority Areas for Action, or linked to these areas, where the objectives have not yet been achieved, and/or additional waterbodies now need to be included in the PAA to achieve the required objectives.
 - Have High Status Objective Water Bodies that are *At Risk*.
 - Or have Water bodies in Protected Areas that are *At Risk*.
 - For Areas for Restoration, WBs that have deteriorated or are *At Risk* of deterioration should also be given priority.
- Priority for Areas for Protection should be given to water bodies that:
 - Have High Status Objective Water Bodies, and/or
 - Have water bodies in Protected Areas.
- In addition, the following principles should be considered for each suggested Area for Action:
 - Areas for Action should be at subcatchment scale where practical.
 - Waterbodies in the headwaters should be addressed first.
 - Multiple pressures should be addressed together.
 - Build on existing programmes including 2nd Cycle Priority Areas for Action and community group initiatives.
 - Build on improvements.
 - Ensure fair distribution of tasks between pressure owners, pressure types, bio-geo-physical settings and regionally, and
 - The Areas for Action should include a mix of known fixable issues and longer-term challenges.
- In parallel, LAWPRO undertook a resource assessment estimate to evaluate:
 - The 2nd Cycle PAAs that will be completed and can potentially be transitioned over to local authorities for ongoing protection.
 - The 2nd Cycle PAAs to be carried through to the 3rd Cycle by LAWPRO, and any amendments required, and

- New 3rd Cycle PAAs.
 - Areas for Action suggestions were submitted to the EPA Catchments Unit by 30th June, 2020.
- Suggestions were collated and a technical assessment using 3rd Cycle characterisation data was undertaken by the EPA Catchments Unit. This assessment helped inform the environmental objective for the suggested waterbodies in the Areas for Action from a technical feasibility perspective by considering the target status, the pressures, the measures being implemented and if the Area for Action was a short-term or long-term project.
- The assessment also included if the *At Risk* waterbodies fell under one of the priority categories for Areas for Restoration e.g. previous PAA, high status objective waterbody or waterbody in a protected area.
- The EPA Catchments Unit issued the collated Areas for Action Regional Longlist to all ROC members and these lists were summarised in reports to ROC and RMC members.
- During August and September 2020, LAWPRO then engaged with each ROC member individually to discuss waterbodies from the longlist for inclusion in the shortlist for the draft RBMP.
- The outcomes of these regional discussions were then sent back to the EPA and were summarised in five Draft Regional Reports.
- Five Regional workshops (Midlands & Eastern, West, South East, South West and Border Regions) were held to discuss the short list with the ROC and RMC members on dates in September and October 2020. Post workshop Regional Final Reports were issued to all ROC and Management Committee members.
- The agreed Area for Action shortlists in each region were combined and a national list created by LAWPRO and reviewed by the EPA Catchments Unit between January and March of 2021. A draft of this report and the shortlist was provided to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in May 2021 for consideration for inclusion in the 3rd Cycle draft River Basin Management Plan.

4 Areas for Action Shortlist

LAWPRO liaised with multiple organisations to discuss the Area for Action longlist and to shortlist the suggested Areas for Action for inclusion in the draft River Basin Management Plan, taking current available resources into consideration.

Meetings were held with the following organisations:

- Each Local Authority
- Irish Water
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- National Federation of Group Water Schemes
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
- Geological Survey of Ireland

Discussions focused on shortlisting Areas for Action under the following headings:

- Areas for Restoration
- Areas for Protection, and
- Catchment Projects

The same waterbody in many cases was proposed by different organisations. Where LAWPRO or the LA proposed to take the lead then the water body has been assigned as a Prioritised Area for Action LAWPRO or LA Area for Restoration/Protection for the purposes of this report. LAWPRO/LAs will collaborate with other interested parties. The scope of the work that is planned to be undertaken, such as source protection work by the National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS), within waterbodies will also be identified in the draft RBMP. In addition, where EIP project work is ongoing, e.g. the Pearl Mussel Project, and LAWPRO are working in the same subcatchments, these areas are listed as Prioritised Area for Action LAWPRO.

Reasons for proposing the Areas for Action for the shortlist are provided in **Appendix 1**. As mentioned, the potential to add / alter Area for Action proposals was discussed with each Local Authority between the point at which the draft Area for Action reports were issued and when the ROC workshops were held, to develop a revised list for inclusion. The results of these discussions were presented for further discussion at each regional workshop with all stakeholders, who agreed sign-off.

The following sections set out the summary statistics and mapping associated with proposed Areas for Restoration, Areas for Protection and Catchment Projects.

4.1 Areas for Restoration

In total, 427 Areas for Restoration, made up of 2,008 water bodies, were shortlisted. The breakdown of the number of water bodies under each risk category is shown in **Table 2**. LAWPRO are proposing to lead on 310 Prioritised Areas for Action. Sixty five Local Authority Areas for Restoration have been

proposed. A total of 21 Blue Dot Areas for Action have been proposed for restoration with the majority being led by LAWPRO. Finally, 31 Public Health Areas for Restoration have been proposed, the majority of which will be led by the National Federation of Group Water Schemes. Where the NFGWS are the lead, only the Zone of Contribution for the group water supply will be assessed and managed by the NFGWS and not the full waterbody subbasin as is the case with other Areas for Restoration selected. The location of all the proposed Areas for Restoration is shown in **Figure 2**

The breakdown of Areas for Restoration by subcategory and in each Local Authority area is shown in **Table 3**.

Table 2: Breakdown of waterbody risk category selected as Areas for Restoration

Areas for Restoration	No. of Areas for Action	No. of Waterbodies			Total WBs
		At Risk	Review	Not At Risk ¹	
Prioritised Areas for Action LAWPRO	310	977	387	403	1767
LA Areas for Restoration Local Authorities	65	112	14	17	143
Blue Dot Areas for Action LAWPRO and Others	21	35	2	29	66
Public Health Areas for Restoration	31	22	9	1	32
Totals	427	1146	412	450	2008

¹ Within the Areas for Restoration category, there are some *Not at Risk* waterbodies included within subcatchments where waterbodies for restoration have been identified. Where LAWPRO are the lead authority, they will collaborate with all interested parties in relation to their protect function for these waterbodies, however, only a limited LAWPRO resource will be allocated to these waterbodies.

Table 3: Breakdown of Areas for Restoration in each Local Authority Area

Local Authority Area	Prioritised Areas for Action LAWPRO	LA Areas for Restoration Local Authorities	Blue Dot Areas for Action LAWPRO and Others	Public Health Areas for Restoration
Carlow	7	2	0	1
Cavan	16	1	1	0
Clare	23	1	2	0
Cork City	1	0	0	0
Cork	29	14	1	1
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown	3	0	0	1
Donegal	16	4	2	0
Dublin City Council	0	4	0	0
Fingal	5	2	0	0
Galway City Council	2	0	0	0
Galway	28	0	2	2
Kerry	16	0	2	1
Kildare	12	6	0	0
Kilkenny	12	0	0	1
Laois	13	0	0	0
Leitrim	10	0	1	1
Limerick	16	4	0	1
Longford	5	2	0	0
Louth	5	1	0	2
Mayo	23	0	5	2
Meath	16	12	0	0
Monaghan	9	0	0	3
Offaly	15	10	0	1
Roscommon	16	0	0	1
South Dublin	0	1	0	0
Sligo	14	1	3	2
Tipperary	24	0	0	7
Waterford	11	0	1	0
Westmeath	8	1	0	1
Wexford	13	0	0	2
Wicklow	15	4	2	1
Total	310	65	21	31

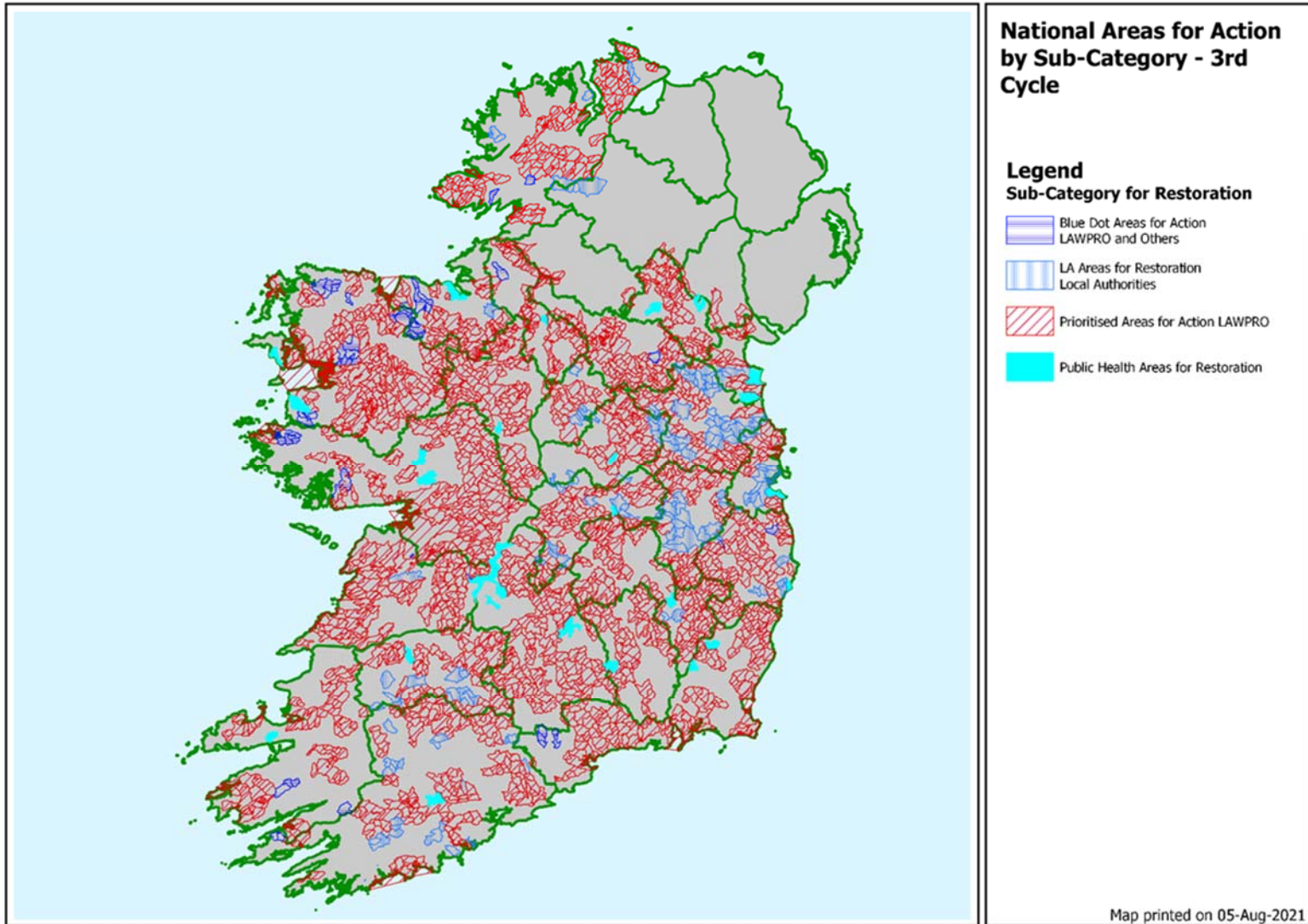


Figure 2: Map of Areas for Restoration (showing surface waterbodies)

4.2 Areas for Protection

In total, 85 Areas for Protection, which include 140 waterbodies, were shortlisted and the breakdown of the number of waterbodies under each risk category is shown in **Table 4**.

The breakdown of Areas for Protection by subcategory and in each Local Authority area is shown in **Table 5**.

LAs have proposed 63 waterbodies specifically for focused work to protect water quality under the LA Areas for Protection category.

Blue Dot Areas for Protection are areas where the Blue Dot Catchments Programme and Local Authorities and other organisations can work together to protect High Status Objective Waterbodies. There is a total of 31 waterbodies in this category.

Public Health Areas for Protection are areas aimed at the protection of bathing waters, drinking waters and shellfish areas. The NFGWS proposed 41 Public Health Areas for Protection with themselves as lead organisation. These areas intersect with 42 surface water bodies. The work in these subbasins will be confined to the Zones of Contribution as identified by the NFGWS for each drinking water source.

The locations of all proposed Areas for Protection are shown in **Figure 3**.

Table 4: Breakdown of waterbody risk category selected as Areas for Protection

Areas for Protection	No. of Areas for Action	No. of Waterbodies			Total WBs
		At Risk	Review	Not At Risk	
LA Areas for Protection Local Authorities	32	4	18	41	63
Blue Dot Areas for Protection LAWPRO and Others	9	3	3	25	31
Public Health Areas for Protection	44	0	16	30	46
Total	85	7	37	96	140

Table 5: Breakdown of Areas for Protection in each Local Authority Area

Local Authority Area	LA Areas for Protection Local Authorities	Blue Dot Areas for Protection LAWPRO and Others	Public Health Areas for Protection
Carlow	1	0	1
Cavan	0	1	5
Clare	1	0	0
Cork City	0	0	0
Cork	2	0	2
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown	0	1	0
Donegal	4	2	0
Dublin City Council	0	0	0
Fingal	0	0	0
Galway City Council	1	0	0
Galway	1	0	10
Kerry	0	0	0
Kildare	0	0	0
Kilkenny	1	0	2
Laois	1	1	3
Leitrim	0	0	0
Limerick	3	0	1
Longford	1	0	0
Louth	0	0	0
Mayo	0	0	8
Meath	1	0	0
Monaghan	0	1	1
Offaly	6	0	1
Roscommon	0	0	1
South Dublin	1	0	0
Sligo	0	0	2
Tipperary	3	0	5
Waterford	0	1	0
Westmeath	0	0	1
Wexford	0	0	1
Wicklow	5	2	0
Total	32	9	44

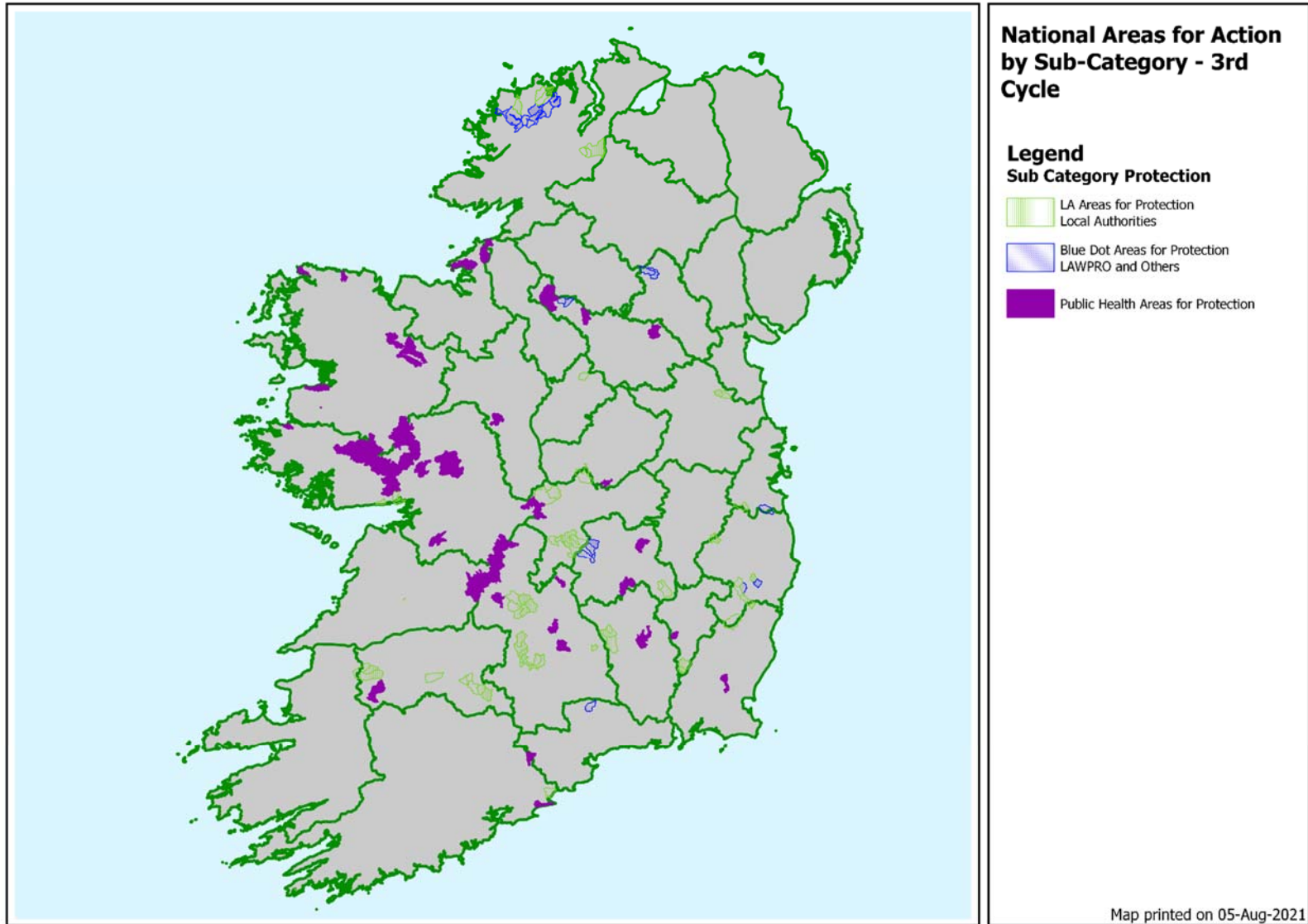


Figure 3: Map of Areas for Protection (showing surface waterbodies)

4.3 Catchment Projects

Several projects are ongoing in Ireland, which will contribute to the restoration or protection of a number of waterbodies across the country. Catchment Projects, including ongoing research, LIFE projects and EIP Agriculture projects are some examples. The 15 Catchment Projects outlined in **Table 6** below are unlikely to fully represent all projects ongoing and do not reflect recent projects for which funding has been sought and which may be successful in the coming year. Two large projects are of particular relevance – the Waters of LIFE Integrated Project and the Wild Atlantic Nature Integrated Project, which successfully received funding in 2020, but have as yet not confirmed the precise areas in which they will focus their work, therefore these projects are not reflected in the figures below at this time.

There are 271 waterbodies included under Catchment Projects (**Table 6**). It is important to note that there is double counting of water bodies between Catchment Projects and Areas for Action for Restoration or Protection. A water body can be in both an Area Restoration or Protection and in a Catchment Project. Of the 271 water bodies that are in a Catchment Project, 120 are exclusively in a Catchment Project and 151 are also in an Area for Restoration or Protection.

Table 6: Breakdown of waterbody risk category related to Catchment Projects

Catchment Projects	No. of Areas for Action	No. of Waterbodies			
		At Risk	Review	Not At Risk	Total No.
Public Body Research	9	51	32	79	162
Public Body Project	1	3	0	1	4
LIFE	1	1	1	0	2
Rivers Trust	1	25	9	7	41
EIP	3	32	5	25	62
Total	15	112	47	112	271

The breakdown of Catchment Projects water bodies in each Local Authority area is shown in **Table 7** and mapped in **Figure 4**.

Table 7: Number of Catchment Projects in each Local Authority Area

Local Authority Area	Public Body Research	Public Body Project	LIFE	Rivers Trust	EIP
Carlow	0	0	0	0	0
Cavan	0	0	0	0	0
Clare	1	0	0	0	0
Cork City	0	0	0	0	0
Cork	2	0	0	1	2
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown	1	0	1	0	0
Donegal	2	0	0	0	1
Dublin City Council	1	0	0	0	0
Fingal	0	0	0	0	0
Galway City Council	0	0	0	0	0
Galway	4	0	0	0	1
Kerry	2	0	0	0	1
Kildare	1	0	0	0	0
Kilkenny	2	0	0	0	0
Laois	1	0	0	0	0
Leitrim	1	0	0	0	0
Limerick	0	0	0	1	1
Longford	0	0	0	0	0
Louth	0	0	0	0	0
Mayo	3	0	0	0	1
Meath	2	0	0	0	0
Monaghan	0	0	0	0	0
Offaly	1	0	0	0	0
Roscommon	0	0	0	0	0
South Dublin	1	1	1	0	0
Sligo	1	0	0	0	0
Tipperary	1	0	0	1	1
Waterford	0	0	0	0	0
Westmeath	0	0	0	0	0
Wexford	2	0	0	0	0
Wicklow	1	0	0	0	0
Total	9	1	1	1	3

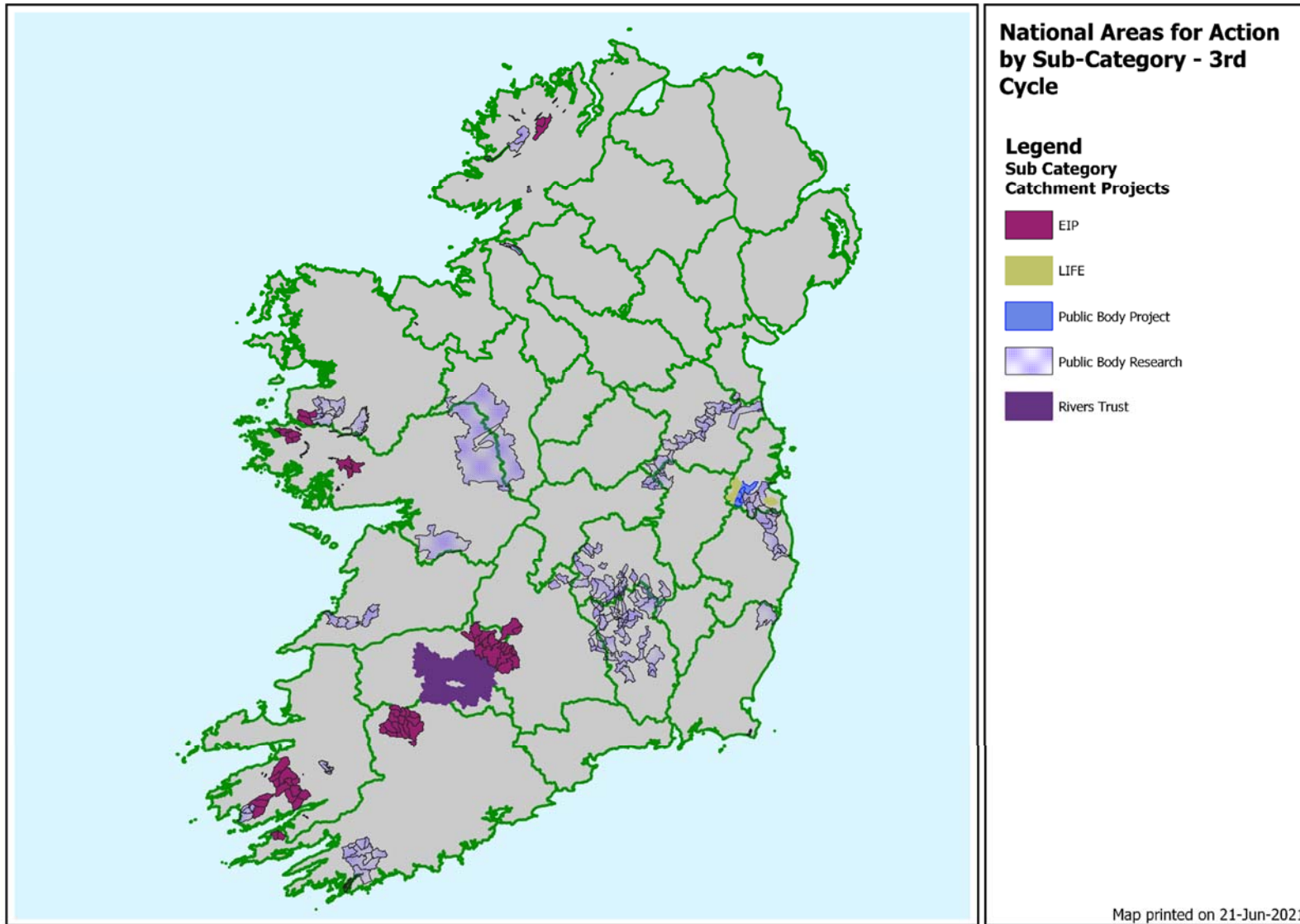


Figure 4: Catchment Projects

4.4 Summary

Following LAWPRO’s engagement with multiple organisations, the final Areas for Action shortlist comprises 2268 waterbodies proposed for inclusion in 527 Areas for Action. Of this total, 427 are Areas for Restoration (2008 waterbodies), 85 are Areas for Protection (140 waterbodies) and 15 are Areas for Catchment Projects (271 waterbodies). The breakdown in relation to waterbody risk is shown in **Table 8**. The table shows that 694 2nd Cycle PAA waterbodies are being carried forward to 3rd Cycle. This is to allow time for further characterisation to be completed in some PAAs; or to allow for the ongoing work of the ASSAP team or other implementing bodies within these areas, or to allow for a transition strategy to be developed where LAWPRO and ASSAP have completed their work programmes and will transition water quality protection back to the relevant Local Authorities.

Table 8: Total numbers of water bodies proposed to be included within an Area for Action for the 3rd Cycle RBMP

LAWPRO Region	Numbers of waterbodies				Cycle 2 PAA waterbodies for inclusion in 3rd Cycle
	Total	<i>At Risk</i>	<i>Review</i>	<i>Not at Risk</i>	
Number of water bodies - total	4842	1603	1256	1983	722
Border	416	237	98	81	161
Midlands & East	431	275	69	87	100
South East	429	246	77	106	153
South West	443	234	90	119	115
West	472	182	120	170	165
National ²	77	7	17	53	1
No. of water bodies for inclusion in a 3rd Cycle Area for Action	2268	1181	471	616	694
Percentage	47%	74%	38%	31%	

There are 384 Blue Dot water bodies nationally (i.e. with a high-status objective) of which 179 are *At Risk*. Of the 179 *At Risk* Blue Dot water bodies 79% are proposed for inclusion in an Area for Action in the 3rd Cycle. The Blue Dot Catchments Programme will continue its work toward ensuring that all Blue Dot waters meet their objective in the 3rd Cycle. A detailed work programme in relation to these water bodies will be drafted in Q3 of 2021 for consideration by the DHLGH for implementation in the 3rd Cycle.

² Catchment projects that are in more than one region, so the name of the Area for Action can’t be attributed to one region e.g. Pearl Mussel Project, Artic Char Project.

Table 9: High Status Objective Waters Bodies proposed to be included within an Area for Action for the 3rd Cycle RBMP

LAWPRO Region	Total	At Risk	Review	Not at Risk
Border	43	22	6	15
Midlands & East	15	8	0	7
South East	31	18	5	8
South West	72	52	6	14
West	66	39	2	25
National	11	2	0	9
Total in an Area for Action	238	141	19	78
Total number of Blue Dots	384	179	32	173
% Blue Dots in an Area for Action	62%	79%	59%	45%

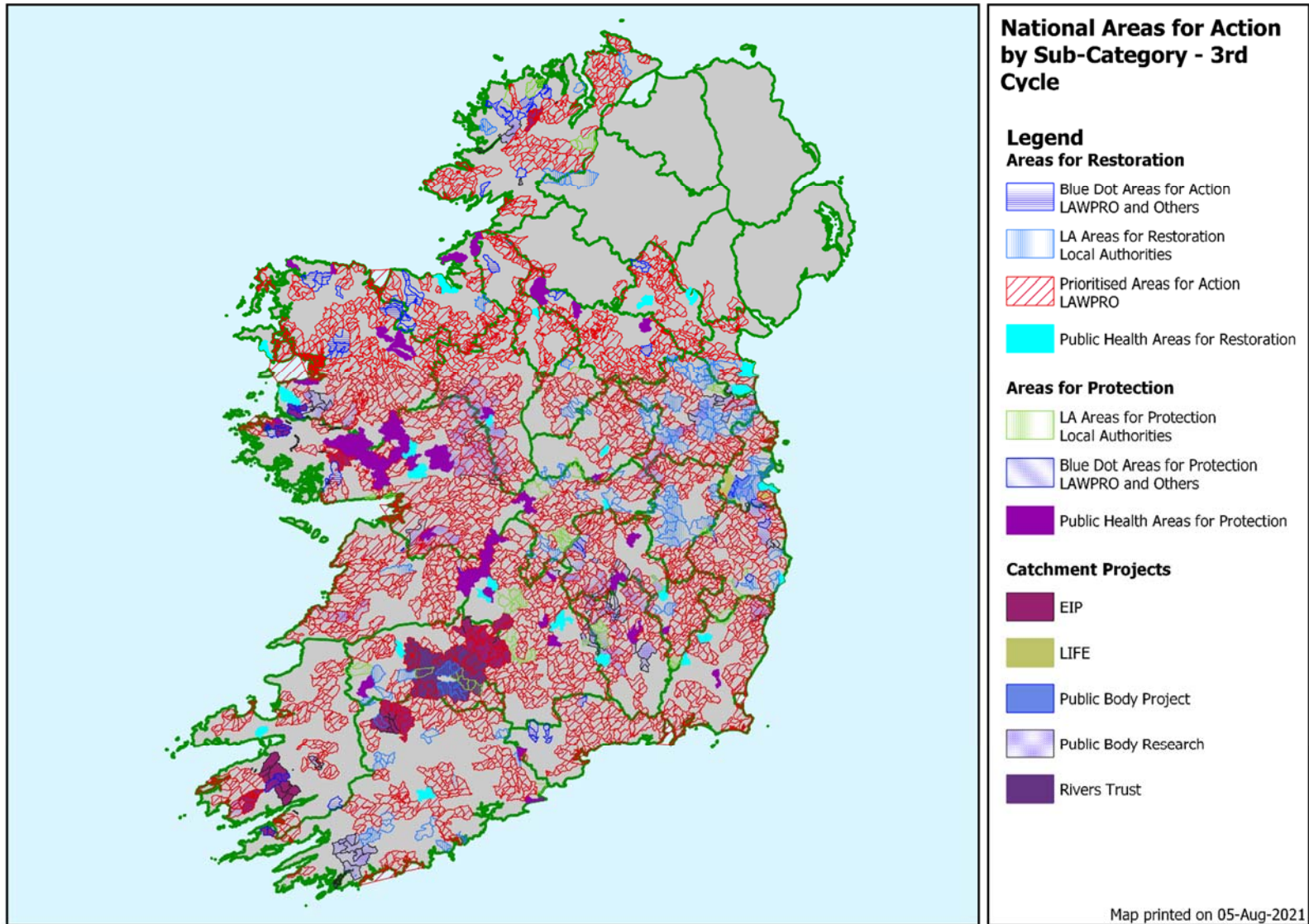


Figure 5: National Area for Action Map Proposed for the 3rd cycle RBMP

5 Concluding Remarks

This report has been compiled by LAWPRO on behalf of the five ROCs and five RMCs who discussed and agreed proposals for Areas for Action as part of their work programme deliverables in 2020. These proposals are submitted to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for inclusion in the Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland for the period 2022 to 2027. The Areas for Action proposed will be for focused work and collaboration amongst all stakeholders, however work will continue to be undertaken as part of implementing bodies' specified functions for all water bodies.