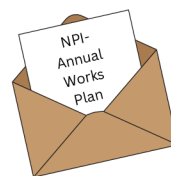


INTRODUCTION TO NON-PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENTS

Non-Productive Investments (NPIs) are actions that help address environmental issues or improve field scores. Your advisor applies for NPIs on your behalf. The actions are screened by DAFM and the local CP Team and you receive notification via a NPI-Annual Works Plan. Funding prioritises actions supporting regional environmental goals.



Do not start until you get your approval letter.

There are 3 categories of NPIs available to ACRES CP participants.

Section 1 - NPI Habitat and Wildlife Support.

Section 2 - NPI Infrastructure.

Section 3 - NPI Scrub/Track (Burren/Aran CP Zone only).

NPIs are restricted in certain areas (woodland, machair, Annex 1 grassland, limestone pavement) and must be free of invasive species. Work near Archaeological Monuments may be notified to the National Monuments Service.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Authorisation of NPI actions

The CP team screens all proposed actions to assess environmental risks and approves them only for the specific location submitted. Unauthorized actions or relocating them may lead to rejection, payment clawback, or penalties.

NPIs must not be undertaken in advance of receiving the approval letter. Only newly created NPIs after approval are eligible for payment, with expenditures eligible only if paid **after** the application submission. Some NPIs may have additional approval conditions outlined in the NPI-AWP Approval letter, which must be followed for payment eligibility.

Fencing NPIs

Barbed Wire, Sheep Wire, and Permanent Electric are restricted to existing field boundaries to make them stockproof and manage grazing. These boundaries can include watercourses, earth banks, drains, hedgerows, stone walls, treelines, roadways, or a combination of these.

Planning permission

Fencing generally doesn't need planning permission, but if new fencing for NPI Barbed Wire, Sheep Wire, or Permanent Electric is in certain protected areas (SAC, SPA, NHA, pNHA, or open uplands/coastal areas), planning permission is required. Evidence may be requested before approval or during inspection.

Time-sensitive NPIs

Some NPIs are time sensitive (bracken actions, Wild Bird Cover actions, Winter stubble). If the NPI-AWP is approved by May 15th, the NPI must be delivered that year. If after May 15th, it must be delivered the following year (withdrawal rules apply).

NPIs cannot be delivered on the following:

- Intertidal areas
- Saltmarshes
- Marram grass dunes
- Sea cliffs
- Mountain cliffs
- Scree Slopes
- Caves
- Reedbeds
- Permanent natural watercourses
- Juniper Scrub
- Yew woodlands
- Mineral Flushes

Biosecurity

- Clean and disinfect footwear, and disinfect plant and machinery wheels.
- Avoid importing materials from sites with invasive species (e.g., Japanese Knotweed).
- Follow the '**Check, Clean, and Dry**' protocol for watercourse activities, inspecting gear for mud or plants, disinfecting, and drying for at least 48 hours.

For more details, visit [NPWS Crayfish Leaflet](#).

Health and Safety

Farmers must ensure NPIs are delivered safely, assessing and addressing risks.

Derogations

Participants must follow specifications unless a written derogation is granted by the CP team. Contact your local Project Officer for advice.

Duration of Commitment

Actions must be maintained until the end of the ACRES contract. Where due to unforeseen circumstances the retention of an action creates undesirable risks, it can be considered for withdrawal by contacting ACRES CP or emailing acrescp@agriculture.gov.ie.

Other schemes

Eco Scheme actions like tree planting and new hedgerows can be on the same parcel as the equivalent ACRES action, but they must be in separate, clearly identifiable locations. It is possible to be in several schemes at the same time as long as there is no double funding. Other schemes could include Corncrake LIFE, Machair LIFE, OFS etc.

INTRODUCTION TO NON-PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENTS

Conditionality

ACRES NPI actions are supplementary to mandatory GAEC or SMR requirements and cannot fulfill them. Fencing NPIs or Riparian Margin NPIs cannot meet mandatory watercourse requirements. Any NPI margin must be additional to baseline watercourse requirements. e.g., under SMR2, some holdings must exclude bovines from watercourses by fencing 1.5m from the top of the bank. To be eligible for the NPI Riparian Margin 3m, the watercourse must be fenced 4.5m from the top of the bank.

Double funding

Investments funded through TAMS or other National/EU schemes since January 2018 cannot be used for ACRES NPI actions. Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) entrants should check Appendix 4 for NPI interactions with OFS to avoid double funding. The same fence cannot be used for two NPI actions on the same parcel; each fencing requirement must have a separate fence. An applicant cannot be paid for more than one type of fencing (Barbed Wire, Permanent Electric, Sheep Wire) along the same length, unless separated by a roadway or watercourse. **NPIs cannot be used to fulfil any requirements of ACRES General Actions.**

Withdrawal of NPIs

If a farmer wishes to withdraw an NPI, they can notify their ACRES advisor or notify DAFM directly in writing by email or post by completing the relevant form. Individual action feature ID(s) on a NPI AWP may only be withdrawn in full. Amendments to individual Action Feature ID quantities is not allowed.

Approved NPI actions which the participant does not intend to complete do not need to be withdrawn. This is because they will be considered withdrawn when a payment claim which does not include them is submitted to the department.

Click here to download the [Withdrawal form](#) as provided in ACRES Circular No. 4 of 2025.



COMPLETION OF WORKS & CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT

Making a Claim

Claims must be submitted online, one claim per NPI-Annual Works Plan, after the NPIs are completed. Unclaimed NPIs can be reapplied for in future application windows. Claims are due by December 31st of the following year.



Budget

The NPI budget over the 5-year contract is €17,500. Where a farmer receives less than the maximum core payment of €7,000 for their scored land, the unclaimed balance can be added to the available NPI funds.

Geotagged Photos

Geotagged photos may be required to support payment claims or verify compliance. The Area Monitoring System (AMS) may also be used to verify certain ACRES NPI actions.

Receipts

Receipts for new purchases or contractors must be kept for the duration of the ACRES contract and 12 months after submitting a payment claim. They may be requested for upload or inspection by the Co-operation Project team. Only deposits or expenditures paid on or after the application submission date are eligible.

Certified Seed

Certified seed must be used for grass margins in NPI Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites and NPI Wild Bird Cover. Seed labels and receipts must be kept, and farm-saved seed is not allowed.



There are several tree planting NPIs available as part of the scheme

The full introduction and requirements for completing NPIs is available in the full NPI Specifications document available on the ACRES DL website.