

Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy Delivery Plan April 2026 to December 2027



Image courtesy of Forest Service



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

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Introduction

The Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy to 2040 was published in September 2025. The Strategy contains 5 Strategic Objectives and 26 Actions which set Northern Ireland on the pathway to meet climate and environmental commitments by aiming to restore **150,000** hectares of degraded peatland by **2050**.

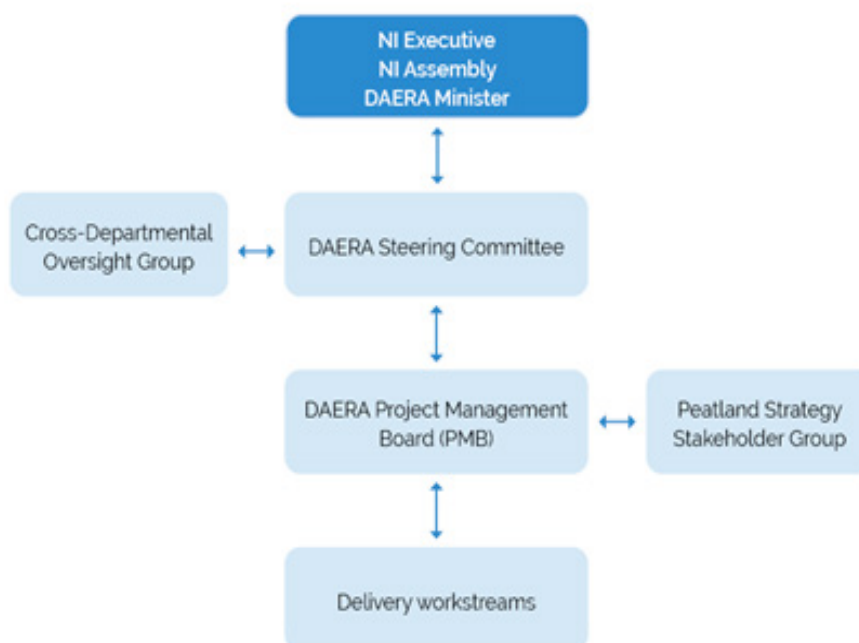
The actions in the Strategy provide a framework to guide the conservation and restoration of peatland habitats in Northern Ireland. Peatlands are vital ecosystems that store carbon, support biodiversity, and help regulate water quality and flood risk.

The Strategy also makes a commitment to publish a Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan in Table 1 sets 14 short-term targets to help deliver peatland conservation, restoration and management and provides a foundation for future plans. This is the first Delivery Plan and covers the period April 2026 to December 2027. It is intended that each subsequent Peatland Delivery Plan will cover a five year time period to align with the Northern Ireland Climate Action Plan cycle. The Strategy also requires the publication of a Reporting Framework. This has not yet been developed and given the short period that this initial plan covers, effort will be focused on developing a Reporting Framework Structure for the next Delivery Plan.

Delivery Plan Governance Structure

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) will be responsible for Programme Management of the Delivery Plan to ensure that targets are achieved. This will require effective collaboration within DAERA and across Government and with stakeholders. The governance structure for the delivery of the NI Peatland Strategy is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Peatland Strategy Delivery Plan Governance Structure



Monitoring & Reporting

- The DAERA Steering Committee will report to the DAERA Minister, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Executive on progress against published targets every three years. The first progress report is due 3 years after the delivery plan is published.
- The Peatland Strategy Delivery Plan for the period to December 2027 is set out below. The Key Department for delivery will report achievement of the tasks against the timescale through the governance structure at Figure 1.

Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy Delivery Plan

Target	Key Department for Delivery	Key Actions from Peatland Strategy	Tasks	Timescale
DP1-4	DAERA	<p>Action 5: Undertake public consultation on restricting retail sales of peat and peat products.</p> <p>Action 6: Work with the Horticulture Sector to phase out the use of peat by 2030.</p>	<p>Restrict the retail sale of peat to the public.</p> <p>Progress policy development on use of peat within commercial sector.</p>	<p>By August 2026: launch a consultation to restrict the sale of peat to the public.</p> <p>By December 2027 – in conjunction with CAFRE, issue a call for evidence on commercial peat usage.</p>
DP1-5	DAERA	<p>Action 8: Develop new policies and delivery mechanisms, including a new Farming with Nature Scheme, with options to support landowners to appropriately manage peatlands in the long term.</p>	<p>Further strands of the FwN package in 2026 will focus on management of land within priority sites and collaboration between farmers on a landscape scale to deliver environmental outcomes.</p> <p>Progress Land Use & Agriculture Modelling Framework (InVEST) to inform FwN interventions.</p>	<p>By October 2026.</p> <p>By October 2026.</p>

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Target	Key Department for Delivery	Key Actions from Peatland Strategy	Tasks	Timescale
DP1-6	DAERA	Action 10: Publish and implement an Ammonia Strategy to deliver reductions in ammonia emissions from agriculture and meet legislative requirements.	Publish the Ammonia Strategy.	By August 2026
DP1-7	DAERA (College of Agriculture, Food & Rural Enterprise) Peatland Collaborative Network (PCN)	Action 12: Develop and deliver knowledge transfer, education and innovation programmes to meet the needs of landowners, organisations and contractors, to build capacity in peatland conservation, restoration and management.	Deliver awareness events for agricultural upland owners and managers. Peatland Collaborative Network (PCN, which is funded by DAERA Environment Fund) to facilitate quarterly events for peatland restoration practitioners.	By December 2026. Ongoing - PCN funded until March 2028 (via DAERA Environment Fund).
DP1-8	DAERA (College of Agriculture, Food & Rural Enterprise)	Action 13: Establish demonstration sites on land in public ownership which showcase best practice in peatland restoration and management.	Demonstration sites to be created at Glenwherry Hill Farm.	Demonstration of Restoration works at Glenwherry Hill Farm ongoing until December 2027.

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Target	Key Department for Delivery	Key Actions from Peatland Strategy	Tasks	Timescale
DP1-9	DAERA	Action 14(b) (i) Commission, fund and deliver research into peatland management which can support biodiversity, cultural heritage and farming outcomes.	<p>Progress AFBI project - Restoring Habitat Condition and Biodiversity to the Uplands: An Applied Experimental Approach</p> <p>Deliver a range of research via AFBI, Co=Centre, Lunz hub and the DAERA/DAFM call</p>	<p>By October 2026</p> <p>By December 2027</p>
DP1-10	DAERA	Action 15: Establish a long-term Public Communications Campaign across Northern Ireland to boost awareness of peatlands and their role in ecosystem service provision.	Publish a Peatland Communications Framework.	By March 2027.
DP1-11	DAERA	<p>Action 21: Establish a Peatland Strategy Steering Group and Project Management Board within DAERA to oversee implementation of the Peatland Strategy.</p> <p>Action 24: Convene and manage a Stakeholder Forum with representative membership to encourage knowledge exchange on the implementation of the strategy.</p>	Set up each group and agree Terms of Reference and meeting schedules.	By December 2026: convene initial meetings for each group.

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Target	Key Department for Delivery	Key Actions from Peatland Strategy	Tasks	Timescale
DP1-12	DAERA	Action 25: Secure funding to implement all peatland conservation, restoration and management activities, recognising the long-term nature of peatland restoration.	Develop a business case for a specific DAERA Fund to support peatland restoration projects.	By December 2027: DAERA funding mechanism in place to continue upscaling peatland restoration to deliver Climate Action Plan Targets 2028-2032.
DP1-13	DAERA	N/A	Review of Peatland Strategy Actions to be included in next Delivery Plan from 2027.	By October 2027: review and agree next phase of actions.
DP1-14	DAERA	N/A	Develop a Reporting Framework to align with Climate Action Plan reporting periods	By December 2027: publish metrics that will be reported to track progress against Strategy actions.



Image courtesy of Paul Corbett



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