**PEATLAND CODE TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD – MINUTES**

**Date:**  22nd November 2023

**Time:** 11am

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

**Attendees: Jane Akerman (Chair), Garance Wood- Moulin, Renée Kerkvliet-Hermans, Steve Clarke, Andy Grundy, Ian Dickie, Alex Hart, Peter Phillips, Sarah Erbanova, Tamarind Falk, Rebekka Artz, Christopher Evans, John McKillen, Hans Joosten, Dinker Bhardwaj, Patrick Jean-Martel. Eimear Reeve, Carolyn Worfolk, Iain Detrey**

**Apologies:**  **Emma Hinchcliff**, **Pat Snowden,** **Ed Salter, Richard Lindsay, Alison Baker, James Dalton, John Couwenberg, Ben Dipper, Peter Hutchinson, Judith Bennett, Paul Vaight, Rhoswen Leonard, Vicky West, Peter Jones, Gillian Manniex, David Drake, Sophie Chapman, Helen Avery, Rob Stoneman, Judith Stuart, Andrew Moxey**

1. **General update**

**Project Registrations**

Currently the Peatland Code has 228 projects registered, 72 project validated and 12 restoration validated. Having 3 validation bodies has ramped up the speed of validations 31,059 ha of peatland restoration, 6,592,311 tCO2e emissions reductions,

We've registered 85 in total so far, which is the same as last year we don’t expect this to jump dramatically toward the end of the year.

**Comment**: The average project size looks fairly similar to last year, but it could be good to show this. It is useful data to understand for finance, and helps plan appropriate transactions costs.

Action: Ed to improve the project registration numbers on the website

**FIRNS Crediting Biodiversity**

The IUCN UK PP and WCC put in a joint FIRNS bid which is 50% Nature Scot funding and 50% National Heritage Lottery Funding the aim of the project would be to find out if Biodiversity credits can be stacked or bundled and to test a few Biodiversity MRV’s with pilot sites. We have been successful getting this funding and we have recruited a project manager who will be joining the team on the 6th December and will be in post till March 2025. The project will need to be completed by March 2025.

**FIRNS Buyer seller standardised contract**
Our second FIRNS funding bid has been successful, together with the Woodland Carbon Code. Scottish Forestry will host the project manager and they are in the final stages of recruitment.

**External Involvement**

**Peatland Finance Ireland:** Its own legal entity with many partners including landscape finance lab and UCD. We are advisory role helping them develop their peatland standards although initially looking at carbon they are also exploring biodiversity and water.

**Salt Marsh Code**: This is being developed in the UK and again we have a small advisory role on our processes and sharing our learning.

**GIS Project:** This around the need for Spatial Data and Shape Files we want to do is creating our own GIS based registry for the Peatland code because at the moment as we don't currently have that**.**

**UKAS:** Garance provided an updated to the TAB on The United Accreditation Service (UKAS) Pilot and its progress.

**ICROA**
International Carbon Reduction and Offsetting Accreditation (ICROA) Accreditation Programme defines and promotes best practice in the financing of high-quality emissions reductions and use of carbon credits as an effective carbon management tool. Garance provided an update to the TAB members that ICROA have updated their application form. We are now making the necessary changes to meet the new eligibility requirements and we are provisionally putting a soft deadline for January 24 to get everything aligned and then apply and submit the application by February 24.

 **ICVCM**

Garance provided an updated to the TAB member on ICVCM. We are keeping an eye on any update ICVCM communicate including their working groups for the category level.

**Price Index**
In collaboration with WCC and Ecosystem Marketplace, we are aiming to generate a UK Price index for carbon for both WCC/PC projects. The first phase of that work has now come to a close and we published along with the Woodland Carbon Code and the ecosystem marketplace on our website, with a methodology on how we reach the price. We're now talking with the Woodland Carbon Code and Ecosystem Marketplace on how we can keep reporting on those prices, how we can keep progressing that work forward and keep that momentum.

**Risk Buffer:**
The Peatland Code team have been working with an external consultant to review the Risk buffer guidance, we have so far had three workshops with brokers, project developers and the consultant to get a revised risk buffer developed. The new guidance was presented to the TAB for comment, and the public funder for input. All this feedback is being collected and presented to the Peatland Code Executive board for further comment and to decide when the new guidance should be published.

ACTION: Renée/Garance to feedback comments and suggestion raised by TAB members to our risk buffer consultant and work this into a final draft.

**Version 2 of the Peatland Code Amendments**

* **Evidencing deep peat**

*Questions to TAB: Are there any visible guidelines available that clearly show the difference in peat core between shallow peat that used to be deep peat and organo-mineral soil?*

TAB Member discussed deep peat and whether evidencing was required if the shallow areas were pockets surrounded by deeper peat.

**A**. We would need to assess whether the current EF database has sites where shallower peat is included within the measured footprint and whether that has an impact on GHG outcomes. Assessing footprint heterogeneity impacts is quite an involved analysis of eddy covariance datasets.

Comment: A different suggestion, where risk and uncertainty exists, you try and manage that out through the risk assessment process. So, if errors like that are included, include that in the risk buffer guidance and increase the buffer where these areas are included. If a project includes some of these shallow peat areas, then that they're buffer automatically goes up, now in some cases that will impact them too much so those area will get excluded not worth including.
And if they have got extensive enough areas of it, there's still worth keeping in despite the buffer reduction.

Action: Add these options to EB board for discussion.

 **Drainage buffer around water bodies:***Does the TAB agree with:*

1. *If water course is visible on current OS map (which scale?) a 30m exclusion zone should be used around them from which no rewetting carbon units can be claimed (i.e. drained 🡪 rewetted modified bog)?*
2. *However, within this exclusion zone revegetation carbon units can be claimed (i.e. actively eroding 🡪 revegetated)?*  **Comment:** Water courses or anything else on OS maps, SEPA needs to be considered for a CAR licence. There is generally an exclusion zone but it was lower. Does anyone know the scale for the OS map that SEPA uses?

Action: Renée to chase SEPA for an answer

AGREED: 30 metres buffer makes sense because we're basing it on the other buffer area for ditch blocking. No rewetting credits in this buffer, but revegetation credits can be generated in this exclusion zone

**High Winter Water table fens**Initial discussions have suggested to cap water table values at zero. This would still give a meaningful measure of the average depth of drained peat over the year but might under predict the CH4 flux. The initial expectation was that CH4 production in winter is low, so this should not lead to underestimation. Our team has done a literature review to back this up, but it seems that CH4 production can still be high in winter.

Discussed the difficult around inundated site and the data needs, to be able to confidently include them within the Code.

Action: Two TAB members will look at CO2 and Methane mean water table, possibly building into the calculator the expected methane emissionfrom monthly mean water tables data.

**Any Other Business

Q. I got asked by TAB member if they are allowed to suggest changes to the code?**

1. Yes, we welcome feedback if you see something that you think this doesn't work or why are you doing this so what's going on here or if you see some other technology or something that you think that might be a good addition please let us in the team know.

Action: Garance to create a better process for communicating development/minor revisions to PD and VVB’s

**Date of next Meeting:**

TBC