

# BUFFER+ | FACTSHEET

## Buffering water to buffer carbon in peatlands

INTERREG 6B NWE \* PRIORITY 1, SO 2.4 \* 1ST CALL 2022, STEP 1 \* JUNE 2022



### What is the project about?

BUFFER+ deals with peatlands. In the Northern hemisphere, peatlands cover 3 to 5% of the total land area and contain no less than about 33% of global soil carbon. They have a strong natural potential to capture carbon and play an important role in nature- and landscape-based solutions for climate change.

However, when they are drained, which is common practice because of conventional peat mining, agriculture or forestry, the well-preserved carbon is released as a greenhouse gas into the atmosphere. This is why it is important to keep peatlands wet.

By maintaining the water levels, peatlands also offer solutions for water capture and retention to offset sudden rain or river flooding and can provide water supplies during drought. They have additional benefits such as creating new habitats to support wetland ecosystems as well as new spaces for sports and leisure.

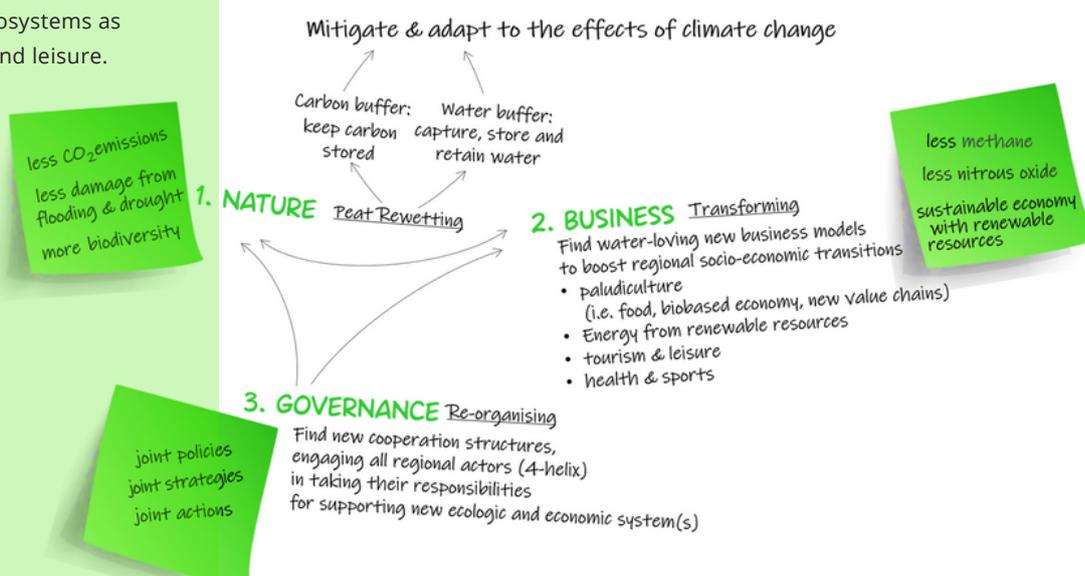
### What are the project objectives?

**The overall objective is** to enhance climate change adaptation and mitigation through finding, applying and testing landscape-based solutions and their revenue streams in peatland areas in North-West Europe..

#### Specific objectives

- 1 Restore nature & Landscape:** Sustainable re-wetting and restoring measures will result in a carbon and water buffer, and at the same time restore biodiversity.
- 2 Develop new business models:** Provide an income for farmers in peatland areas by developing and testing new water-loving business models to boost the necessary transition towards a carbon zero society. These solutions could be, for instance, in the fields of food, energy, water, biodiversity and circular or biobased economy.
- 3 Improve governance structures:** Develop new cooperation models or redraft existing ones. These new models should engage all members of society (industry, academia, public authorities and citizens) in decision processes and in taking responsibility for co-creating, maintaining and scaling up the new found solutions.

## BUFFER+ Buffering water to buffer carbon in peatlands



## What are the common territorial challenges?

- Referring to recent IPCC reports, climate change is an increasingly pressing challenge to deal with.
- Peatlands, when un-managed, release huge amounts of GHG emissions. So, we must find comprehensive measures, cutting across and connecting many industry and policy sectors and touching upon many responsibilities and actors.
- Biodiversity is in decline, which also severely affects the climate.
- There is a need for business models which match ecological aims.
- Policy objectives must link various policy domains to climate adaptation: energy, food, livestock, sustainable tourism and leisure, carbon credits etc.
- There are still many gaps in terms of education, knowledge and capacity regarding the sustainable transition (technical, social and economic) of peatlands: restoration and re-wetting methodologies, paludiculture, monitoring, lack of coherent information, shared perspectives, joint strategies and joint actions.
- Citizens, farmers and other entrepreneurs do not feel part of the discussions and the decision processes. There is a need to bring everyone to the table and keep them engaged in an effective way.



## How does the project take available knowledge further?

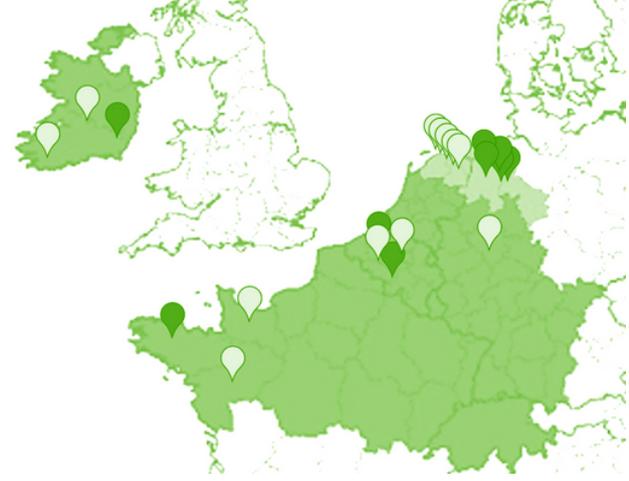
In the preceding INTERREG NWE programme, the CConnects and Care Peat projects tested peat-soil restoration and wet crops for peatland farming. The partners also linked their activities to projects in the North Sea Region (CANAPE) and the Baltics, and to the Peat Restore project under the LIFE programme. For partnerships under the current EU programme period, these previous partnerships strongly recommend the mainstreaming of peatland restoration. Furthermore, they advocate for reliable, affordable and easy-to-use GHG assessment methods. Next to this, they emphasise the need to harmonise policies. Finally, they strongly propose to harness new business models and increase economic incentives.

Following these recommendations, BUFFER+ will focus on the following four essential aspects:

1. **Peatland regeneration:** Put pilots into practice and scale up action on climate mitigation in peatland areas through regional holistic approaches and strategies.
2. **Business models:** Develop long-term and resilient business models for farmers, land-users and landowners that only reward sustainable land practices.
3. **Governance and policy:** Mainstream peatland governance structures and policies in all relevant areas and at all levels.
4. **Training and communication:** Raise awareness about the value of peatlands for climate adaption and mitigation, and increase knowledge of landowners, farmers, experts, decision-makers, politicians and citizens.

The learnings from these four topics will be added to the toolbox, which was started by the preceding projects under the EU programmes mentioned above. Thus, the BUFFER+ partners will help to complete the existing body of knowledge for landowners, farmers, experts, researchers, decision makers, politicians and citizens.





## Who will take part?

**Lead partner:** NL, Province of Groningen

### Project Partners:

- **BE:** BeeOdiversity, Haedes, Natuurpunt and Province of West-Vlaanderen. EcoRes is considering joining the partnership.
- **FR:** AC3A Association des Chambres d'agriculture de l'Arc atlantique and the Chambers of Agriculture in Normandie, Pays de la Loire and Bretagne.
- **GE:** Philipps-University Marburg. Landvolk Osterholz, Biologische Station Osterholz, Landkreis Osterholz, Oldenburgisch-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband and Hochschule Bremen are considering joining the partnership.
- **IE:** South Kerry Development Partnership. The Rivers Trust is considering joining the partnership.
- **NL:** Bioclear Earth, Hanze UAS Groningen, Municipality of Midden-Groningen and Municipality of Westerkwartier. The Waterboard Hunze & Aa's is considering joining the partnership.



## For more information please contact

Roos Galjaard, galjaard@pau.nl, +31 6 50214869  
Sabine Lutz, salut@share-link.eu, +31 611 42 84 02

## Colophon

Text: Sabine Lutz & Roos Galjaard  
With thanks to Sarah Beigel and Alexandre Morin, AC3A

### Photography:

P.1: <https:// groningen.nu>  
P.2: above: Moreau.henri, CC BY-SA 3.0;  
below: Maud Duijn  
P.3: above: C. Diebolt  
below: Christophe MAUGER / AC3A

Design: Sabine Lutz, Share & Link, salut@share-link.eu