



The Peter De Haan Charitable Trust

Environmental Grants Scheme

Introduction

The Peter De Haan Charitable Trust has a long history of awarding grants to the environmental sector, in particular supporting the work of various Wildlife Trusts, the John Muir Trust and peatland conservation. More recently, grant awards have been given to the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust to expand opportunities for volunteers and trainees and to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, largely as 'match-funding' to enable funding for bigger programmes of work.

A seminal moment for PDHCT's environmental support, was the London Peatland Conference in 2008, whose main findings were that there was an overwhelming need for a programme of action to deliver large scale peatland restoration in the UK with a focus around the conservation quartet of partnership, science, policy and practice. PDHCT subsequently provided £400,000 to establish and run the IUCN-UK Peatland Programme which has been fundamental in changing Government policy and funding towards peatland conservation. A consensus around the science and evidence for the importance of peatlands was established through the Peatland Inquiry.

PDHCT has now allocated a further £1 million to grant aid environmental programmes of which £750,000 has been allocated to this environmental grants scheme.

Themes

Four themes are proposed for support:

1. **Peatland restoration** – Following the IUCN-UK Peatland Programme lead, the UK has moved from a position of degradation of peatlands through perverse public policy and neglect to a clear recognition of the issue and some positive steps to restore our mostly degraded and damaged peatland resource. However, much of Britain's peatland resource remains damaged and degraded. The IUCN-UK Peatland Programme sets this out:

"The management and restoration of the UK's peatlands is an ambitious goal, with best estimates of 2.3 million ha of blanket and raised bog, of which around 1.8 million ha is damaged in some way. By creating a better framework to integrate public and business policies and by putting the right funding mechanisms in place, we should be able to secure a much better future for our peatlands by 2050. A positive interim target would be to work towards having 1 million ha of peatlands in good condition or under restoration management by 2020 – a timescale consistent with UK and international biodiversity objectives as well as commitments to tackle global climate change."

Funding for capital programmes of peatland restoration do exist – through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, via water companies as well as other environmental grants, though many of these funds require some form of 'match' funding (levered funding) to procure. In some cases, the

key blockage is the payment of staff salaries to identify and take forward peatland restoration works: working with land-owners and managers, negotiating agreements and contracts and undertaking survey and mapping to bring about peatland restoration as well as the often intensive data resource needed to enable effective restoration.

2. **Skills development and training** – Nature conservation is a diverse activity with particular specialisms in campaigning, outdoor education and land management. Staff that work for environmental organisations are generally highly qualified and/or experienced, typically with 10+ years’ experience and qualified to degree level and above, despite that wages are generally quite low. Wildlife charities also deploy an army of volunteers and have a strong focus on volunteer support and training. Currently though, support for such work through project grants is limited, with only the Lottery and the occasional Charitable Trust supporting this type of work. Environmental charities are now forced to limit volunteer and training programmes due to a lack of capacity to support such programmes adequately.
3. **Advocacy** – The 2013 “*A State of Nature*” report showed that species were in rapid decline. David Attenborough, in his foreword to the report, set out a stark warning:

“Far more species are declining than increasing in the UK, including many of our most treasured species. Alarmingly, a large number of them are threatened with extinction. The causes are varied, but most are ultimately due to the way we are using our land and seas and their natural resources, often with little regard for the wildlife with which we share them. The impact on plants and animals has been profound.”

Whilst changing public policy to conserve wildlife better is not the only way to conserve wildlife, it does send a powerful signal to Society and can have considerable influence over some of the most damaging activities that degrades our nature conservation resource (e.g. intensive agriculture and intensive fishing). However, advocacy work is difficult to fund. The results are often intangible, very rarely immediate and such work is long-term. Moreover, the current Government appears to be intent on weakening environmental protection.

4. **Technical support** – Nature conservation in the UK benefits from a long-term construct between the State and the voluntary sector. The capacity of state nature conservation is rapidly weakening through reductions in grant aid to the main conservation agencies of Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency whilst Local Authorities are substantially reducing their capacity for countryside management. Voluntary sector nature conservation has fared less worse though there has been some criticism that it is fragmented between many different organisations. Clearly, the sector needs to achieve more with less and one way is to harness technical solutions that are opened up by new technologies. Deploying better customer relation databases, collective web-site platforms, improving information sharing or deploying cloud technologies, for example, might enable organisations to be more efficient, particularly if they could share technical solutions between organisations.

Operation of the grant scheme

PDHCT has allocated £750,000 over three years and is hoping to develop a small portfolio of projects that will begin in 2016. Trustees are keen to support substantial projects, i.e. projects of over £50,000 per year. At this level, PDHCT will be able to support a portfolio of five different projects, funded at a cost of £50,000 per year for three years. However, the Trust is happy to consider applications for more than this. Trustees are keen that the portfolio together has some strategic merit, through for example a good geographical spread or that coordinated PR allows for a convincing ‘story’ or that together the projects might create a strong platform for advocacy and public policy change.

PDHCT are keen that successful applicants concentrate on effective and efficient project delivery, rather than dealing with funder administration and the scheme is designed to be relatively bureaucracy-light. As such, only well-established charities with a strong track record will be approached for this scheme, for example the 47 Wildlife Trusts and RSWT, the John Muir Trust, RSPB and the larger species focussed charities such as BugLife, Plantlife and Butterfly Conservation.

PDHCT will pay the grant in advance of spend at six monthly intervals on the production of half-yearly updates, comprising of a simple 2-page update that sets out progress and spend to date, forecast spend for the next six months, as well as forecast spend for the rest of the project. Payments will be made according to this budget. Grant holders will be required to provide PR support to PDHCT as required (for annual reports, website etc.) and are encouraged to acknowledge PDHCT in any local PR.

PDHCT are particularly keen that this funding enables charities to lever in further funding to take the project forward. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate a high degree of leverage, with the grant forming a minimum of 50% of the cost of the project (a 1:2 leverage). Applicants will be able to use the fund as 10% third party support for the landfill communities fund (LCF), given a 1:10 leverage. PDHCT realise that some projects may not succeed at the application stage to the LCF funder. If a project is not approved by a LCF funder, then the grant will be withdrawn by PDHCT and deployed to another PDHCT applicant.

In essence, PDHCT would want to see projects where PDHCT funding enables a project to go forward by filling a funding 'gap' (say the last 10-20% of a larger project) or where PDHCT funding is clearly being used to lever in new funding (e.g. providing the match funding to lever in Heritage Lottery Fund support).

Application

Applicants would apply through a 2-4 page 'letter' setting out a description of the project, the main outputs and outcomes and a simple budget. Applications will be considered by a small advisory group comprising of Dr Rob Stoneman, Chief Executive of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (and trustee for PDHCT) and Simon Bentley, Chief Executive of Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. Advice will be passed to the Board of Trustees of PDHCT for a final decision.

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| Leverage | At least 1:2 leverage. |
| Substantive | Will make a substantive difference. Projects that link well within the portfolio so that the sum of the projects make an even more substantive difference will score higher. |
| Forms part of a portfolio | The aim the scheme is to develop a portfolio of projects. Applicants may have collaborated to submit linked projects or the panel seeks to develop a portfolio of projects that together would provide a more substantive difference. |

Deadline

In order that applicants are able to develop levered funds, our deadline for applications is **November 30th**. Please apply via an e-mail attachment (MS Word or PDF) to pdehaan@opus-trust.com. Applications must be authorised by your Chief Executive (e-mail confirmation is adequate).