**Natura Communities Seed Fund for LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature Project Areas**

LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature is launching a local communities support grant known as the ***Natura Communities Seed Fund***. The aim of the fund is to assist communities in the project target areas in mobilising complementary funding for projects broadly related to conservation and restoration of blanket bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and their associated habitats.

The purpose of the grant aid is to:

1. Help with preparing funding proposals related to nature conservation and restoration project calls, or
2. Provide a contribution towards co-funding for applications under those schemes

Eligible activities[[1]](#footnote-1) might include grant writing or other preparatory work leading to full proposal. Preparatory works may include training in project management, procurement or finance, grant writing workshop, acquiring professional services for feasibility study, strategy development or research support (e.g. ecological studies to gather baseline data), administrative support, study visit, other professional services to support a grant proposal.

Relevant funding calls related to nature conservation and restoration include NPWS Conservation Measures, LEADER, LIFE, EIPs, Horizon Europe, Biodiversa+, PEACEPLUS, Shared Island Fund. Other funding sources will also be considered, if relevant.

Funding proposals to these calls might address a range of issues related to conservation and restoration of peatlands including social, environmental, economic and cultural aspects. Typical topics might include habitat enhancement; invasive species control; sustainable agriculture; education and training; wildfire management; culture, heritage and the arts; community engagement, etc. Projects should be within the vicinity of, or within, one of the 35 blanket bog SACs in the LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature target area: <https://www.wildatlanticnature.ie/wild-atlantic-nature/>

**Funding and timelines**

The total budget for the Natura Communities Seed Fund is €100,000 over the duration of LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature, which has been made possible by Lifes2Good Foundation. Applications of up to €15,000 will be considered, with a minimum requirement of 20% match funding to be contributed by the applicant. Match funding by way of voluntary contribution or benefit-in-kind is acceptable.

All applicants seeking funding must plan to submit a full funding proposal to one of the calls listed above within a defined timeframe, typically under 12 months.

The grant fund is open to voluntary and community groups, local development companies, peatland-related Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), academic institutions working with local communities. Applications from local authorities, commercial projects or individuals are not eligible, but their inclusion as co-funders will be considered. Non eligible projects and activities include projects that solely benefit an individual, staffing costs, overseas travel/transport costs, equipment, infrastructure, income generating projects, overheads, insurance, accommodation costs/subsistence, potentially environmentally damaging activities. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Enquiries about applications and funding eligibility should be directed to Wild Atlantic Nature using the following email address: info@wildatlanticnature.ie

The closing date for applications for the 2024 round of the Natura Communities Seed Fund is 5pm, 28 June, 2024.

PLEASE FILL IN THE APPLICATION FORM OVER LEAF

**Please submit completed electronic forms to:** **info@wildatlanticnature.ie**

We do not accept paper forms. To consider your application, we must receive your online application along with supporting documents (where relevant) by 5pm on 28 June 2024. Applications or supporting documents cannot be submitted after this time. Incomplete applications will not be considered. You will receive, by return email, an acknowledgement of receipt of your application.

**LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature – Natura Communities Seed Fund**

Name of applicant(s) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Primary contact person \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(*Suggested 250-word maximum word count for each section*)

Overview of proposed project

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How will the project benefit peatland conservation, sustainable agriculture or biodiversity?

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How will the project benefit the local community?

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Description of how the project will be delivered, where will the project be delivered

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Who will be responsible for the delivery of the project, including local or national partners?

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How will the project be developed, when will it commence, key milestones, when will it be completed?

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Funding sought € \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide indicative budget breakdown and anticipated timelines where appropriate

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Details on match funding

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If application is successful for seed funding, please demonstrate anticipated pathway for a further proposal to one of the relevant funding calls related to nature conservation and restoration (include expected timeframe)

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Any other relevant information

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Where appropriate, please attach supporting documentation.

**Please submit forms electronically to:** info@wildatlanticnature.ie

**Terms and Conditions:**

1) Applications must be submitted electronically using the LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature Natura Communities Seed Fund *Application Form*.

2) Applications for funding of up to €15,000 will be considered, with a minimum requirement of 20% match funding to be contributed by the applicant. The exact funding for each approved application will be agreed between the LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature project team and the applicants.

3) The funding offered must only be used for the purposes specified in the application and any alterations to the proposed use of the funding must be approved in advance by LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature.

4) Applicants must have a strong link to one or more of the LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature project sites. They must be able to demonstrate how the grant aid sought would be used to support preparing writing funding proposals or contribute towards co-funding for applications for nature conservation and restoration projects under one or more of the funding calls listed in the call text or other relevant source.

5) All applicants seeking funding must plan to submit a full funding proposal to one of the calls listed or other relevant source within a defined timeframe, typically under 12 months.

6) The selection of successful applicants will be made by the LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature project team. Proposals will be examined on merit and will be considered subject to sufficient funding being available. The assessment criteria include:

* Quality and standard of application (15 marks)
* Capacity to deliver the project (30 marks)
* Blanket bog and associated habitats conservation potential (20 marks)
* Community engagement potential (15 marks)
* Value for money (20 marks)

A minimum mark of 50% must be achieved under each assessment criteria.

7) Successful applicants must be able to sign a contract with LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature.

8) All payments will be by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to an agreed bank account in the name of a group or organization and not to any individual member. The scheduling of payments will be agreed with the applicants.

9) Terms and conditions are also set out on the Natura Communities [website](https://www.naturacommunities.ie/community-resources/funding-opportunities/natura-communities-seed-fund/). You may also wish to [view](https://www.naturacommunities.ie/community-resources/funding-opportunities/application-privacy-statement/) our privacy statement.

1. Applicants need to ensure adequate and appropriate insurance, licenses and permissions will be available for proposed actions. Applicants will be required to produce evidence of such if their application is successful. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)