

Circular 14/2015

23rd April, 2015

To: GLAS Advisors

Re: **High Status and Vulnerable Status Water Areas in GLAS**

Further to queries raised by Advisors this Circular explains the classification of applications as “High Status Water Area” (TIER 1), “Vulnerable Status Water Area” (TIER 2), or as falling into the Optional watercourse action category (TIER 3) on the GLAS on-line system. It outlines which watercourse actions must then be chosen and on which parcels. It should be read in conjunction with the GLAS Specification in order that the Scheme requirements for the actions chosen are met.

High Status Water Area (HSW) TIER 1

On the GLAS on-line system, **High Status River** is shown under Parcel Values (Profile TAB) as an attribute. Under Actions Tab it is shown as a “High Status River (At least 1 must be selected)”. Where High Status River is on a holding a watercourse action **must** be taken except for specific exceptions, on certain parcels shown at A, B, C and D below.

Where it is taken all watercourses must be fenced (except for exclusions below) which means that **ALL** parcels on the holding with a High Status River attribute, Low Status River attribute and parcels with a river on the EPA River layer **must be fenced**, i.e. **either the Protection of Watercourses action or the Riparian Margin action must be chosen**. Where there is an area based action on the same parcel the only watercourse action that can be chosen is the Protection of Watercourses from Bovines. The Protection of Watercourses and the Riparian Margin action cannot be chosen on the same parcel. Both actions involve fencing.

Exceptions from taking watercourse action on a PARCEL:

A. Split Farmland Bird Actions

Where specific Farmland Bird actions (Chough, Corncrake, Hen Harrier, Breeding Wader and Twite A) are split for the purpose of farm viability, the mandatory requirement to fence a watercourse may be overridden on that parcel by means of choosing the “Farmland Bird Derogation <= 20% removed from GLAS contract on farm viability grounds” or “Farmland Bird Derogation >20% removed from GLAS contract on farm viability grounds”. In these cases, a watercourse action cannot be chosen on any part of the original whole parcel.

B. Watercourse on map but not on the ground or not in the applicant’s land parcel

A facility has been added to the GLAS online system, where you can select the option “Watercourse not present”. In these cases, a watercourse action cannot be chosen on that parcel.

C. Mountain land/Rough grazing not grazed by bovines

A facility has been added to the GLAS online system where you can select this option for mountain/rough grazing land not grazed by bovines. In these cases, a watercourse action cannot be chosen on these parcels. Advisors should note that no bovines **can be on these LPIS parcels at any time** during the GLAS Contract. GLAS participants, who indicate LPIS parcels under the above, will be considered **as a risk for inspection purposes**. If on

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inspection, bovines are found or evidence of bovines is found on these LPIS parcels, the participants GLAS contract may be terminated for failure to deliver the Protection of Watercourse from Bovines action in full.

D. SAC/SPA Designation – Farmland Habitat (private Natura sites)

If the watercourse is in a designated SAC/SPA approval for fencing may be required.

Advisors must choose a watercourse action on these parcels within the GLAS on-line system and if approval to fence is subsequently refused a derogation from delivering the action will be given; the participant will remain eligible for GLAS but will receive no payment for the fencing of watercourse action for the lengths concerned within the derogation. See Appendix 1 – Derogation Form for Specific GLAS actions. A facility to upload this form will be provided on the GLAS on-line system.

Vulnerable Water Area TIER 2 (Also mandatory for Tier 1(b) applicants

Mandatory for Tier 1(a) applicants with a High Status River on holding; it is optional for all other Tier 1(a) applicants).

A Vulnerable Water Area is one where there is a **Low Status River attribute on a parcel** (Profile TAB/ Parcel Values), **bovines on holding in 2013 or 2014** (Profile TAB/Overall Farm Values), **grass parcel contiguous to a watercourse** and where it is **Wet Land** – Profile TAB/Overall Farm Values (i.e. more than 50% of the total area of the holding is classified as wet using the latest Teagasc Soils Map). Under Actions TAB, it is shown as a “Low Status River (Primary – one of many)”.

The Vulnerable Water Area on the holding is mandatory for all applicants, except for the exceptions listed at E from taking it on a HOLDING and F and G from taking it on a specific PARCEL.

Where it is taken all watercourses must be fenced (except for exceptions below) which means that **ALL** parcels on the holding with Low Status Water attribute and parcels with a river on the EPA layer must be fenced, i.e. either the protection of watercourses action or the Riparian Margin must be chosen. Where there is an area based action on the same parcel the only watercourse action that can be chosen is the Protection of Watercourses from Bovines. The Protection of Watercourses and the Riparian Margin action cannot be chosen on the same parcel. Both actions involve fencing.

Exception from taking watercourse action on HOLDING:

E. Watercourse action is not mandatory on the holding (but may be taken as an optional action)

Where the following Priority Environmental Assets are on the holding AND High Status Water Area is not present:

- Commonage
- Farmland Habitat (Private Natura)
- Farmland Birds
- Rare breeds

Exceptions from taking watercourse action on a PARCEL:

F. Watercourse on map but not on the ground or not in the applicant’s land parcel

A facility has been added to the GLAS online system where you can select the option ‘Watercourse not present’. In these cases, a watercourse action cannot be chosen on that parcel.

G. Mountain land/Rough grazing not grazed by bovines.

A facility has been added to the GLAS online system where you can select this option for mountain/rough grazing land not grazed by bovines. In these cases, a watercourse action cannot be chosen on that parcel. Advisors should note that no bovines **can be on these LPIS parcels at any time** during the GLAS Contract. GLAS participants, who indicate LPIS parcels under the above, will be considered **as a risk for inspection purposes**. If on inspection, bovines are found or evidence of bovines is found on these LPIS parcels, the participants GLAS contract may be terminated for failure to deliver the Protection of Watercourse from Bovines Action in full.

GENERAL WATERCOURSE ACTION (TIER 3 or may be chosen as an additional action by Tier 1 and Tier 2 applicants). OPTIONAL

A general watercourse action may be chosen where the holding does not fall under categories High Status Water or Vulnerable Status Water. In other words there is **Low Status River attribute** on a parcel (Profile TAB/Parcel Values) and the holding is **Dry Land** (Profile TAB/Overall Farm Values). Under Actions TAB it is shown as a 'Low Status River (Primary – one of many).

On such a holding where the Advisor opts to take a watercourse action, then **ALL** parcels with Low Status attribute and EPA River (as shown on map) must be fenced, with exceptions allowed on specific parcels as listed at H and I. Where there is an area based action on the same parcel the only watercourse action that can be chosen is the Protection of Watercourses from Bovines. The Protection of Watercourses and the Riparian Margin action cannot be chosen on the same parcel. Both actions involve fencing.

Exceptions from taking watercourse action on a PARCEL:

H. Watercourse on map but not on the ground or not in the applicant's land parcel

A facility has been added to the GLAS online system where you can select the option 'Watercourse not present'. In these cases, a watercourse action cannot be chosen on that parcel.

I. Mountain land/rough grazing not grazed by bovines

A facility has been added to the GLAS online system where you can select this option for mountain/rough grazing land not grazed by bovines. In these cases, a watercourse action cannot be chosen on that parcel. Advisors should note that no bovines **can be on these LPIS parcels at any time** during the GLAS Contract. GLAS participants, who indicate LPIS parcels under the above, will be considered **as a risk for inspection purposes**. If on inspection, bovines are found or evidence of bovines is found on these LPIS parcels, the participants GLAS contract may be terminated for failure to deliver the Protection of Watercourse from Bovines action in full.

Note: The only actions allowable on parcels with a High Status River or Low Status River attribute are those which are compatible with the presence of the river. The river being fenced must be visible on the GLAS mapping system.

Appendix 1: Derogation Form for Specific GLAS actions – (Appendix 17 in GLAS Specification)

Action – Please tick the appropriate action	Protection of Watercourses from Bovines <input type="checkbox"/> Riparian Margins <input type="checkbox"/>
Herd number	
LPIS parcel(s)	
Reason for derogation	
GLAS advisor name	
Signature	
Date	