



**An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta**  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage

# Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme



TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE SCHEME

## Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme 2022

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### ***Abbreviations***

DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
MHLGH	Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
PMU	Peatlands Management Unit of
The Department	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

# Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme 2022

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## 1. Background and Purpose of Scheme

Ireland's bogs occurring as raised bogs, blanket bogs or fens are special and unique places and play an important role in contributing to our biodiversity, well-being, natural and cultural heritage.

Ireland holds approximately 50% of all raised bogs remaining in the Atlantic region of North West Europe with the national area of blanket bogs reported to be over 250,000 hectares.

The Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme (PCES) contributes to the strategic objectives as set out in the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022, Project Ireland 2040 and Irelands Rural Regeneration Strategy.

The objective of the scheme is to provide funding to support the conservation and revitalisation of raised bog and blanket bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other peatland areas including fens. The Scheme aims to encourage communities, local organisations and other interested parties to become involved in the enhancement of their natural surrounding areas and to raise awareness of their local environment.

Grants to local community groups, bodies and organisations under the Scheme will support a diverse range of initiatives with community benefit from events, education programmes, promotions, publications, exhibitions, development of conservation management plans, public amenity and recreational measures, maintenance measures that support the conservation of raised and blanket bogs and fens, monitoring or surveying work to inform peatland restoration/conservation projects, invasive species and fire control measures, anti-littering initiatives to local environmental improvements in the area of the designated bogs and other peatland areas.

The Scheme, administered by the Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, is now seeking in 2022 to encourage local communities, local groups, schools and other interested parties to engage with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to the conservation and revitalisation of raised bog and blanket bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other peatland areas and promote public engagement and awareness of our natural heritage. A fund of up to €500,000 is available for this scheme in 2022.

For further details on national policies in relation to peatlands and designated bogs please see [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) for the publications 'National Peatlands Strategy', the 'National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022' and the 'Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network'.

**Please note that local authority or commercial projects are not eligible for funding under this Scheme.**

## **2. PCES 2022 Scheme Focus**

The focus of the scheme in 2022 will be to support conservation, restoration, revitalisation of raised bog and blanket bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and other peatland areas including fens and promote public engagement and awareness of our natural heritage across Ireland. The 2022 scheme will, in particular, support and provide an outlet for the communities in which they are situated and also position rural areas to respond to the post-COVID-19 economic environment.

### **Operation of Scheme:**

This scheme will operate as an annual scheme for 2022 subject to the normal Departmental budgetary processes. Funding must be claimed by the deadlines as specified by the Department.

Applications will be accepted for **2022 projects** throughout the year. This deadline may be amended at the discretion of the Department.

- Projects approved for 2022 must be completed by 5 November 2022 and a claim for reimbursement of funds made by 11 November 2022.

Projects funded under the scheme should be commenced as soon as practicable.

### **Project Types:**

The Scheme will support a diverse range of initiatives with community benefit. The types of projects typically funded by the Scheme include education programmes, publications, exhibitions, events, public amenity, recreational measures, maintenance measures, development of conservation management plans, monitoring or surveying work to inform peatland restoration and conservation projects, invasive species and fire control measures, anti-littering initiatives to local environmental improvements.

Applicants in 2022 are strongly encouraged to consider opportunities to develop conservation management plans for their local areas, undertake feasibility studies, or engage with an ecologist as a first step in the sustainable management or development of amenities in these areas.

The above is not a definitive list and other innovative projects are encouraged. Proposals under the Scheme should demonstrate a collaborative approach, working with the local community and stakeholders involved.

Applicants are encouraged to review projects funded in previous years to get an understanding of the diverse types of projects eligible. Lists of projects funded previously are available from [pcengagementscheme@housing.gov.ie](mailto:pcengagementscheme@housing.gov.ie) or on the Departments website.

## **3. Funding and Timelines:**

An indicative budget of €500,000 is available for successful project under the 2022 Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme.

All proposed projects must be in a position to commence at the start of 2022, and must be capable of being delivered in a realistic time frame, i.e. by start of November 2022.

It is advisable that appropriate assessments, feasibility studies and planning permissions (if required) are in place or substantially progressed prior to the submission of a project application.

In respect of proposed walking trails and cycle ways, please note that such proposals may likely require planning permission or consent from the relevant authorities. In this regard it is advised to plan your project on a phased basis allowing sufficient periods for each phase and seek relevant professional expertise e.g. ecological expertise and/or planning expertise particularly if proposing a project near protected or ecologically sensitive areas. Guidance on walking and cycle trails from the National Parks and Wildlife Service should be considered in this regard.

### **Preparing for Funding:**

To obtain funding the group, body or organisation should have a formal status, good financial administrative and governance structure, for example registered as a charity. It is possible for one group to act as an umbrella group for others in this respect.

The group should ideally have undertaken a number of steps before an application is lodged including having a budget available to cover fundraising, have obtained quotes for the proposed project, identified who within the group has the skills to put together a strong application, identified any local or national partners, checked the need and source of matching funding, checked that the application meets all the required criteria, identified any risks or challenges to the project, be clear on project aims and objectives, set out the applicants strengths and past achievements, have an understanding of how the project will develop in time and be able to demonstrate how the project is progressing and budget is being managed.

### **Funds awarded and grantee contribution**

Under the Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme, up to 75% of the total cost of a project under the Scheme will be provided for any individual project. The remaining 25% match funding must be contributed by the successful applicant / community group.

The maximum grant available is 75% of the costs of the project **to a maximum of €25,000.**

The minimum funding awarded for successful projects will be **€1,000** up to a maximum of **€25,000.**

**In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Department a grant may be awarded outside of this range.**

It is recommended that the projects should directly provide a community benefit, support national nature/biodiversity/conservation policies and should be in the vicinity of/within a local raised/blanket bog SAC / NHA or other raised/blanket bog/fen areas of conservation/community value.

### **Cash Contribution**

A minimum cash contribution of 5% of the overall project costs is required. The grantee will be required to provide confirmation that the cash contribution is in place and retain a record of the source of the cash contribution.

## Matching Funding/Contributions in Kind

The remainder of the 25% must be made up by the organisation / group themselves. Full involvement by community interests will be an important feature of successful projects. Contributions in kind, e.g. voluntary work, free materials, community investment, philanthropic contributions, **will be accepted** as eligible as matching expenditure.

The Department will require documentation such as signed time sheets, validated information on materials and/or goods donated.

### For donated goods/materials,

- provide a description and number of items,
- date provided, and
- the total fair market value of the items.

### For facilities,

- the published rental rate and hours or dates the facility was used.

### For volunteers' services,

- list the number of hours worked,
- dates of service,
- type of service
- countersigned by project manager/supervisor

This documentation will be forwarded to you for completion if approved under the scheme.

Voluntary Labour: If Contribution in Kind is in the form of Voluntary labour (i.e. unpaid work), time spent on the project must be verified.

- The rate applied should be for remuneration of equivalent work. The grantee must ensure that the rate per hour applied is properly justified according to the work undertaken.
- Where Voluntary Labour forms part of a project, the grantee is advised that the requirements of all relevant Health and Safety legislation apply.
- Project administration e.g. attendance at meetings, preparation of grant application form, funding drawdown claims and management costs are not eligible as voluntary labour.

Details of all voluntary labour claimed must be maintained on a timesheet (1 timesheet per person) which has been provided by the Department. The time sheet will capture the following details;

- The name of the person undertaking the work
- The nature, time, dates of the works, quantity, hours worked and rate per hour,
- The signature of the person who provided the in-kind work,
- The timesheet must be signed off by the appointed project co-ordinator over the project.

### **Professional Fees, Oversight and Certification of Works:**

All works must be carried out to the best standards and major works and those deemed by the Department as relevant must be overseen and certified by a suitably qualified professional. A maximum **5% of the grant awarded can be used towards the cost of professional fees where professional oversight/certification is necessary** (e.g. Engineer / Ecologist etc.)

### **Start-up (Pre-funding) Funding**

Should the applicant or group require **start-up funding**; the Department can on a case by case basis prefund the project or works **up to a total of 30%** of the total project value, subject to sanction from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, which will need to be used prior to the release of more funding. Paid invoices / receipts must be submitted as proof. Further funding will be released once the initial start-up funds have been spent in full. If start-up funding is released and the project does not progress the start funding will **be recouped**.

The remainder of the funds granted will be paid out on the basis of vouched expenditure only.

Applicants must demonstrate clearly how the start-up funding and the remainder of the funds will be spent. Project budgets should be well set out and as per best procurement practice a minimum of three **quotations** should be obtained as appropriate. Project timelines and milestones should also be provided. Quotations must be supplied from the supplier for specific goods / materials/services. Goods catalogues will not be accepted as quotations. Please submit the preferred quotation with your application but retain on file other quotes received for audit purposes.

### **Funding Awarded:**

The precise level of grant for an individual project will depend on the nature and quality of the proposal.

The funding offered must only be used for the purposes specified in the application and any alterations to the proposed use of the funding must be approved in advance by the Department.

Change of suppliers, materials used or change of project objectives must be notified to the Department and approval received prior to any alterations to the use of funding.

### **Notification of Funding Awarded:**

Following the approval of projects for funding, the Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section of the Department will notify successful applicants of **provisional** offers of funding. This notification will detail the level of funding approved, the timeline for the completion of the project / event / activity / works and the terms and conditions of the funding awarded in sufficient time to enable the applicant to complete the project / event / activity / works and recoup funding by the required deadline.

Final sanction will be given by the Department once the applicant satisfies any outstanding conditions.

Details of projects/events/activities/works awarded funding under this scheme will be published by the Department.

Applicants will be required to complete an Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) Form. Payment will be only made by means of EFT to a bank account in the name of the group or organisation and not to any individual member.

If your application has been deemed ineligible, you will receive a letter informing you that your application will not be assessed. If your application has been unsuccessful, you will receive a letter informing you that your application has not been successful. You may contact Peatlands Management Unit for feedback on your application.

#### **4. Eligibility for the Scheme**

##### **What types of projects/works/activities are eligible?**

The categories of projects/events/activities/works eligible for grant funding are as follows: (*These lists are not exhaustive*)

**Events / Exhibitions / Promotions:** i.e. funding to support the production of an event, exhibition or promotion campaign connected to peatland (including fens) conservation, restoration, awareness or promotion and that will allow the public an opportunity to engage with or experience.

*Examples of potential successful applications may include, but are not limited to, events, exhibitions or promotions in formal or informal education settings or community settings.*

**Raised, Blanket Bog and Fen and Peatland Education / Awareness and Conservation Programmes:** i.e. funding to support the development of conservation/management plans or feasibility studies, the production of an education or awareness programme by an individual, group or local school/college that will promote the public's engagement with and awareness of raised and blanket bogs and our natural heritage.

*Examples of potential successful applications may include, but are not limited to, conservation plans for raised / blanket bog areas, feasibility study for development of recreational amenities, undertaking tours, school day trips, historical tours or summer projects i.e. recreational and educational activity for young people.*

**Publications / Leaflets / Local Nature Newsletter:** i.e. Funding to support the production of a publication, leaflet, newsletter by an individual or community group that promotes an appreciation for and understanding of the immense intrinsic value of raised and blanket bogs and fens to Ireland's rich natural heritage and would contribute to national enjoyment of said heritage.

*Examples of potential successful applications may include, but are not limited to, books on wildlife habitats, flora and fauna of Irish raised/blanket bogs.*

**Raised/Blanket Bog and Fens and Peatland Conservation / Enhancements / Improvements Measures:** i.e. funding to support and provide assistance to local volunteer groups, individuals or organisations for the completion of maintenance works to enhance the area in the vicinity of/within the Raised/Blanket Bog SAC/NHA network and fens or undertake certain conservation measures and who actively seek to improve their local environment through projects or activities of an environmental nature at community level. We would advise any group undertaking walk-way or trail measures consult guidance from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and seek advice of other organisations who have undertaken similar projects

*Examples of potential successful applications may include, but are not limited to, removal of invasive species, improvements to recreational access by e.g. hedge cutting; gravel spreading; local bog road improvement; measures to minimise anti-social activity e.g. placing barriers; waste removal; signage; measures to improve the quality of the recreational experience e.g. benches; picnic benches; hides; viewing points; fire control measures or wildlife survey measures.*

The Department would encourage projects that are related to the development of conservation plans, management plans and feasibility studies and works which are to be undertaken on a phased and considered basis.

Please contact your local NPWS ranger for guidance regarding the undertaking of works or the erection of signage in the vicinity of protected sites (e.g. SACs, NHAs).

**Funding for access or road improvement measures or drains on bogs being used for turf cutting or commercial uses will not be eligible for funding under this scheme.**

**Improvement works must be necessary and not merely ordinary maintenance or of a kind which the applicants could reasonably be expected to do for themselves.**

**The Department will not formally fund activities involving:**

- Projects that solely benefit an individual
- Equipment, unless directly associated with the project
- Income generating projects
- Overheads, ongoing running costs
- Insurance

Particular care should be taken with proposed works in designated areas, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), etc.

Any necessary screening for appropriate assessments and/or other environmental assessments /approvals/planning permissions etc. that may need to be obtained must be in place prior to any works commencing.

Applicants should ensure that all necessary consents are forthcoming from all relevant landowners (Private and Public) for the proposed works, and that works, where applicable, comply with relevant standards set by relevant bodies. In particular, for projects relating to the development of walking trails, cycleways etc or across private lands proof of consultation and agreement of **all** affected local landowners must be provided with the application.

## Monitoring of Project Progress

Projects funded under the scheme should be commenced as soon as practical. Please note that the Department may request further information, carry out inspections of project /event /activity /works being considered for funding or inspections of project /event /activity /works approved for funding if deemed necessary.

## 5. The Application and Assessment Process

### Overview of Process

The Department will advertise for, assess and recommend applications for consideration by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage for funding under the scheme. The Department may inspect the project / event / activity / works to ensure it has been completed in accordance with best practice/statutory obligations. It may also inspect the project / event / activity / works being considered for funding under the scheme.

The scheme will be advertised on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie) and on the website of the Department [www.housing.gov.ie](http://www.housing.gov.ie) and on other social media.

Electronic copy of the Terms and Conditions of the scheme, the public information leaflet and the application form will be circulated to local authorities, national parks, Department visitor centres, and to interest groups and parties.

Applications for funding under the Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme must be made by the applicant no later:

Applicants must **submit 1 copy** of the completed and signed application form along, with a Method Statement and any other supplementary materials, where relevant, by email to [pcengagementscheme@housing.gov.ie](mailto:pcengagementscheme@housing.gov.ie) or by post to the address set out at the beginning of the application form.

**Applicants are advised that failure to provide adequate detail on the application form and method statement may seriously weaken their application.**

**Incomplete and unsigned applications will not be considered.**

**Your National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS) local ranger** <https://www.npws.ie>

Contact should be made with your local ranger prior to starting works on your project / event / activity / works near/within protected sites (SACs/NHAs/Nature Reserves) as consent may be required for the works. The ranger may also offer you advice in terms of nature conservation and biodiversity aspects of your project.

### Legal Status:

Proof of the legal status of any group/body/organisation must be submitted with an application along with any relevant tax clearance certification.

Documentation to include: proof of legal status of organisation, bank account details for the organisation, a copy of the organisation's constitution along with names and details of the chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.

### **The Assessment Process**

Proposals will be examined on merit and considered subject to sufficient funding being available. Projects should also represent good value for money and be in line with the overall aims of the scheme.

In approving applications and selecting the successful projects, a number of factors will be considered by the Department, including the information supplied in the Application Form, the Method Statement; the range, mix, quality and impact of proposed projects; previous funding provided and other relevant considerations.

It should be noted that the number of projects approved for a particular body may be reduced in the event that there are excessive delays in the projects approved for that body under previous iterations of this Scheme.

Projects will be assessed based on the information submitted and under the following weighted criteria:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
1. Quality & Standard of Project & Method Statement (where relevant)	15 marks
2. Value for Money	15 marks
3. Capacity to deliver the works, project, event or activity	15 marks
4. Raised Bog/Blanket Bog/Fen Peatland Conservation Education and Awareness raising potential	20 marks
5. Community Engagement Benefits	20 marks
6. Risks and Mitigation Plans*	15 marks

\*Risks and Mitigation plans- Project Coordinators must complete a brief risk evaluation of the proposed project prior to submission. The applicant should detail what the significant risks to delivery are and how these risks are to be mitigated against. How the impacts of the projects will be captured and communicated to the wider community. There must be support from the community at large for the project being proposed and evidence of this included in the application. Evidence of consultation with the community or target groups intended to cater for must be provided with the application where relevant.

Following assessment of the applications, the Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section of the Department will recommend projects and levels of funding to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

## **METHOD STATEMENT**

In 2022 for physical works a **method statement** must be also submitted appropriate to the scale and nature of the project. A method statement is a document detailing how a particular task or activity will be carried out. It should specify the activities to be undertaken on a stage by stage basis. Please see template guidance below.

**Applicants are advised that failure to provide adequate detail on the method statement may seriously weaken their application.**

**Brief Guidance Note on Method Statements**

The Method Statement should be appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposed works. **The Method Statement for physical works should include:**

1. **A concise description of the existing area where works / project is planned.**  
This should be a concise description of the area as it currently exists, noting all its salient features, its appearance, setting, form, condition, present function and significance.
2. **A site location map of suitable scale and quality clearly marked must also be provided.**  
Any ‘on the ground measures’ and physical works proposed should be specific and detailed in as far as practicable.
3. **A concise description of the works / project proposed.**  
This should identify any issues that are causing risk, what works are proposed, how the work will be done, necessary safety measures and what specification and materials will be used. It must include relevant plans, drawings and supporting visual media such as photographs or other illustrations and should typically address the following (but by no means exclusive) issues:
  - a) Are the works temporary or permanent?
  - b) What types of work are being proposed and in which locations?
  - c) Details of on-site supervision and monitoring
  - d) A brief schedule or sequence of works
  - e) Is there adequate access/egress?
  - f) An estimated project cost
  - g) Estimated start date and completion date
4. **An impact statement and proposed mitigation measures (if applicable).**  
This should address any likely impact of works and outline ways of mitigating adverse impacts.
5. **A detailed description of future phases of the project (if applicable)**
6. **Please complete table below and provide details of any contractors, tradesperson or personnel**

Contractor(s)/Tradesperson(s)/(Personnel)  Name:  Position:	Address:
Telephone/Mobile No:	Email:
Tax Reference No:	Date:
Satisfactory level of subcontractor tax compliance demonstrated:	Yes                  No
Outline experience in similar types of projects/works	

**Any permissions/assessments required (e.g. Ministerial Consents, Planning Permission, Appropriate Assessments, Strategic Environment Assessments, landowner consents lease arrangements) must be stated on the application form and an outline given of when consent was requested/received.**

Please refer to the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service for further detail on planning and consents ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)) for projects/plans or programmes which may impact on the natural heritage.

The contributors and any other persons whose lands or interests appear to be affected by the proposed project / event / activity / works must, when required, prior to the commencement of project/event/activity/works, be consulted and give written consent to the execution of the project / event / activity / works including for entry to their lands. **This written consent must be submitted with the application form.**

Any measures undertaken to improve access to raised/blanket bog /fen peatland areas must have consideration to relevant safety and liability and access implications.

### **Statutory Requirements and Consents**

Works approved under this scheme must meet all statutory requirements including Safety, Health and Welfare legislation, employment and environmental legislation and the need for planning permission or other relevant consents, where appropriate.

Where works are proposed to be undertaken on areas protected under the Wildlife Act 1976, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and/or the National Monuments Acts, proof must be provided by the applicant that the statutory requirements for notification or for Ministerial consent under these Acts/Regulations have been complied with.

Depending on the nature of the project / event / activity / works permission may be required from other consent authorities.

## 6. The Recoupment of Funding

### Overview of Payment Process

The Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section of the Department is responsible for the payment of funds approved under the Scheme to successful applicants. The Department is bound by **Circular 13/2014: Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds and the requirements of the public spending code.**\*

*\*The overall principle is that there should be transparency and accountability in the management of public funds, in line with economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The circular outlines, for example, that grant recipients should not dispose of publicly funded assets without prior approval.*

Any funds offered will be solely for the project / event / activity / works described in the letter of approval from the Department. In the event of significant changes such as change of suppliers, materials used or change of project objectives this must be notified to the Department and approval received immediately before proceeding.

**All project / event / activity / works must be completed and certified where necessary by a relevant professional before the applicant may seek the payment of funding.**

Grants are only payable on completion of the project / event / activity / works and on submission of the following documentation before the final draw down of the funding is made:

- Completion of EFT;
- Completion of Recoupment Form B sheet;
- Certification of works by relevant professional (e.g. Architect, engineer, surveyor);
- Vouched receipts that have been **SIGNED and DATED** by the supplier;
- Invoices marked paid that have been **SIGNED and DATED** by the supplier;  
*NOTE: an invoice simply stamped PAID is not sufficient*
- Report on the grant aided project / event / activity / works and;
- Provision of supplementary information including photographs, copy of any material produced e.g. books, booklets, where necessary

Applicants making claims for grant funding on the basis of vouched expenditure are required to state that:

- the invoices used to support their claims relate to activities and services appropriate to the Scheme objectives and have been paid; and
- the invoices have not and will not be used in support of another claim for reimbursement from any other funder(s) (except as provided for in an agreed joint-funding arrangement).

In the event of the project / event / activity / works being abandoned, the applicant must notify the Department immediately and also refund the full amount where funding has been provided.

## Cross-check Procedures

In some cases projects may be eligible to receive funding from more than one publicly funded scheme/programme. In such cases to ensure that the limit of the total project cost from public funding –inclusive of VAT- is not exceeded, save in exceptional circumstances, information provided by the applicant may be cross-checked with other public bodies within data protection guidelines.

## Eligible Expenditure and Professional Fees

**Value Added Tax (VAT)** is allowable as eligible expenditure under this Scheme. However, it is only allowable for that portion of works which is being funded and only in circumstances where such VAT is not recoverable by the beneficiary by any other means.

**Professional Fees** are allowable as eligible expenditure under this scheme. However, they are **only allowable for that portion of works which is being funded and must be no more than 5% of the overall awarded project funding.** These may include fees for surveys and method statements, on-site supervision and monitoring, reasonable travel and subsistence costs and sign-off on project.

## Financial Management Requirements:

The Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme operates under the principles of the public spending code whereby all Irish public bodies are obliged to treat public funds with care and ensure that the best possible value-for-money is obtained whenever public money is being spent or invested. <http://publicspendingcode.per.gov.ie> .

Particular attention by grantees should be paid to **Circular 13/2014: Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds. Please see <http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2014/13.pdf>** for further details. Grantees must ensure that there is proper financial management and that an adequate audit trail exists and is maintained for funding awarded under this scheme. Financial Statements will be required to be submitted to the Department at the end of the financial year. Where audited accounts are not available the Department must be satisfied that suitable financial statements are acceptable as an alternative.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to report in their financial statements, where they produce such statements, on funding received from the scheme as below:

- The name of the Department, specifying the exact title that is to be used in the report i.e. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- The actual name of the Scheme i.e. Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme;
- The amount of funding accounted for in the current financial statement;
- Whether and how the use of the funding is restricted (i.e. is it for a particular project or for the delivery of a service).

## 7. General Information

### Photographs/Quotes for Works/Tax Clearance Compliance

The Department requests that the applicant(s) provide where relevant good quality digital photographs of the project before any works/measures commence and after the project/work is completed, which may be used later for a 'before and after' comparison for reporting purposes.

Please note that the Department may use any or all images supplied by the applicant(s) to advertise or publicise the Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme until instructed otherwise by applicant. Applicants are advised to obtain permission to use images (if necessary) before they submit them to the Department and to confirm this in writing.

Project budgets should be well set out and a minimum of **three quotations** obtained as appropriate in line with best practice procurement principles with the preferred detailed written quotation for the project / event / activity / works **submitted with the application**.

Evidence of tax clearance compliance or charitable status **must be** submitted with the application where relevant, together with **evidence of the legal status** of the organisation/group, bank account details and a copy of the organisation's/group's constitution.

Written consent of owner or other affected owners for proposed works / project / event / activity (if applicable) **must also** be submitted.

### Tax Clearance Procedures:

Relevant tax clearance procedures in respect of public sector grant payments as set down by the Revenue Commissioners must be adhered to. Please note that Revenue have introduced new Tax Clearance procedures. Please refer to [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie) for further details. In line with Section 4(1) of Department of Finance *Circular 44/2006: Tax Clearance Procedures: Grants, Subsidies and Similar Payments*, please ensure that the proper tax clearance procedures are being adhered to by applicants, contractors and subcontractors.

### Publicity:

Recipients of funding under the Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme will be required to acknowledge the contribution of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Natura 2000 (where relevant for projects within Special Conservation Areas or Special Protection Areas) in all their printed and online publicity channels that relate to the project / event / activity / works being funded along with the inclusion of the relevant logos. These include the following:

- Site signs, hoardings, information boards and interpretation panels;
- Printed and online publications;
- Printed publicity materials such as flyers, event programmes and posters, brochures, leaflets, newsletters and press releases;
- Advertising;
- Educational materials and presentations;
- CD and DVD sleeves and related product packaging; and

- Film, television and online video credits.

The relevant logos will be provided by the Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section of the Department.

#### **Freedom of Information and Access to Information on the Environment:**

Applications for funding under this scheme are subject to the *Freedom of Information Acts* and the *Access to Information on the Environment Regulations*.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, details contained in applications and supporting documents may, on request, be released to third parties. If there is information contained in your application which is sensitive or confidential in nature, please identify it and provide an explanation as to why it should not be disclosed. If a request to release sensitive information under the legislation is received, you will be consulted before a decision is made whether or not to release the information. However, in the absence of the identification of particular information as sensitive, it could be disclosed without any consultation with you.

#### **Audit and Document Retention:**

Projects may be subject to audit by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General. All documentation regarding this Scheme must be kept on file for at least 7 years after the closure of this Scheme. If documents are stored electronically procedures used to do so should be in compliance with the *E-Commerce Act, 2000*.

#### **Child Protection:**

Grantees shall adhere to the Children's Act 2015 and 'Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children'. Where projects/events/activities funded involve children assurances will be sought from grantees that the proper child protection policies/arrangements are in place.

#### **Reallocation of Funding:**

The Department may reallocate funding if projects have not commenced by the specified dates and been completed by the deadline. Any issues regarding the administration of this scheme should be addressed in the first instance to the Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

#### **Contact/Enquires:**

For further information or enquiries regarding the operation of this scheme, applicants may contact the **Peatlands Management Unit of the Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section** of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Newtown Road, Wexford, Y35 AP90 by email [pcengagementscheme@housing.gov.ie](mailto:pcengagementscheme@housing.gov.ie).

#### **Complaints / Appeals Process:**

In the event of a complaint in relation to the administration of the Scheme, applicants may refer the matter to the Peatlands Conservation and Restoration Section of the Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage for an internal management

review with an option if unsatisfied with the outcome for a second review at a more senior management level within the Department. Following that if they feel that their complaints have not been dealt with satisfactorily by the Department the applicant can contact the Office of the Ombudsman.

**Use of Data:**

**Privacy Statement:**

The Department is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy and employs appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your information from unauthorised access. The Department will not process your personal data for any purpose other than that for which they were collected. Personal data may be exchanged with other Government Departments, local authorities, agencies under the aegis of the Department, or other public bodies, in certain circumstances where this is provided for by law.

The Department will only retain your personal data for as long as it is necessary for the purposes for which they were collected and subsequently processed. When the business need to retain this information has expired, it will be examined with a view to destroying the personal data as soon as possible, and in line with Department policy.

The Department's Privacy Statement in relation to individual suppliers, payees and grantees can be found on our website at: [Privacy Statement | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage \(old.gov.ie\)](#) Further information on Data Protection can be found on our website at: [Data Protection Policy | Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage \(old.gov.ie\)](#)

[gov.ie/housing](https://gov.ie/housing)

