

PEATLAND CODE

**Minor revision and clarification guidance for
Version 2 of the Peatland Code
September 2024**

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Introduction: This document provides clarity in areas of the Peatland Code, Guidance document and Field Protocol that have subjectivity or are unclear and aims to offer project developers and validation/verification bodies clear direction on how these areas shall be interpreted. This document shall be read alongside the Peatland Code version 2, Guidance document version 2 and Field Protocol version 2. This document also provides information on minor revisions to version 2 which will eventually be incorporated into version 2.1. The IUCN UK Peatland Programme is committed to continuous improvement of the Peatland Code. Any text that has been struck through has been replaced with updated wording. We have left the original wording crossed out to show the changes made.

Note: Following a revision or update projects have a three-month period from the published date in which document submission for Project Plan Validation can still be done against the old rule.

Definitions:

The document employs following definitions:

Shall: represents a mandatory requirement

Should: represents recommendations or best practices that project developers should aim to implement on their projects

May: represents a course of action permissible by the Peatland Code

Normative References

This Clarification document shall be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Peatland Code v2.0
- Peatland Code Guidance Document v2.0
- Peatland Code Field Protocol v2.0

Clarifications:

Main Peatland Code:

Section	Current text	IUCN UK PP Clarification/Updated text	Date Approved	Approved by	Published date
1.1 Eligible Activities	<p>Requirement: Eligible activities shall be those relating to restoration of:</p> <p>Either blanket bog or raised bog with an associated baseline condition category of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively eroding • Drained • Modified bog • Cropland - drained¹ • Grassland - intensive¹ • Grassland - extensive¹ <p>or fen with an associated baseline condition category of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cropland - drained • Grassland - intensive • Grassland - extensive • Modified fen <p>Areas with a minimum peat depth of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 cm in fens • 30 cm in bogs, with the additional requirement in bogs that areas with peat depth between 30 and 	<p>There are three broad peatland types in the UK: blanket bog, raised bog and fen see Peatland Code glossary and Field Protocol V2 for definitions.</p> <p>Requirement: Eligible activities shall be those relating to restoration of:</p> <p>either blanket bog or raised bog with an associated baseline condition category of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively Eroding • Drained • Modified bog • Cropland-drained¹ • Grassland- intensive¹ • Grassland – extensive¹ <p>or fen with an associated baseline condition category of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cropland-drained • Grassland- intensive • Grassland – extensive • Modified fen. 	4th September 2024	Technical Advisory board and Executive board sign off	27 th September 2024

¹ Please note that the fen section in the Field Protocol shall be used, since they will first transition to rewetted fen.

	<p>50 cm shall be part of a restoration project contiguous with areas of deeper peat. Areas of continuously shallow peat are excluded. The project shall evidence that the areas between 30 and 50 cm are degrading and are likely to have been deep in the past.</p>	<p>Areas with a minimum peat depth from the surface of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 cm in fens with baseline condition category grassland and modified fen • Cropland – drained condition category and Grassland that used to be cropland in the past 20 years may have a lower minimum peat depth than 45 cm if the project can evidence that the average carbon soil content is more than 30 times the Tier 1 Emission Factor for CO2-C emissions. • 30 cm in bogs. With the additional requirement in bogs that areas with peat depth between 30 and 50 cm shall be part of a restoration project dominated by areas of deeper peat. Areas of continuously shallow peat are excluded. 			
1.1 Eligible Activities	<p>To evidence that peat of between 30 and 50 cm in depth used to be deep peat, soil coring could be used. This will show if it is subsided/compacted deep peat or a peaty podzol. If using soil coring, one core for each distinct area of shallow peat shall be taken. An alternative approach, if available, would be to use historic peat maps.</p>	<p>The requirement to evidence that peat between 30 and 50 cm used to be deep peat is removed. In return the following definition of continuous shallow peat is used:</p> <p>The Peatland Code defines continuous shallow peat areas where three or more connected peat depth points on a 50 x 50 m grid consistently measure between 30cm and 50cm; these areas won't be</p>	24 th January 2024	Technical Advisory Board and Executive Board final sign off on text via email	25 th January 2024

		eligible. However, areas predominantly characterized by peat depths exceeding 50cm, isolated shallow pockets falling within the 30cm to 50cm range are accepted for restoration projects if surrounded by deeper peat.			
1.1 Eligible Activities	N/A	<p>An updated definition of continuous shallow peat:</p> <p>The Peatland Code defines continuous shallow peat areas for the drained and modified baseline condition categories as follows: three or more peat depth points on a 50 x 50 m grid, connected in any direction, consistently measuring between 30cm and 50cm; the whole area is not eligible. Isolated shallow pockets falling in the drained and modified baseline condition categories within the 30cm to 50cm range are accepted for restoration projects if less than three connected peat depth points on a 50 x 50 m grid are surrounded by deeper peat (>50cm). Any peat depth points between 30cm and 50cm in the actively eroding baseline condition category are eligible, no matter the size of area.</p>	4 th September 2024	Technical Advisory board and Executive board sign off December	25 th September 2024
3.3 Net GHG Emissions Reduction	Projects shall be validated/verified against the current version of the Peatland Code and the most recent Emission Factors will be used to determine the emissions reductions at verification.	Project Plan Validation and Restoration Validation happens to the same version of the Peatland Code, even if there has been a version update in between. If projects wish to use the emission factors of a later version for Restoration Validation, with no other change from project plan validation and have not already had PIUs issued	14 th September 2023	Internal Peatland Code decision, with input from Project Developers	25 th January 2024

		<p>then they may do so by submitting a new version of the Emissions Calculator.</p> <p>If there was a diversion from the validated project plan, then all documents need to be updated and submitted to the validator, these documents should be the same version as used for Project Plan Validation with the exemption of the emission calculator if no PIUs are issued.</p>			
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Field Protocol Clarifications

Section	Current text	IUCN UK PP Clarification	Date Approved	Approved by	Published date
Blanket and Raised Bogs: Field Survey	A project site will always have to be surveyed in the field to ensure the peatland present is of eligible depth and to confirm the pre-restoration (baseline) peatland condition categories present. The Assessment Unit map, described in the previous section, provides the structure for the field survey.	To ensure the information you have submitted to the Peatland Code is valid. Baseline field surveys can be up to 3 years old when submitting all documentation to the validation body for Project Plan Validation.	22 nd October 2023	Internal Peatland Code decision, with input from Project Developers	23 rd October 2023
Site Survey and Restoration section of Peatland Code Guidance Document	N/A	Moved to Site Survey and Restoration section of Peatland Code Guidance Document: The Project shall evidence the dates of all site surveys. However, baseline peat depth surveys will be valid for 5 years when submitting all documentation to the validation	4 th June 2024	Technical Advisory board and Executive board sign off December	25 th September 2024

		body for Project Plan Validation but please be aware that peat depths are checked at Restoration Validation and if these are different to the submitted depths corrections shall be made. Project developers/landowners are advised to recheck peat depths in actively eroding areas as well as peat depths that are close to the eligibility cut offs.			
Fens Field Survey 3. Water Table Assessments	Use a mix of rust rods, dipwells and continuous loggers. At least one continuous water level logger per unit is required, with a minimum of 5 manual monthly dipwell readings and a minimum of 15 quarterly rust rods readings. However, some or all rust rods can be replaced with dipwells if preferred by the project. All dipwells and rust rods will move up and down together in response to rain/dry weather. Therefore, use the continuous record to gap-fill the manual records and calculate the mean water table depth across the site.	For clarity you need 5 different dipwells read monthly, and a minimum of 15 rust rods read quarterly. If you chose to use dipwells instead of rust rods the total should be 20 dipwells read monthly.	22 nd November 2023	Internally	25 th January 2024
Fens Field Survey 3. Water Table Assessments		It has come to our attention that rust rods are generally unreliable in most fen types, providing accurate data only in agricultural fields of drained fen peat. After rewetting, rust rods may no longer give precise readings. For existing project that have already installed	4 th June 2024	Technical Advisory board and Executive board	27 th September 2024

		<p>rust rods please email the Peatland Code team peatlandcode@iucn.org.uk for guidance on next steps.</p> <p>For new projects: 20 dipwells shall be required per field unit which are read monthly. Updated guidance on continuous loggers is still being drafted and will be included in Version 2.1.</p>			
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Minor revisions to version 2:

Field Protocol and Guidance

Section	Current text	Revision	Date approved	Approved	Published date
Field Protocol: Map non-peatland Features	Add a 30 m drainage buffer around water courses. Calculate area of non-peatland and drainage buffer and subtract from Gross Area to calculate Net Project Area in ha.	The 30 m drainage buffer is an exclusion zone from which no rewetted credits can be claimed. However, revegetated credits can be. Water courses here are any water features that won't be blocked and thus have a likely drainage effect on the surrounding peat.	4 th December 2023	Technical Advisory board and Executive board sign off December	25 th January 2024
Field Protocol: Map non-peatland Features	Add a 30 m drainage buffer around water courses. Calculate area of non-peatland and drainage buffer and subtract from Gross Area to calculate Net Project Area in ha.	Map features that are clearly non-peatland such as rock, forest, water courses, tracks, etc. Around watercourses, establish a 30-meter drainage exclusion zone from which rewetted carbon units cannot be claimed, but revegetated carbon units can (in this instance peat depths shall be taken from this area). Water courses are defined as any linear and permanently flowing water features that incise through peat (i.e. bare peat sides) and will not be blocked. Calculate the non-peatland area and the drainage exclusion zone (unless claiming revegetated carbon units), then subtract	4 th September 2024	Technical Advisory board and Executive board sign off December	25 th September 2024

		this from the Gross Area to determine the Net Project Area in hectares.			
Field Protocol: Pre-verification field survey Peatland Condition Assessment	At each survey point determine and record the condition category present using the post-restoration condition category definitions. A minimum of 75% of the condition categories recorded within each Assessment Unit must correspond for the Assessment Unit to achieve said condition category. Assessment Units can be redrawn to capture areas of higher or lower expected performance.	Create a circle with a 30-meter radius around each survey point and exclude any area that is not within an eligible Assessment Unit. In the circular area around each survey point, identify and document the existing condition category, or categories, based on post restoration condition category definitions. Record the proportion of each category within the circle. The average percentage recorded is used to convert PIUs to PCUs for each Assessment Unit, i.e. if 90% within one Assessment Unit has changed to the next condition category, then 90% of PIUs are converted to PCUs within that category.	4 th September 2024	Technical Advisory board and Executive board sign off December	25 th September 2024
Peatland Code Guidance: Project Plan Validation	Contact one of the approved third-party independent validation bodies to arrange project plan validation: see the Peatland Code website for contact information. Ideally, project plan validation should be in place before any restoration work starts, which might take anywhere between 3-12 months. If needed however, restoration could start prior to completion of project plan validation IF sufficient baseline evidence is handed in to the validation body. In this instance the risk	Contact one of the approved third party independent validation bodies to arrange project plan validation: see the Peatland Code website for contact information. Project plan validation should be in place before any restoration work starts, which might take anywhere between 3-12 months. If required restoration may start before project plan validation is completed. In this instance the responsibility for any risk of not achieving project plan validation is for the project as no additional baseline evidence can be collected. It is important that project plan validation should be achieved as soon as possible and before finishing the restoration work.	4 th September 2024	Internal Peatland Code decision, with recommendation from UKAS and sign off from EB	27 th September 2024

	of not achieving project plan validation is for the project. In this case project plan validation should be achieved as soon as possible and before finishing the restoration.				
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Updates to Version 2:

The changes below are changes to current version 2 requirements and supersede the requirement set out in version 2. All these changes will be published in a full version 2.1 update.

Section	Old Text	IUCN UK PP Updated text	Date Approved	Approved by	Published date
Peatland Code	N/A New section	<p>The Peatland Code specifies requirements for the validation and verification of a greenhouse gas (GHG) assertion from voluntary UK based projects which actively reduce GHG emissions through peatland restoration, resulting in less cumulative carbon in the atmosphere compared to a business-as-usual scenario.. Peatland Code projects and their greenhouse gas (GHG) assertions will be validated and verified by an independent third-party Validation and Verification Body (VVB) and ISO 14065:2020 and ISO 14064-3:2019 shall be used as the governing standard for Peatland Code validation and verification delivery.</p> <p>Peatland Code carbon units (PCUs) account for both GHG reductions from, and carbon sequestered by, the peatland. It does not account for carbon already stored within the peatland or the carbon saved when substituting peat products for products with a lower</p>	10 th September 2023	Internal Peatland Code decision, with recommendation from UKAS	27 th September 2024

		<p>carbon footprint. The Peatland Code is the quality assurance standard for peatland restoration projects in the UK and generates independently verified carbon units which shall be verified to a reasonable level of assurance.</p> <p>Backed by the UK Government and governed by an Executive Board, Technical Advisory Board with key experts from the industry, policy and research community, and a Market and Investment Forum, with players with an economic interest in the Peatland Code, the Peatland Code offers the UK's only official peatland carbon units. These units can be purchased and retired by companies operating under the UK Government's Environmental Reporting Guidelines, as well as by companies that do not fall under these guidelines. Currently these carbon units can only be used to offset UK based emissions.</p>			
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Updated Process/Procedure

The following processes and procedures have been updated since the publishing version 2 and the procedures below now supersede the previous versions.

Version 2	New revised Procedure	Website location	Date approved	Approved by	Published date
Disputes Process –	QMS_ 034 Peatland Code Grievance and Appeals Procedure	Grievances IUCN UK Peatland Programme (iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org)	24 th September 2024	IUCN UK PP Director (Input from external)	24 th September 2024

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Guidance Document				legal firm and Steering Group)	
Peatland Code Review – Guidance Document	QMS_016 Peatland Code Review Procedure	Peatland Code Development IUCN UK Peatland Programme (iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org)	4 th September 2024	Technical Advisory board and Executive board sign off September	10 th September 2024