

# Eyes on the Bog Fund 2024: delivery of a national peatland monitoring scheme and community engagement

## About the IUCN UK Peatland Programme

The IUCN UK Peatland Programme (IUCN UK PP) was set up in 2009 to promote peatland restoration in the UK and advocate the multiple benefits of peatlands through partnerships, strong science, sound policy and effective practice. Key objectives of our 2018-2040 [UK Peatland Strategy](#) include supporting ongoing research and monitoring of peatlands and communicating peatland values to a wide audience.

## About the Eyes on the Bog Fund

Our £40K Eyes on the Bog Fund is part of a wider package of philanthropic support for Eyes on the Bog during 2024 and 2025. The wider funding will be used to promote Eyes on the Bog, develop associated resources and provide training for new Eyes on the Bog users.

## The problem: a lack of co-ordinated, long-term monitoring on UK peatlands

The [2011 Commission of Inquiry on Peatlands](#), led by IUCN UK PP, brought together over 300 contributors from more than 50 organisations, drawing on a wide range of expertise from science, policy and practice. This, combined with a series of annual conferences, have led to the Programme making several recommendations around improved peatland research and monitoring including:

- **Establishment of a cohesive network of monitored sites** to assess the impact of restoration and management and building on the already successful regional peatland restoration partnerships and national scientific research collaborations.
- **Guidance for the standardisation of monitoring.** Methods which are practical, low cost and low maintenance, compatible across a range of sites and conditions.
- **Ensuring policy** guiding restoration funding recognises the value of robust, scientific data and **makes monitoring an integral part of project design.**
- **Long-term monitoring of peatland ecosystems in a range of conditions** to help assess the impacts of climate change and the effectiveness of mitigation measures.

As an additional challenge, the sort of data which is desperately needed to keep advocating for the basic requirements of peatland restoration and conservation (e.g., **long-term** water table depths, vegetation structure, peat depth and subsidence) is often not supported by existing short-term funding schemes. As a community we have had to find other routes to gather and share this data.

## The solution: simple monitoring, deployed at multiple peatland sites nationally

In response we developed [Eyes on the Bog](#). This standardised methodology enables individual peatland sites to be consistently monitored across the UK, creating a network of comparable sites. The initiative employs affordable, simple techniques and modern technology to enable useful monitoring information to be collected by peatland scientists, practitioners or volunteers on:

- Surface subsidence or accumulation
- Carbon loss or capture
- Water table behaviour
- Peat soil condition
- Vegetation composition and surface structure
- Historical context of change and current trajectories

Guided by a manual and [guidance videos](#) to ensure consistent deployment, this suite of metrics provides reliable information which may be used to effectively inform:

- management interventions;
- refined metrics for the [Peatland Code](#) to enhance private investment in peatland restoration;
- testing of long-term climate predictions;
- assumptions about the condition and function of UK peatlands.

The initiative not only provides an accessible and robust monitoring methodology, but also inspiration and support for peatland projects to engage the wider community in monitoring the condition and long-term changes of peatlands. Totemic markers installed at appropriate locations (*see opposite*) give quality assurance to established Eyes on the Bog sites and provide an opportunity to work closely with local artists, promote sponsorship from local businesses and encourage people to submit fixed point photographs, creating a visual archive of long-term landscape changes, and celebrating the importance of peatlands. Fixed point photography stations can also be used to support other initiatives such as the [Tracking the Colour of Peatlands project](#).



**Installing totemic markers such as fixed-point photography posts provides opportunities for meaningful, standardised data return, engagement with local artists and volunteer citizen scientists.**

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## Ensuring open-source data and continuity of long-term data sets

Eyes on the Bog data can be stored and shared using an open-source platform called [PeatDataHub](#), hosted by Water@Leeds (University of Leeds). As part of a wider project to create a global database of peatland monitoring sites, PeatDataHub currently supports the standardised upload of site metadata, water table data, photographs and ancillary data such as maps and scientific papers. The platform also provides a standardised template for Eyes on the Bog data. For a more in-depth explanation of how Eyes on the Bog and PeatDataHub align, please see our online conference session and explainer video [here](#).

## Fund aims

The fund aims to ensure the continuation of low-cost, long-term peatland monitoring and peatland advocacy through community engagement, by supporting existing delivery partners in expanding and/or enhancing their Eyes on the Bog offering. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- Purchase of replacement and/or additional equipment to support long-term Eyes on the Bog delivery.
- Production of interpretation resources and/or engagement activities which promote Eyes on the Bog to a public audience.
- Data collation and input into PeatDataHub.
- Funding support for staff and/or volunteer time and other associated resources.

## Level of funding and requirements

Applicants can apply for up to £5,000 in total for Eyes on the Bog delivery, which must include:

- Physical equipment directly employed in long-term Eyes on the Bog monitoring, including but not limited to rust rods, surface-level rods, plastic tubing for rust rods, paint, metal detectors, etc. Equipment such as GPS devices and metal detectors must be prioritised for Eyes on the Bog projects but may be deployed for other peatland monitoring activities.
- Up to £500 to produce interpretation resources and/or engagement activities. We encourage the installation of totemic markers and other creative interpretation methods on publicly accessible sites where possible and will provide up to £500 per totemic marker or similar for each site of deployment. Where public access to Eyes on the Bog sites is not possible, engagement may be achieved by producing digital or physical resources which explain and promote Eyes on the Bog to a public audience, e.g., web pages, blogs, videos, social media content, etc.
- Up to £200 for Eyes on the Bog data collation and input.

Funding support for staff and/or volunteer time and other associated resources (e.g., travel and subsistence) will also be considered on a case-by-case basis in addition to the above requirements, provided the total funding request does not exceed £5,000.

## **Who can apply?**

Any type of organisation, of any size based in the UK is welcome to apply for the Eyes on the Bog fund. However, to be funded, they must:

- Evidence that they are currently using one or more aspect(s) of Eyes on the Bog methodology on one or more peatland site(s).
- Evidence that they are committed to the long-term application of Eyes on the Bog monitoring (i.e., not just as a temporary requirement of an existing grant scheme).
- Be legally constituted and have a bank account in the organisation's legal name. Partnerships involving more than one organisation must provide details of a lead organisation to receive the funding.
- Commit to open-source sharing of Eyes on the Bog location data through PeatDataHub. Landowner permission must be obtained to share location data.

## **Funding criteria**

- The grant will be paid in two instalments: 90% in advance on receipt of a completed grant agreement and 10% in arrears on receipt of a completed end of grant report.
- Received funds must be allocated within 12 months of the fund award date (see timeline).
- The end of grant report must be submitted to IUCN UK PP within 12 months of the fund award date. The report must include a summary of Eyes on the Bog sites installed to date (numbers, location, habitat), which aspects of the methodology are being used, how the data is being applied, and feedback on the organisation's experience of using Eyes on the Bog. The report must also provide evidence of community engagement (photographs, links to new webpages and socials content, quotes from volunteers, etc.) The report content may be reproduced publicly by IUCN UK PP, with acknowledgement of the organisation(s) involved.
- As a minimum, Eyes on the Bog site location data must be inputted to PeatDataHub within 3 months of installing funded equipment.

## How to apply

Applications open on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March. Please submit an outline proposal of no more than 800 words to [info@iucn.org.uk](mailto:info@iucn.org.uk) no later than **midday on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April**. This proposal must include the following:

- A brief description of your organisation and its role in peatland monitoring. [100 words]
- Evidence of your existing application of Eyes on the Bog and how you plan to expand and/or enhance this if successful. [300 words]
- Evidence of how you plan to maintain long-term Eyes on the Bog monitoring, i.e., beyond specific short-term grant funding, including this fund. [150 words]
- Your agreement to share Eyes on the Bog data using PeatDataHub. [30 words]
- Your agreement to provide a summary report, some or all of which may be made publicly available. [30 words]
- Your agreement to acknowledge IUCN UK PP as a funder and use Eyes on the Bog and IUCN UK PP branding in your promotional and engagement activities and resources as mutually agreed. [30 words]
- A cost breakdown of your proposed allocation of funding according to the requirements outlined above. [150 words]

## Timeline (dates TBC - approximate)

Applications open	Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> March
Applications close	Midday, Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> April
Funding panel	Week commencing Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April
Funding decisions shared with successful partners and grant agreement shared	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April
Payment of awards (90% on completion of grant agreement)	No later than Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> May (subject to receipt of completed grant agreement)
Public announcement of funded partners	June onwards
Deadline for PeatDataHub upload	3 months after equipment installation
Deadline for grant reports	Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2025 (final 10% to be paid following submission of grant report)

If you have any questions, please contact [info@iucn.org.uk](mailto:info@iucn.org.uk).