**PEATLAND CODE TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD – MINUTES**

**Date:**  20th August 2024

**Time:** 11am

**Venue:** Online Meeting – Teams Meeting Invite

**Attendees: Emma Hinchcliff (chair)**, **Garance Wood- Moulin, Renée Kerkvliet-Hermans, Ian Dickie, Rebekka Artz, Ed Salter, Peter Jones, Joe Anderson; Andrew Moxey, Vicky West, Christopher Evans, Hans Joosten, Renny McKeown, Ian McKee, Andy Grundy**

**Apologies: Judith Stuart, Peter Phillips, Katherine Birdsall, Richard Lindsay, Ben Dipper, Patrick Jean-Martel, Stephen Clarkson, Judith Bennett, Rhoswen Leonard, Eimear Reeve, Steve Clarke, Alex Hart, Carolyn Worfolk, Pat Snowdon, Sarah Erbanova, Gillian Manniex, Sophie Chapman, Helen Avery, Rob Stoneman, , James Dalton, John Couwenberg,**

**Agenda**

1. General updates

2. Version 2.1 of the Peatland Code

3. Version update process

4. AOB

1. **General update**

**Project Registrations & Validations**

* 292 projects registered (plus 11 pending registration)
* 65 project plan validated
* 26 restoration validated
* 2 Verifications due in September
* 55 projects registered so far for 2024

**Registry fees increase and registry contract**

We have communicated an increase in fees, alongside the WCC, an issuance fee from 10p per unit to 15p per unit. The registry will continue to receive a 5p levy and the PC will get 10p. This will be in effect from November 1st. We will also be getting a conversion fee split between the registry at 10p per unit.

This is to make the PC more financially healthy and sustainable.

The registry contract is up for renewal. The plan is to extend for a year to September 2025. A new registry format is under creation and we are starting procurement process soon and putting it out to tender next year.

**Workplan for the coming year**

**UKAS**

UKAS pilot is underway with 2 validators, 3rd one hopefully coming on board soon. Head office desk assessment/ desk-based reviews have taken place.

Desktop review: Main feedback was to be ensure we have clearer guidance for project developers and for validation and verification bodies as its currently mixed in, so we need to make that distinction. We’ve made a scheme document that will sit alongside our main code documents to help address this comment.

We have started a clear appeals and grievance process internally; it is being checked with a legal team we are working with and will be published on our website and will be included with version 2.1 once that is published.

**ICROA**

We have had to reapply after they updated their criteria earlier this year. We have received some comments and addressed most of them, but the application is on hold until we get enough Peatland Code Units and need 2 successful verifications for that. We are hoping to be conditionally approved by December 2024 once we have completed the verifications. We require 100,000 tonnes of tC02e in emissions reductions, but they need to be verified.

**ICVCM**

Garance is working to find out what needs to go into the next version of the code, which include strengthening the governance structure, risk buffer increase, alignment with the sustainability goals and a robust benefit sharing plan.

We are starting to look at how associated emissions are accounted for and are working with a PhD student on that.

Intended application December 2024/January 2025.

**Biodiversity Crediting**

We are 8 months into the project. Piloting underway in 3 sites, split as 2 peatland and 1 woodland. We received feedback from key players in the UK market and are rethinking our approach to metrics as biodiversity is more complex than carbon.

We have created a draft version of the standard and it is designed to be a standalone standard that is compatible with the carbon standard.

The aim is by March 2025 have the document out for consultation.

Next steps: We have begun conversations with the registry on what would need to be updated. They are tentatively confident they could onboard the data from biodiversity projects from next Summer.

**Q: Why is there no mention no Biodiversity Net Gain?**

**A:** BNG is legally required, so doesn’t pass additionality test for PC and WCC. BNG is also not robust enough to stand up against any existing biodiversity crediting standards as it uses habitat condition as a proxy for biodiversity, so using it alone would put the codes at risk of greenwashing accusations.

It might be included as a component of habitat structure as it relates to biodiversity crediting. Joe going to push for that, especially with Woodlands.

Forest to Bog: We know F2B has a lot of biodiversity uplift. We are still considering whether those will be included in the first version. We want them to and we're aiming for that.

**CivTech Challenge 10.6**

**How can we use technology to administer, measure and predict the performance** **in regard to carbon of Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code projects more coherently, efficiently and effectively?**

With the increase in project numbers, we are looking to increase efficiencies. There is not a lot of capacity to address this internally, so it has been put forward as a CiVTech challenge. Applications are open, companies can apply with a solution to the challenge. We have to wait and see who will respond to the challenge.

We had a Q&A session last week. The application deadline is in September.

**Forest to Bog**

Still moving very slowly, we are writing a paper with 2 funding asks:

1. Establish the baseline, presently data is limited; the majority has been generated from Forsinard Flows flux tower, gather early restoration GHG data.

2. Four country agreed policy which delineates carbon from forest and carbon from peat, at present modelling often includes historically sequestered carbon from the peat. There needs to be greater oversight of the inputs of key models such as CARBINE.

No funding has been confirmed yet.

**SBTi**

A letter was sent last year signed by companies, Project Developers and investors speaking against their guidance stating that residual emissions can only be offset to using permanent removals, which create barrier in the markets.

There was a meeting with SBTi. It was a good discussion, the door isn’t closed but SBTi will not be able to define what they mean by permanent removals by the time they bring version 3 out next year. They will work on clearer guidance due to misunderstanding in the market. The PC team will give a follow up written note. If anyone from the TAB is able to provide input on the note that would be valuable.

**UK ETS**

Consultation was out at the end of last week, which included carbon credits from GHG projects. Their analysis dismissed peatland credits as they are not a removal, a similar issue to SBTi. We have written a consultation response arguing their take is incorrect.

Their proposal for WCC is to verify themselves. There is a lot to discuss on how it would work or be compatible with the Peatland Code.

1. **Version 2.1 of the Peatland Code**

Version 2.1 went out for public consultation between 18 April 2024 and 20 May 2024. The public consultation feedback was discussed in the TAB and EB in June 2024 with an aim to publish v2.1 in August 2024.

Main changes are:

* Not to introduce condition matrix. It needs some specific PC testing.
* Minimum peat depth will remain at 45cm for grassland but for cropland drained they can have a lower peat depth.
* New grievance process: Disputes panel is made up of exec board members. It was concluded not to be impartial enough. We are calling on members of the steering group to make up the panel.

In order to meet UKAS/ISO/ICVCM requirements we are delaying V2.1 publication. We will however publish some interim updates such as risk buffer guidance. This will go into the clarifications document.

**Q: Does the TAB agree with the approach to publish minor changes and delay the release of V2.1 for winter 2024/25? No further public consultations are planned for these changes.**

**A:** No objections raised. TAB AGREES WITH THE ABOVE APPROACH.

**3. Version Update Process**

We are reviewing how to develop a smoother consultation process. Feedback from PDs is they want to be able to view and feedback before it goes to public. They receive all TAB papers and versions (and minutes) but they still felt that between TAB meetings further changes are made without their consultation. UKAS need to review any changes to the standard before publication, requiring 2 months to review and provide feedback. This means a new version could take up to 8 months to be released. Input from TAB requested to improve the process, especially with such a small team with a high workload.

TAB agreed we may have to accept the administration required in these updates. However, being dependant on other people’s timelines could affect the release of versions of the code.

**Date of next Meeting:**

Tuesday 19th  November 2024 11am-1pm.