

# Bog Bothy Tour 2026: Expression of Interest

## About Tóchar

Tóchar is a three-year wetlands restoration project co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the EU Just Transition Fund Programme and managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. With €12 million invested over its lifetime, Tóchar supports the recovery of the Midlands' raised bog landscapes, which were deeply shaped by decades of peat extraction for energy, domestic fuel and horticulture. While this industry provided vital employment and stability, it also resulted in the loss of natural habitats and ecosystem benefits, leaving long-term impacts on people, climate and nature. Today, the region is undergoing an important transition as natural processes, large-scale rehabilitation and conservation work help restore these landscapes. Tóchar forms part of this wider shift, aligning with national and European commitments such as the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the EU Nature Restoration initiatives, including Ireland's emerging Nature Restoration Plan.

## About the Partnership

As part of this wider restorative effort, Tóchar is developing a new partnership with the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) and architects 12th Field. This involves the Bog Bothy project, an initiative that emerged through Creative Ireland and successfully toured in 2025. Together, Tóchar and Bog Bothy will work with local communities and sites to host a new series of creative, place-based engagements in 2026, deepening public connection with the region's evolving peatland landscapes.

## About Bog Bothy

Bog Bothy is a partnership project between the Irish Architecture Foundation (IAF) and architects 12th Field. The project came about through a Creative Climate Action II – Agents for Change programme, developed over nearly three years with the support of Creative Ireland.

The Bog Bothy is a small (23sqm) temporary structure designed to allow people to spend time within the bog. It has many functions - a gathering space for workshops, conversations, performances and local events, a work space, a place for reflection and rest. It was co-designed with local peatlands communities to offer a creative way for people to reconnect with their bogs, reflect on climate action and explore the cultural life of their landscapes. The first Bog Bothy was launched in Summer 2025, stopping in two locations: Clara Bog, Co. Offaly and Girley Bog, Co. Meath.

In 2025, we produced a collaborative public programme around peatlands architecture, ecology, and culture. During the weeks following, the Clara and Girley communities equally stewarded the Bothy as a space for community life to unfold and for people to

gather around activities of their choosing such as moth trapping workshops, yoga classes, and biodiversity work on the bog. You can learn more about this through our short film ([vimeo.com/1142134005](https://vimeo.com/1142134005)) and on our website ([iaf.ie/events/bog-bothy-girley](http://iaf.ie/events/bog-bothy-girley)).

## **About IAF and 12th Field**

IAF is an independent organisation, founded in 2005, to connect people with architecture. Working island-wide, we bring audiences together to experience, explore and discuss the ways architecture shapes our lives, individually and as communities, as a culture and as a nation. Through festivals, exhibitions, placemaking and learning initiatives, IAF expands knowledge and understanding, sparks new ideas and advances new thinking about the role of architecture and the built environment in our shared future.

Through architecture residencies in peatland communities, 12th Field explores ways in which architecture can reignite our ancient relationship with the peatlands, by spending time with local communities to understand and record their wetlands and co-develop creative proposals. This involves remembering the social history of the place, imagining new rituals and opportunities to interact with the landscape, while keeping local people at the heart of the design and construction process.

## **The Opportunity to Work with Us**

In 2026, Tóchar with IAF and 12th Field are collaborating to bring this work to new communities that would like to host the Bothy. Ideas are sought to work with us and spend some time with and in the Bothy, a space for conversation to develop new ideas around how we might collectively reimagine our future relationship with Ireland's peatlands.

We are therefore inviting Expressions of Interest, through the following form, from groups who feel a strong connection to their local peatlands and who would like to co-develop a public programme and/or specific projects rooted in ecology, culture, creativity or community learning. You do not need to be a formal organisation to apply; emerging groups, informal networks and partnerships between local organisations are all welcome. You may even want to apply as a cohort of organisations to steward the Bothy together. This is a funded opportunity that will also support a community led programming element to bring some of your ambitions for your local peatlands to life. This form is therefore also an opportunity to share your ideas for how you might use the Bothy within your community group and what kind of project or programming it might support for your locality.

## **The Expression Of Interest Process**

This form helps us understand your group, your proposed site, and your vision for a Bog Bothy programme. The application is therefore structured through the following four parts:

1. Eligibility check (site suitability, permissions, environmental considerations)
2. Community group(s) (your story, relationships with local bogs, ambition and capacity)
3. Proposed site (location, ownership, meaning for the community)
4. Programme idea (what you would like to do and how it might be delivered)

Applications will be assessed and scored out of 10 under each of the following criteria:

- Eligibility – Pass/Fail
- Community Group(s) – 30% (Score out of 10)
- Site – 30% (Score out of 10)
- Programming – 40% (Score out of 10)

We encourage responses written in your own voice. Please keep written answers to 250 words per question. As above, if you would like to apply as part of a cohort of community groups, you are also welcome to do so.

#### **Deadlines and Further Information**

**We will host a short online information session on 23rd January 2025 for anyone who would like guidance or has questions.** The deadline for submissions is 6th February 2025 at 5pm. Shortlisting will take place in early February, followed by conversations and potential site visits. Final selections will be made by the end of February, with hosting taking place during spring-summer 2026.

If you have any further questions or need further clarifications, please direct them to Dean Black, IAF Placemaking Manager via [dean.black@iaf.ie](mailto:dean.black@iaf.ie).

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to learning about your community, your peatlands, and your ideas.

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\* Indicates required question

1. Email \*

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Section 1: Eligibility Check

This first section helps us understand whether your proposed site is suitable for hosting the Bog Bothy in 2026. Because the Bothy is a temporary structure placed within a sensitive landscape, certain environmental, planning, and geographic criteria will influence its feasibility. These questions also confirm that your site falls within Tóchar's project area, located in the Just Transition Territory (Kildare, Galway, Roscommon, Laois, Longford, Offaly, Tipperary and Westmeath).

This section is simply an eligibility check before we move into your ideas. If you already have permission from the landowner to use the site, please let us know—this is not required and will not affect the outcome of your application, but it is helpful context at this stage.

This section represents 10% of the overall assessment and is marked on a pass/fail basis.

## 2. Please Tick All That Apply \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- We confirm that we have read and understand all information and guidance associated with this application.
- Our proposed site is adjacent to, near, or on a peatland/bog area.
- Our proposed location is within the geographical catchment area of the Tóchar project.
- We currently have permission from the landowner for the structure's placement.

(\*This is not a requirement and will not impact your application's success but is helpful for us to know at this stage)

## Section 2: Community Group(s)

In this section, we'd like to learn more about your community group(s), who is involved, and what connects you to your local peatlands. We welcome groups of all kinds, formal organisations, informal networks, emerging collectives, and partnerships between local organisations. Your answers will help us understand your story, your experience, your hopes, and your capacity to care for and steward the Bothy during its time with you.

This section represents 30% of the overall assessment and is scored out of 10.

Please keep your responses to a maximum of 250 words each.

## 3. Group Name \*

4. Website or Social Media \*

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5. Main Contact Person Name \*

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6. Main Contact Email Address \*

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7. Main Contact Phone Number \*

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8. Tell us about your group. \*

*Who are you? What brings you together? What do you do?*

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9. What is your group's existing relationship with local bogs or peatland? \* *This can be cultural, ecological, historical, creative, or community-based.*

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10. How would you describe your group's ambition for the future of your local peatlands? \*

*Tell us what you hope for the future of your peatlands and your community's role in that future.*

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11. How would you describe your group's capacity to host and look after the Bog \* Bothy?

*This can be simple and practical—such as welcoming visitors, maintaining the space, coordinating access, or ensuring it is respected and safely used.*

*In 2025, for example, the Bothy was hosted by both a local heritage society and a neighbourhood meitheal group, each with different resources and ways of working, but both well placed to steward the Bothy in their own context.*

*You may also include information here on your existing resources, the kinds of events or projects you currently deliver, and any experience you have coordinating community activities.*

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12. How would you describe your group's connections with other local organisations, networks, or community groups? \*

*Tell us about any partnerships you currently have, groups you regularly collaborate with, or networks you are part of. Please share how such networks might welcome and support wider community participation during the Bothy's time in your area.*

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### Section 3: Proposed Site

In this section, we'd like to learn more about the site you are proposing to host the Bog Bothy. The Bothy and its use are shaped by their surroundings, so understanding the place you have in mind is an important part of the process.

We invite you to describe where this site is, how it sits in relation to your local peatlands, and what makes it a meaningful or suitable location for gathering, learning, and hosting activity. We are interested in your placed-based knowledge of this location, its character, and its relevance to your community.

This section represents 30% of the overall assessment and is scored out of 10.

Please keep your responses to a maximum of 250 words each.

Images and maps can be uploaded in the final question of this section to help us understand the site.

13. Please provide the location of your proposed site. \*

*Include the County, Peatland/Bog name, Eircode, and coordinates.*

14. What is the ownership status of the proposed site? \*

*Please select one of the following options.*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Public Land - Non NPWS Owned
- Public Land - NPWS Owned
- Private Land - Unknown Owner
- Private Land - Known Owner with no Prior Engagement and/or Relationship
- Private Land - Known Owner with Prior Engagement and/or Relationship
- Community Owned Land - Not owned by your community group
- Community Owned Land - Owned or part-owned by your community group
- Not sure

15. Does your proposed site have any known environmental designations or protections? \*

*This may include national or European conservation statuses such as NHA (Natural Heritage Area) or SAC (Special Area of Conservation).*

*SACs carry the highest level of protection under EU law, while NHAs are nationally protected sites under Irish legislation.*

*Knowing whether your site is designated helps us understand what environmental considerations may be required for hosting the Bothy.*

16. How accessible is this site to the public? \*

*Please take into consideration anything that may affect general public access, including transport, pathways, signage, or restrictions.*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Highly Accessible (Easy public access and facilities)
- Moderately Accessible (Some access challenges but manageable)
- Limited Accessibility (Remote location, significant access challenges)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Why does this particular site matter to your group and your wider community? \*

*You may wish to describe its cultural, ecological, social, or historical significance, as well as how people currently use or relate to this place and plans for its future.*

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18. Email Supporting Site Documents to [opportunities@iaf.ie](mailto:opportunities@iaf.ie)  
(File Upload – Optional)

*Please email up to five documents that might help us understand your proposed site to [opportunities@iaf.ie](mailto:opportunities@iaf.ie)*

*These might include images of the location and its access routes, maps or sketches, or any reports or materials that offer further insight into the site's character, context, or current use within your community.*

*Files may be up to 100MB each.*

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#### Section 4: Community Programming

The Bothy is most impactful when the surrounding community shapes what happens in and around it. In this section, we invite you to share your ideas for how the Bothy could support learning, creativity, ecology, culture, or community gathering in your area. Your programme could take many forms: a single event, restoration works, a workshop series, outdoor activities, conversations, performances, fieldwork, or something entirely unique to your peatland and your community.

We are interested in your imagination, your local partnerships, and how you might bring people together during the Bothy's time with you. Your responses will help us understand the potential for community-led activity and the wider engagement this project could support. There will be funding and support from the Tóchar and Bog Bothy teams allocated to delivering these activities.

This section represents 30% of the overall assessment and is scored out of 10.

Please keep your responses to 250 words per question.

19. Which themes would you say are central to your proposed idea? \*

*Tick all that apply.*

- Ecology/Biodiversity/Conservation
- Culture/Heritage/Architecture
- Creativity/Arts/Performance
- Community Learning/Workshops
- Climate Action/Sustainability

20. What would you like to do with the Bog Bothy? \*

*Tell us about your idea.*

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21. How might your proposed idea be delivered? \*

*Tell us who could be involved, how you might organise the activity, and any partnerships that would help bring it to life.*

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22. Are there existing festivals, gatherings, or community events that the Bothy \* could link with?

*Tell us how your programme could connect with your existing calendars and other local celebrations, cultural events, seasonal activities, or peatland-related initiatives.*

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23. What kind of support or guidance might your group need to deliver your proposed programme? \*

*Please feel free to describe any forms of help that would strengthen your programme and your group's ability to deliver it.*

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24. What budget range do you estimate your proposed idea would require? \*

*Please select the option that best reflects the scale of your idea. This does not need to be exact, an approximate range helps us understand the level of support your programme might need. Mark only one oval.*

- Under €1,000
- €1,000–€2,000
- €2,000–€5,000

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