

**Title:** Sustainable Uplands

**Impact:** This Pathway to Impact led to an impact case study that was graded 3\* in REF2014



**Year of submission:** 2010 and 2011 (Pathways to impact from two linked projects are integrated below)

### Pathways to Impact

This project will use UK peatlands as a case study to provide important academic insights into the links between science, values and decision-making in complex socio-ecological systems that can be applied in a range of policy and business settings. It will investigate new methods and approaches to assess stocks, flows, sustainability and uncertainty of ecosystem services at multiple scales, which can be applied across multiple ecosystems.

The peatland focus of this work will provide the network with a series of concrete methodological challenges around which to develop new methods that are applicable to a range of complex socio-ecological systems. This focus will also enable the project to make concrete policy contributions that have the potential to deliver far-reaching social and economic impact. In particular, the proposed work will identify and develop the research methods and regulatory mechanisms necessary to develop new markets for peatland restoration. Working closely with relevant teams in DEFRA, DECC and the devolved administrations, a range of regulatory and policy options will be explored in the context of implementing the Natural Environment White Paper in England & Wales and with members of Scottish Government's Rural & Environment Science & Analytical Services Division.

#### Audiences:

- Government: this research will provide DEFRA and the Ecosystem Markets Taskforce with essential information about how to facilitate the creation of peatland carbon markets in the UK, feeding into the on-going work of EMTF. The work follows DEFRA's PES best practice guidelines and effectively complements previous DEFRA funded work into barriers and opportunities to PES. Preliminary findings from the project will be offered for incorporation into DEFRA's PES Action Plan towards the end of 2012
- Future buyers of peatland carbon and related ecosystem services: providing potential investors with more information about the scientific basis for peatland restoration and the monitoring of carbon and other benefits, and the launch of a pilot phase code that can provide them with the certainty they need to invest in pilot phase restoration projects
- Future sellers of peatland carbon and related ecosystem services: providing them with best practice guidelines for restoration and monitoring, and linking them to buyers in the pilot phase to facilitate peatland restoration on their land
- Intermediaries who are interested in brokering relationships between those who wish to buy and sell peatland carbon

The team is well connected to deliver policy impact with Reed currently on placement with DEFRA working on these issues funded by LWEC/RELU, the IUCN UK Peatland Programme's Commission of Inquiry on UK Peatlands having raised the profile of these issues considerably (Bonn, Bain), and Evans participating in the development of new guidelines for peatland GHG accounting by the IPCC. By making new regulatory and financial mechanisms possible for peatland restoration, the research has the potential for a

long-term legacy of better managed and functioning peatlands, which will provide the UK and global society with many vital benefits long into the future.

The project will lead to two key outcomes:

- Creation and launch of a pilot phase UK Peatland Carbon Code that is sufficiently well developed to guide pilot phase peatland restoration projects (interim outputs: i) workshop reports from expert meetings; ii) market research report on needs and preferences of potential investors)
- Recommendations that the Ecosystem Markets Taskforce could consider making to Secretaries of State to support the development of peatland carbon markets in the UK

To help achieve these outcomes, the following knowledge exchange activities will be carried out:

- Regular project meetings between project team and relevant teams within Defra and the Devolved Administrations
- Project board meetings
- Expert meetings/workshops with stakeholders
- A dedicated session at the forthcoming IUCN conference in July 2013