



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

Peatlands and Natura Community Engagement Scheme

Frequently Asked Questions

2025

Prepared by the Department of
Housing, Local Government and Heritage
gov.ie

What is the closing date?

The closing date is Friday 24th January 2025.

Who should we contact throughout the application process?

All queries should be sent to nature@npws.gov.ie .

Is charitable status a requirement?

No, charitable status is not a requirement however legal status is. It is advised to seek support from an established community group in your area to facilitate the project should your group not have legal status.

Can you apply for multiple projects?

Yes, multiple project applications are accepted. We advise that you identify which project would take priority should the scheme be over subscribed.

What are the key requirements?

If works are part of your project application it is most important to determine if permissions are required i.e. landowner, planning and any relevant Ministerial permissions.

Can you apply for funding for;

- **Planning permission support services** – Yes
- **Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA)** – Yes
- **Feasibility Studies** - Yes

What constitutes as matching funding?

Matching funding can be in the form of monies held by the group and voluntary contributions, for example, voluntary work hours, donated facilities or equipment. It is important to note that this must amount to 20% i.e. a total project cost of €10,000 would require €2000 of matching funding and €8000 would be funded by the scheme.

How many quotes do you need to have for application?

Three quotes should be sought but only the groups preferred quote should be submitted.

Why do you need to show funds held by applicant?

As claims are paid on a vouched basis, (i.e. the invoices have been paid by the group and the scheme is reimbursing the group for these payments), it is required that the group can provide proof of how these invoices will be paid in the first instance.

What happens after application is submitted?

A panel will then review your application along with the other submissions and make a decision on whether to award funding. It is also important to note that while you may be awarded funding this may not be the full amount requested and also may come with certain conditions. Should you feel the project cannot be completed within these limits or under the stipulations there is no onus on the group to accept the funding as attempting to complete a project without the full funding required can prove problematic.

What are the first steps after funding has been granted?

Any queries that were made by the panel must be satisfied. The group must then sign the acceptance letter and complete the Electronic Funds Transfer Mandate as this is how payments will be made.

Do you need to consult with NPWS throughout the project?

For any groups undertaking works within, or in the vicinity of designated sites (SAC/SPA/NHA), it is essential that the NPWS rangers be aware of your project. The NPWS will notify them of projects receiving funding, however it is the responsibility of the group to ensure that all stages have been approved by regional NPWS staff, where relevant. Approval at each stage will be required by email or writing.

You have discovered that Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required after project has begun, what should you do?

Advise us by email at nature@npws.gov.ie as soon as possible as this could lead a delay in the project and if notified with enough time an extension could possibly be provided or an amendment in the funding awarded.

The project is delayed or certain elements won't be completed before closing date, what should you do?

Advise us by email at nature@npws.gov.ie as soon as possible. A request for an extension can be submitted if necessary, this will then be reviewed by the NPWS.

The project has come to a complete stop and won't be proceeding, what should you do?

Advise us by email at nature@npws.gov.ie as soon as possible.

What is needed to submit a claim?

We require invoices, receipts or proof of payment, a completed claim form and any approvals from regional NPWS staff, if required.

Can you submit claims at different stages?

We would advise if the group have multiple small payments that are being made throughout the duration of the project that these can be submitted at different stages, once the documents stated above are provided.

What are the options for groups to ensure they are financially in a position to apply for funding for a project?

As it is a requirement for all grant payments to be paid on a vouched basis, meaning groups are reimbursed following the invoice or cost firstly being paid by the group, it is essential that groups have the means to afford these costs. There are many options that can be explored such as;

- Credit union loans – if group account is with credit union, not individual members
- Fundraising
- Business loans – local businesses can often provide loans when grant award has been confirmed

Is the funding available for bogs that aren't designated?

Yes, funding of up to €20,000 is available for undesignated peatland sites.

Is it encouraged to carry out a phased project over a couple of rounds of PNCES? E.g. feasibility study etc. this year, and works next year.

Yes, this is very much encouraged as it can ensure a more manageable project for community groups within the time frame allowed.

When is the final recoupment date for this scheme this year?

The recoupment date for Friday 21st of November 2025.