



Open call for wetland restoration plans and projects to be funded by Tóchar Midlands Wetland Restoration

Information sheet

Open date: 1 May 2026

Closing date: 3 June 2026

Introduction

Tóchar is a three-year wetlands restoration project, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund Programme. It is managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Overall the project will spend €12m during its lifetime. The Eastern Midland and Regional Assembly (EMRA) is the managing authority for EU Just Transition funds in Ireland.

The Tóchar project office is located in Birr, Co. Offaly.

More information on Tóchar can be found on our website: www.tocharwetlands.ie

Open call for wetland projects

Costed proposals are being sought for wetland plans and projects that will be funded by Tóchar.

The proposed plans and projects should:

- Assist with the understanding and knowledge base for any aspect of a specific wetland sites' ecology, hydrology or Greenhouse Gas emissions.
- Map wetland attributes such as vegetation, habitats, species, drains, watercourses.
- Produce restoration plans to improve and enhance the wetland's conservation status, in order to increase the wetland's functional resilience and biodiversity value.
- Deliver restoration works onsite, in line with appropriate consents and permissions appropriate with the designation status, and in line with best practice methodology for the characteristics of the wetland.
- Produce management or feasibility studies for improving access/reducing impacts of recreation on wetland sites which already are in use for amenity purposes.



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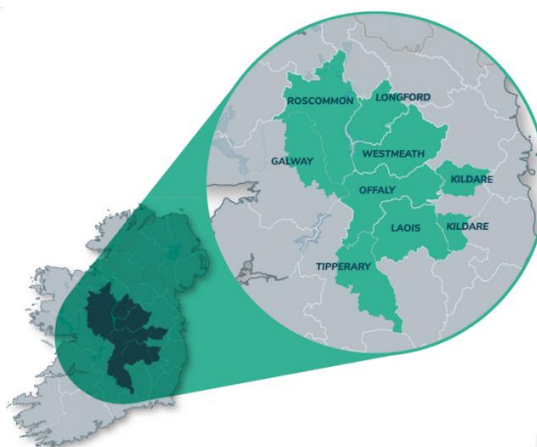


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Location

Wetlands must be located within the following districts, or directly adjacent to the Just Transition boundary. If a wetland site is outside the boundary but it can be demonstrated that the site is part of a wetland complex that extends into the territory, thereby benefitting the territory, proposals can be accepted.

County	Municipal districts covered
Laois	All
Westmeath	All
Offaly	All
Longford	All
Roscommon	All
Galway	Ballinasloe
Tipperary	Carrick on Siur Thurles
Kildare	Athy Clane - Maynooth



Objective of the EU Just Transition Fund

The objective is to enable regions and people to address the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards the Union's 2030 targets for energy and climate and a climate-neutral economy of the Union by 2050, based on the Paris Agreement.

Tóchar is implementing Action 2.1 of Ireland's EU Just Transition Programme (JTF) 2021 to 2027. The objective of Action 2.1 is to support the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded peatlands (and wetlands) to enable the transition towards climate-neutrality while also facilitating the diversification and modernisation of the economy of the Territory.

Timeframe and costs

Proposals must be deliverable within one year from the date of the letter of offer from Tóchar.

Direct incurred costs of the plans and projects will be paid directly from Tóchar to the service providers that are procured by the project proposers, upon receipt of invoices. Certificates of completion in relation to the works/plans will be checked and verified by Tóchar prior to payment of invoices. Payments can be made in phases in line with an agreed delivery plan.



Wetlands

Wetlands are important places for nature and play a crucial role in the maintenance of a healthy and resilient environment for all. Wetlands can be defined as areas that are wet, either throughout the entire year or seasonally, and where the water table is at or near the surface. The wet conditions of these habitats mean that they are generally colonised by a unique suite of flora species. The presence of characteristic wetland vegetation is often used to identify wetland areas.

For information on wetland types in Ireland, a good source is this guide produced by the Irish Ramsar Wetland Committee: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/irish-wetlands-guide.pdf>

A useful guide on wetland types, ecosystem services and community action has been produced by the Community Wetlands Forum: https://communitywetlandsforum.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CWF_Wetlands_Beginners_Guide_A_2025.pdf

For information on sites that are designated under legislation, such as the EU Birds and Habitats Directive of the Wildlife Act, please search for information about them here: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites>

For information on various species associated with your wetland, a useful place to search for data is here: <https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map> and a how-to-guide is published here: <https://docs.biodiversityireland.ie/biodiversity-maps/mapping>

Wetland site selection criteria

Costed proposals for wetland plans and project must meet the following criteria (1) eligibility and (2) selection criteria.

1. Only sites which pass the following **eligibility criteria** will be considered for inclusion:
 - Sites which are located within the Just Transition Territory or for the benefit of the territory will be eligible for inclusion.
 - There must be accessibility and landowner consensus for project actions to be undertaken.
 - Only sites where the polluter pays principle¹ doesn't apply will be eligible.

¹ The PPP is the principle according to which the polluter should bear the cost of measures to reduce pollution according to the extent of either the damage done to society or the exceeding of an acceptable level of pollution. In practice this means that the fund will not pay for any works that are consider obligated rehabilitation. Therefore, compliance with condition 10 of relevant IPC licenses is the determining factor, and where sites have already met or are meeting this obligated rehabilitation, the Just Transition Fund can be used for enhanced works such as restoration, which goes beyond the requirements of 'environmental stabilisation'.



2. NPWS will appraise all eligible applications against the following **selection criteria**:

Selection Criteria	Maximum score
Meeting objectives of the Just Transition Fund	25%
Biodiversity and Conservation Benefits	30%
Structure and Governance, capacity to deliver and value for money	25%
Other Ecosystem Services value	20%
Total	100%

A consensus mark will be awarded by the review panel under each of the criteria.

To be considered eligible for selection, sites must achieve at least an overall score of 50 - at least 50%.

NPWS will issue written notifications on decisions to each applicant.

Appeals

NPWS will co-ordinate and manage an appeals process for unsuccessful applicants. It will provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback on request and guidelines and timeframes for the appeal process with their decision in writing.

Personnel not involved in the original decision will undertake the appeals process. As part of the process unsuccessful applicants will be encouraged and advised to seek feedback on their application prior to proceeding to seek a review of the decision on their application. NPWS will advise all appellants of the outcome of their appeal in writing. If the appellant is unhappy with the decision on their appeal, they will be able to make a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Incentive payments

Tóchar has an incentive payment scheme available to landowners who are undertaking nature restoration works or management activities on their wetlands. Types of activities include drain blocking, invasive species removal, peat cell bunding, buffer strips to protect water quality, where these activities will improve the ecological or hydrological status of the wetland.

For more information about the incentive scheme and eligibility, please see appendix A.





[How to make an application to this open call](#)

Applicants are invited to complete the application form **Tóchar Form A** and submit it together with the accompanying information by email to tocharwetlands@npws.gov.ie by **12noon on the Wednesday 3rd June 2026**.



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APPENDIX A – TÓCHAR INCENTIVES PAYMENT SCHEME

The Tóchar Midlands Wetlands Restoration Incentive Scheme

Tóchar is a three-year wetlands restoration project, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund Programme. It is managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Overall the project will spend €12m during its lifetime.

The Tóchar Midland Wetlands Restoration Incentive Scheme (TMWRIS) is an area based financial incentive available to eligible landowners (and adjacent landowners in certain cases) and turbary right holders who wish to participate in restoration measures on wetlands sites within the EU Just Transition Territory.

The EU Just Transition area includes municipal districts in the counties Laois, Longford, Offaly, Roscommon, Westmeath, and the Municipal Districts of Ballinasloe (Co Galway), Athy, Clane-Maynooth, (Co Kildare) and Carrick-on-Suir and Thurles (Co Tipperary).

Eligibility

A once off payment rate of €1,450 per Hectare, with a minimum payment of €725 and a maximum payment of €15,000, is available to landowners and turbary right holders to accommodate the restoration measures or for access to carry out restoration measures under the scheme. Applicants must have a legal interest in the land through freehold title, a turbary right or fee simple title.

Process

Applications for Tóchar Incentive payments can be made on all lands held on each site provided the activities/restoration measures to be incentivised do not form part of any other payment or compensation scheme. By accepting the terms and conditions of the scheme the landowner is confirming that the payments do not constitute double funding. Landowners should consult their agricultural advisor for clarification.

Access to lands, which are within the restoration works zone of influence, will be required in order for the restoration work to be undertaken. The zone of influence refers to the land areas where active management is necessary to maintain, improve or restore the favourable conservation condition of the land.



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The Department are also willing to purchase lands in certain cases where the land purchase is of strategic importance to the success of the restoration programme.

Contract agreement

Approval as a participant in the Tóchar Midlands Wetland scheme and the signing of a contract is required.

Each successful applicant must sign a contract which includes an access consent agreement granting access to the Minister, employees, contractors, subcontractors or agents of the Minister to the lands and facilitating the restoration works to be undertaken.

Payment of incentive

Payment of agreed amount (subject to minimum and maximum amounts) will be made by electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the applicant on receipt of the completed and signed contract agreement, and following the certification of the works undertaken. Applicants may be required to provide a current tax clearance certificate.



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