

# Shared Island Initiative PEATLAND PROGRAMME



Shared Island  
Initiative

## CASE STUDY

### Shared Bogs, Shared Future: Cross Border Peatland Scoping Project

This three year cross-border peatland project, delivered by Fermanagh & Omagh District Council with Cavan County Council, funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency through the Shared Island Initiative Peatlands Challenge Fund, aims to build a strong evidence base for peatland management while deepening community engagement across sites in Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Cavan County Council, and Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark.

Baseline surveys, covering habitat quality, species presence, peat depth, and water table levels, are guiding the development of effective management plans. The project also includes establishing a demonstration site at Gortin Lakes to showcase restoration techniques and longterm monitoring approaches.

## METHODS & APPROACH

The project combines scientific assessment, crossborder collaboration, and community driven engagement.

**Scientific Work:** Building on longstanding monitoring at Cuilcagh, and insights from the CANN Project, the initiative addresses differences in survey standards and practices between Northern Ireland and Ireland. While shared guidelines exist, varying funding structures, resources, and timelines have resulted in different approaches. The project aims to bridge these gaps and create more aligned, streamlined monitoring methods.

**Community Engagement:** A dedicated Peatlands Officer leads outreach with schools, landowners, volunteers, and community groups, promoting sustainable land management and restoration. Gortin Lakes and Cuilcagh also host Eyes on the Bog, offering hands on citizen science experiences.



## RESULTS

Progress includes completion of habitat assessments and initial peat depth checks, installation of piezometers for watertable monitoring, and ongoing drainage mapping to

inform future management plans. Gortin Lakes has emerged as a valuable demonstration hub due to its accessibility, community interest, and connections to ongoing restoration work. Engagement has grown across the region, with schools and families sharing cultural histories, such as turfcutting traditions, and linking them to modern climate and conservation themes.

## KEY LESSONS

Several key lessons are already evident in this project:

- Cross-border coordination is essential in order to align survey methods and support restoration.
- Community involvement is vital, providing cultural context, local knowledge, and longterm stewardship.
- Small demonstration sites have large impact, showing how accessible locations can anchor learning and collaboration.
- Partnerships are essential for positive outcomes, with councils, conservation bodies, and NGOs building a united movement to protect and celebrate Ireland's peatlands.

