



NPWS

An tSeirbhís Páircsanna
Náisiúnta agus Fiadhúlra
National Parks and Wildlife
Service

Peatlands and Natura Community Engagement Scheme 2025

Scheme Background



- The Peatland Community Engagement Scheme was established in 2018 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.
- The scheme has now been expanded to include communities that wish to foster better engagement with other designated and protected habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network specifically.
- ***The Peatlands and Natura Community Engagement Scheme*** aims to encourage local communities, organisations, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to actively contribute to the conservation and restoration of Natura 2000 sites and peatland areas.



Natura 2000



- Natura 2000 is a European network of sites designated for the protection of threatened species and habitats, on both land and sea.
- The Natura network of sites is comprised of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the EU Birds Directive, and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), established under the Habitats Directive.
- The Natura 2000 network, comprising over 27,000 sites, is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world.
- Natura 2000 sites in Ireland have been designated specifically to protect core areas for species or habitat types listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives.
- Ireland has over 600 Natura sites designated for the conservation of a range of threatened habitats and/or species and details of all these sites can be found on the website of the [National Parks and Wildlife Service \(NPWS\)](#).

What is a conservation measure?



A conservation measure is a mechanism or action that is taken on a Natura 2000 site with the aim of reaching ecological requirements of the ‘Qualifying Interests’ and achieving a site’s conservation objectives.

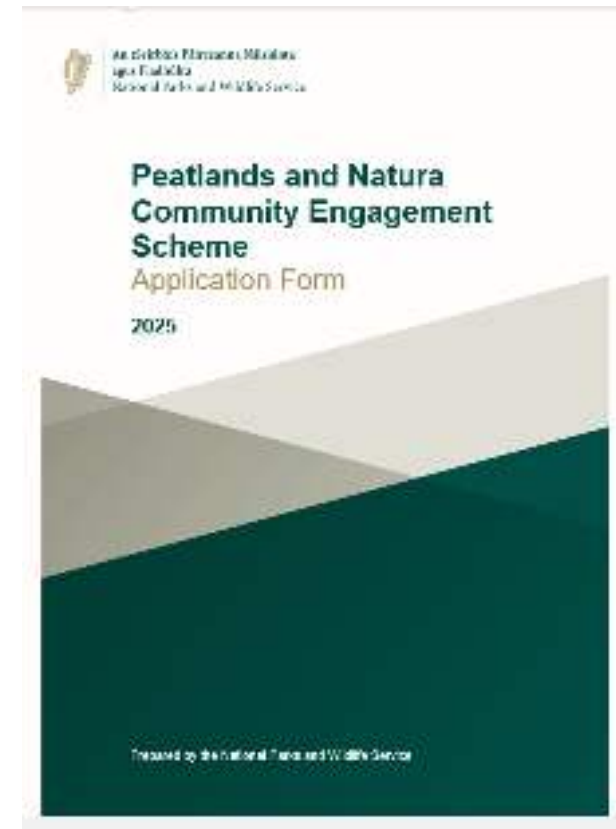
Where can I find out more information on ‘Qualifying Interests’ and ‘Conservation Objectives’?

More information can be found at:
(<https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>)

Application Process



1. Completed and signed application form
2. Method Statement for works where relevant
3. Detailed written preferred quotes
4. Supplementary material e.g. maps, photos
5. Evidence of tax clearance compliance / charitable status
6. Evidence of legal status of the organisation / group
7. Written consent of owner(s) for proposed works if applicable/consultation with impacted landowners
8. Ministerial Consent/statutory consents/licenses if required



Funding available



Category 1 – Natura 2000 sites (SAC / SPA)

- The maximum grant available is 80% of the costs of the project to a maximum of €40,000

Category 2 – Undesignated Peatland sites

- The maximum grant available is 80% of the cost of the project to a maximum of €20,000

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- Remaining 20% must be made up by the individual / group themselves/voluntary contributions (documented)
 - A minimum cash contribution of 5% of the overall project costs is required.
 - Prefunding 30%
 - The remainder of the funds granted will be paid out on the basis of vouched expenditure only.

Statutory Requirements



- Works approved under this scheme must meet all Statutory Requirements -
 - *Safety, Health & Welfare legislation*
 - *Employment legislation*
 - *Environmental legislation*
 - *National Monuments Acts*
 - *Need for planning permission – where appropriate*
 - *Wildlife Act 1976, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000*
 - *European Communities (Birds & Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended*



Activities Requiring Consent



- Activities Requiring Consent (ARCs) are specific activities which have the potential to negatively impact on the habitats and/or species for which a Natura site is designated
- Each Natura 2000 site has its own page on the NPWS website with useful background information: the ARCs are listed in the Statutory Instrument on the page

Why Do You Need to Know this?

- Some activities applied for under this scheme, may constitute an ARC and therefore require permission from NPWS prior to a grant being awarded and works commencing
- Some activities may not fall under the ARC definition, but may require planning permission. If in doubt about planning permission, please contact your Local Authority for advice

Why do you need to contact your local NPWS Conservation Ranger?



- To discuss your project and ensure the proposed actions are appropriate for the Natura 2000 site in question
- To seek advice on whether an ARC is required and to obtain a copy of the ARC application form

How to contact your local ranger.

- Contact details for your local regional office can be found on the NPWS website

[Contact Us | National Parks & Wildlife Service](#)



Under this Scheme, the NPWS will not formally fund activities involving:

- Projects that solely benefit an individual
- Equipment, unless directly associated with the project
- Income generating projects
- Local Authority projects



Frequently Asked Questions



Does the scheme cover insurance?

The new extended scheme now includes a provision of 10% for overheads related to a project.

What is vouched expenditure?

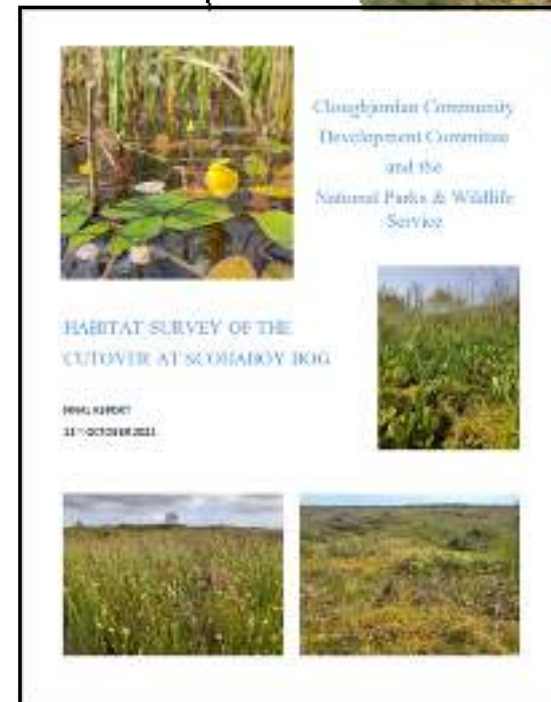
Any costs invoiced to groups must be paid by the group, the receipt received from this payment is then submitted to the Department and the costs will be reimbursed.

Why do I need to provide quotes at application stage?

Providing quotes at application stage ensures that the applicants will be awarded sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with the project.

Project examples

- Maintenance works to enhance areas
- Education and awareness e.g. signage, viewing points and illegal waste disposal.
- Conservation measures e.g. fire control, removal of invasive species
- Feasibility studies
- Research
- Wildlife surveys
- Conservation plans
- Cultural/Promotional e.g. production of an event, exhibition, promotion campaign e.g. artist, photographer, production of a publication, leaflet, newsletter, etc.



Clara Heritage Society



The Bog Trotters Festival is an annual event, the aim of this project is to bring people closer to their natural habitat and encourage them to become more involved in the management and preservation of their own environment.



Natura 2000 Day

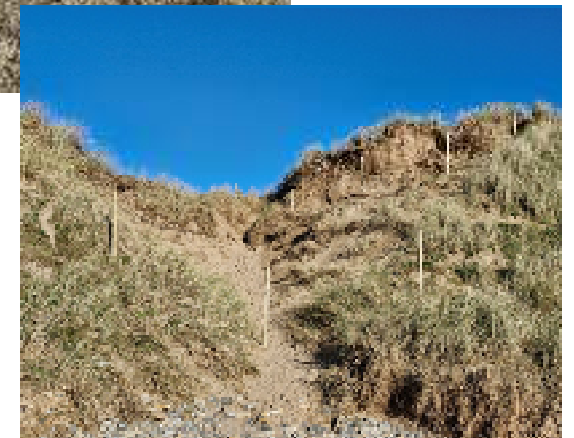


We provided support to a number of events on Natura 2000 Day in 2024, to raise awareness of the Natura 2000 network.



Tramore Eco Group

‘Project Sand Dunes’ is a Sand Dune restoration project, with the aim to restore, protect and enhance the fragile dune ecosystem at Tramore Dunes and Backstrand SAC. Actions include installation of chestnut fencing, knowledge sharing events and production of an educational booklet.



Green Skibbereen



Myross Wood SAC :

- The completion of an ecological survey and action plan for the rare Killarney Fern, to deal with threats to the conservation status.
- Training of volunteers in invasive species control methods
- Public engagement and awareness raising regarding the importance of the SAC



Thank You

Reminder - The closing date for submission of applications is Friday, January 24th 2025

Email: nature@npws.gov.ie

