# PEATLAND CODE

**Minor revisions and clarification guidance for Version 2.1 of the Peatland Code November 2025**

## Contents

**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 2.1, Peatland Code Guidance document version 2.1 and Field Protocol version 2.1.

This document also provides information on minor revisions to version 2.1 which will eventually be incorporated into a future version. The IUCN UK Peatland Programme is committed to continuous improvement of the Peatland Code.

**Note**: Following a Peatland Code rule revision or version update projects have a three-month period from the published date in which document submission for Project Plan Validation and/or Verification can still be done against the old rule. Clarifications to existing rules shall be implemented from the date the clarification document is published.

## 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 v2.1
- Peatland Code Guidance Document v2.1
- Peatland Code Field Protocol v2.1

## Clarifications to Version 2.1:

The clarifications and updated text below are to existing rules, not changes to the rules. Therefore, these shall be implemented from the date the clarification document is published.

### Main Peatland Code:

| Section | Current text | IUCN UK PP Clarification/Updated text | Date Approved | Approved by | Published date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1 Eligible Activities** | Areas with a minimum peat depth of:<br>• 45 cm in fens with baseline condition category grassland and modified fen<br>• Cropland – drained condition category and Grassland that used to be cropland in the past 20 years can have a lower minimum peat depth than 45 cm if the project evidences that the Soil Organic Carbon stock is more than 30 times the Emission Factor for CO2-C emissions for the relevant baseline category<br>• 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 | Areas with a minimum peat depth of:<br>• 45 cm in fens with baseline condition category grassland and modified fen<br>• Cropland – drained condition category and Grassland that used to be cropland in the past 20 years can have a lower minimum peat depth than 45 cm if the project evidences that the Soil Organic Carbon stock is more than 30 times the Emission Factor for CO2-C emissions for the relevant baseline category<br>• 30 cm in bogs with the additional requirement that area with peat depths between 30 cm and less than 50 cm must form part of a restoration project that is predominantly composed of deeper peat areas (50 cm or more). Areas of continuously shallow peat are excluded (see minor revisions below). | 30th October 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | dominated by areas of deeper peat. Areas of continuously shallow peat are excluded (see below). | | | | |
| ***3.3 Net GHG Emissions Reduction*** | The project shall calculate the net change in GHG emissions ($tCO_2e$) using the Peatland Code Emissions Calculator.<br>Gross emissions reduction is the change in emissions over the project duration, relative to the baseline, as a direct result of the project. Net emissions reduction of the project is calculated by subtracting the total carbon cost of restoration from the gross emissions reduction (if this cannot be calculated, a 5% carbon cost buffer is used), applying a 5% conservative buffer, and adjusting for any leakage (see diagram below). To determine the claimable net emissions reduction, the contribution to the Peatland Code Risk Buffer, which is managed by the IUCN UK Peatland Programme, is also removed.<br>Net GHG emissions reduction shall be divided in the Peatland | The project shall calculate the net change in GHG emissions ($tCO_2e$) using the Peatland Code Emissions Calculator.<br><br>Net emissions reduction of the project is calculated by subtracting the total carbon cost of restoration* from the gross emissions reduction, applying a 5% conservative buffer, and adjusting for any leakage (see diagram below).<br><br>Gross emission - Carbon Cost of restoration or Carbon Cost Buffer 5% - 5% Conservative Buffer - Potential leakage = Net emission reductions<br><br>*Projects on bogs that began restoration prior to the launch of the Emissions & Carbon cost calculator v2.1.1 (18th February 2025) and projects on fens shall use a 5% carbon cost buffer.<br><br>Projects on bogs undergoing project plan validation from the 1st of June 2025 and which started restoration after 18th of February 2025 shall calculate their carbon cost of restoration using the latest version of the Emissions & Carbon cost calculator.<br>To determine the claimable net emissions reduction, the contribution to the Peatland | 30th October 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Code Emissions Calculator into the contribution<br>to the Peatland Code Risk Buffer and the remaining claimable units. The project shall state each contribution<br>per vintage for the duration of the project. The most recent emission factors shall be used to determine the<br>emission reductions at verification. | Code Risk Buffer, which is managed by the IUCN UK Peatland Programme, is also removed. | | | |

## Field Protocol

| Section | Current text | IUCN UK PP Clarification | Date Approved | Approved by | Published date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Field Survey**<br><br>**1. Establish location of survey points** | Place a 100 x 100m grid overlay upon the Assessment Unit map. Each intersection of the grid represents a survey point. Peat depth and condition category assessment shall be made at each survey point. | Place a 100 x 100m grid overlay upon the Assessment Unit map. Each intersection of the grid represents a survey point. If there are big areas with no Assessment Units you may exclude these from your 100 x 100m grid overlay. However, make sure that all Assessment Units have at least 1 survey point on the 100 x 100m grid outside their boundary. Peat depth and condition category assessment shall be carried out at each survey point.<br><br>Any peat depth points that are outside an Assessment unit will **not** be included in the peat depth template and do not count towards the project length. | 15th September 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Field Protocol 2.1**<br><br>**Field Survey**<br><br>**5. Confirm Assessment Units** | Re-map the boundary(s) of each Assessment Unit, if necessary, and calculate the area of each in hectares (for use within the Peatland Code Emissions Calculator). Overlay the peat depth points over the mapped Assessment Units | Re-map the boundaries of each Assessment Unit if necessary and calculate the area of each in hectares for use within the Peatland Code Emissions Calculator. Overlay the peat depth points over the mapped Assessment Units.<br><br>The map shall include all 100x100 peat depth points on the project map, regardless of whether they fall outside an Assessment Unit. Including all peat depth points on the map helps to understand the rationale for incorporating any outlying or non-contiguous areas within the Assessment Units.<br><br>Any peat depth points that are outside an Assessment unit will **not** be included in the peat depth template and do not count towards the project length. | 15th September 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 |

## Minor revisions to version 2.1:

The minor revisions outlined below supersede the requirements set out in version 2.1 of the Peatland Code. These updates will be incorporated into the next full version release. Following Peatland Code minor revision projects have a three-month period from the published date in which document submission for Project Plan Validation and/or Verification can still be done against the old rule.

## Peatland Code

| Section | Current text | Revision | Date approved | Approved | Published date | Effective from |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.1 Eligible Activities** | 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 | 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 that have a peat depth of less than 50cm; the whole area is not eligible.<br><br>Isolated shallow pockets falling within the 'drained' and 'modified' baseline condition categories, with peat depths ranging from 30 cm to less than 50 cm, are considered eligible for restoration projects if fewer than three connected peat depth points on a 50 × 50 metre grid are present, and the area is surrounded by deeper peat (50 cm or more). | 30th October | TAB via email | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 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. | Any peat depth points measuring between 30 cm and less than 50 cm in the 'actively eroding' baseline condition category or in areas where shallow peat is the result of active peat cutting, are eligible regardless of the size of the area. | | | | |

## Field Protocol and Guidance

| Section | Current text | Revision | Date approved | Approved | Published date | Effective from |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Field Protocol 2.1** | **Requirement:** Projects shall add the project name, scale, a North arrow, the grid reference of the central point and the access point onto site (if this is relevant) to your map. Projects shall have very distinct colours for the different assessment units and include the method that has been used to create the map (e.g., satellite imagery, drone imagery, etc.). | Projects shall ensure the following information is clearly included on all submitted maps:<br>• Project name<br>• Survey date<br>• Field protocol version used<br>• Map scale<br>• North arrow<br>• Grid reference of the central point of the site<br>• Grid reference of the main access point (if relevant)<br>Additionally, projects shall:<br>• Use **distinct and clearly differentiated colours** for each Assessment Unit. | 15th September 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Indicate the **method used to create the map** (e.g., satellite imagery, drone imagery, GPS survey, etc.).<br>Projects should:<br>• Use distinct and clearly differentiated colours for peat depths points based on the assessment unit they fall into | | | | |
| **Pre-Restoration Condition Category**<br><br>**Actively Eroding: Hagg/Gully** | • A linear feature of bare peat that is actively eroding within a hagg/gully system (e.g., steep bare peat cliffs and/or bare gully bottoms) that needs reprofiling<br><br>OR<br>• Artificial drains which have opened up to the point that they are bare and actively eroding, and require reprofiling | • A linear feature of bare peat that is actively eroding within a hagg/gully system (e.g., steep bare peat cliffs and/or bare gully bottoms) that needs reprofiling<br><br>OR<br>• Artificial drains which have opened up to the point that they are bare and actively eroding, and require reprofiling<br><br>OR<br>• Peat banks from peat cutting that have active, ongoing erosion, not just bare peat. | 15th September 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |
| **Assessment Unit Mapping for raised and blanket bogs** | Trace the crest of any visible hagg/gully or peat bank. Map the visible bare peat, measure the length and width and | Trace the crest of any visible hagg/gully or peat bank. Map the visible bare peat, measure the length and width and calculate the area. Only if the extent of bare peat | 15th September 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Map 'Actively Eroding: Hagg/Gully' Peatland** | calculate the area. Only if the extent of bare peat cannot be determined from aerials, e.g., if bare peat is restricted to the steep bare cliffs, use a default width of two metres. Bare peat classifiers or other remote sensing technologies may be used for this, with a minimal mapping resolution of 25 cm. | cannot be determined from aerials, e.g., if bare peat is restricted to the steep bare cliffs, use a default width of two metres for haggs and gullies and a default width of 50cm for peat banks from peat cutting to represent the height on a map.<br><br>If deviating from these default heights this shall be evidenced to the validation and verification body, see Field Survey section 3 below.<br>Bare peat classifiers or other remote sensing technologies may be used for this, with a minimal mapping resolution of 25 cm. | | | | |
| **Pre-Restoration Condition Category**<br><br>**Drained: Hagg/Gully** | • Within 30 m of an actively eroding hagg/gully drainage system<br><br>OR<br>• Within 30 m of a vegetated hagg/gully drainage system | • Within 30 m of an actively eroding hagg/gully drainage system<br><br>OR<br>• Within 30 m of a vegetated hagg/gully drainage system<br><br>OR<br><br>• Within 30 m of a peat bank from peat cuttings IF it can be evidenced that they are actively drawing down water (e.g. cut down a slope) | 15th September 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pre-Restoration Condition Category**<br><br>**Drained: Artificial** | • Within 30 m of an active artificial drain (grip) | • Within 30 m of an active artificial drain (grip)<br><br>OR<br><br>• Within 30 m of a peat bank from peat cuttings IF it can be evidenced that they are actively drawing down water (e.g. cut down a slope) | 15th September 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |
| **Assessment Unit Mapping for raised and blanket bogs**<br><br>**Map 'Drained: Artificial' Peatland** | Trace the lines of any visible drain. Map the drained area as 30 m from the outer line of the drain (or where applicable, stop at a fence, track, boundary of restoration site, break of slope or a drainage exclusion zone of a water course; or for raised bogs, the ring-ditch if it's before this). For wandering drains across otherwise undrained land, map 30 m each side of the drain, creating a 60 m strip. | Trace the lines of any visible drain or peat bank from peat cuttings that are actively draining. Map the drained area as 30 m from the outer line of the drain Where applicable, this area shall stop at a fence, track, boundary of a restoration site, break of slope or a drainage exclusion zone around a watercourse. For raised bogs, the drainage area shall stop at the ring-ditch if it lies within this distance. For wandering drains across otherwise undrained land, map 30 m each side of the drain, creating a 60 m strip. | 30th October 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |
| **Field Survey**<br><br>**3.** | At each survey point determine and record the condition category | At each survey point determine and record the condition category present using the pre-restoration | 30th October 2025 | Internally | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Peatland Condition Assessment** | present using the pre-restoration (baseline) condition category definitions. If condition assessments recorded within each Assessment Unit do not match the expected condition, as mapped during the desk-based mapping, further field survey is required to establish the cause. Assessment Unit boundaries shall be redrawn to reflect the condition in the field. | (baseline) condition category definitions. If condition assessments recorded within each Assessment Unit do not match the expected condition, as mapped during the desk-based mapping, further field survey is required to establish the cause. Assessment Unit boundaries shall be redrawn to reflect the condition in the field.<br><br>For condition category “Actively eroding: Hagg/gully”:<br>If deviating from the default heights for vertical cliffs, heights shall be measured in the field and the supporting evidence (e.g. pictures with rulers, or standard height objects for reference) shall be submitted to the validator.<br><br>For peat banks from peat cuttings in condition categories “Drained: Hagg/gully” and “Drained: Artificial”:<br>Evidence of active drainage shall be submitted to the validator; this could include direction of banks down a slope. | | | | |

| Section | Old Text | IUCN UK PP Updated text | Date Approved | Approved by | Published date | Effective from |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Peatland Code Guidance document 2,1**<br><br>**Site Survey and Creation of Restoration Plan** | **Note:** If the Field Protocol is updated after a site was surveyed, but before Project Plan Validation was achieved, the project may be validated against the previous version of the Field Protocol up to 2 years after the update.<br><br>Baseline peat depth measurements will be valid for 5 years when submitting Peatland Code documentation to the validation body for Project Plan Validation. However, 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 | **Note:** If the Field Protocol is updated after a site was surveyed, but before Project Plan Validation was achieved, the project may be validated against the previous version of the Field Protocol up to 2 years after the update.<br><br>Baseline surveys are valid for 2 years and baseline peat depth measurements are valid for 5 years when submitting Peatland Code documentation to the validation body for Project Plan Validation. However, 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. The project shall | 15th of September 2025 | Internally, but was decided in TAB before launching v2.1 but somehow did not make it into v2.1 clear enough | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | depths in actively eroding areas as well as peat depths that are close to the eligibility cut offs. The project shall evidence the dates of all site surveys. | evidence the dates of all site surveys. | | | | |
| **Project Plan Validation** | The Project Plan Validation consists of a review of the documents detailed below and a site check to determine if the Peatland Code requirements have been met. The site check may be done virtually if the evidence (for example an orthorectified map from drone images, with potentially additional photographs of specific haggs/ gullies, fixed point photographs, etc.) submitted allows this. However, if the validation body cannot adequately check the baseline virtually, the validator shall request additional evidence to be submitted and an in-person site visit shall be arranged. | The Project Plan Validation consists of a review of the documents detailed below and a site check to determine if the Peatland Code requirements have been met. The site check may be done virtually if the evidence (for example an orthorectified map from drone images, with potentially additional photographs of specific haggs/ gullies, fixed point photographs, etc.) submitted to the Validation and Verification body allows this. However, if the validation body cannot adequately check the baseline virtually, the validator shall request additional evidence to be submitted, and an in-person site visit shall be arranged.<br><br>In some instances the restoration may start prior to completion of project plan validation IF sufficient baseline evidence is handed in to the validation body. In this instance the risk of not achieving project plan validation is for the project. In this | | | 6th November 2025 | 9th February 2026 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | case project plan validation should be achieved as soon as possible and before finishing the restoration. | | | | |

## Updates to Version 2.1

The changes below are new rules and or requirements for version 2.1. These new requirements supersede the requirement set out in version 2.1 after the three month transition period for adoption has expired. All these changes will be published in the next full version update.

None

## Updated Process/Procedure

The following processes and procedures have been updated since the publishing version 2.1 and the procedures below now supersede the previous versions.

| Document Ref | New revised Procedure | Website location | Date approved | Approved by | Published date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| QMS_016 | Peatland Code Review v3 | Peatland Code Key Documentation & Support \| IUCN UK Peatland Programme | 05/11/2025 | Peatland Code Manager | 10th November 2025 |