

Easy-to-use Guide for National Committees

The International Peat Society (IPS) is represented on a local level by its National Committees.

National Committees exist currently in 18 countries: Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the USA.

Application

To become a National Committee of IPS, a local organisation of peat and peatland experts can submit an application to the Executive Board at any time. Application forms are available at www.peatlands.org and from the IPS Secretariat.

For each country, only one National Committee will be recognized. The National Committee has to have the status of a legal entity, for instance as a registered non-profit association or other organisation according to national law.

Statutes

Each National Committee has to submit its Statutes in English to the IPS Secretariat. The Statutes must be written in accordance with the Statutes and Internal Regulations of the IPS as well as according to association laws in the country concerned. The Statutes have to be approved by the Executive Board.

Contact persons

Each National Committee is asked to nominate a Chairman, a Vice Chair and a Secretary. Chairman and Vice Chair should reflect a balance between science and industry. Their addresses as well as an indication who will act as main contact person has to be submitted to the IPS Secretariat.

Membership

The membership of a National Committee should consist of a broad range of stakeholders in all issues connected to peat and peatlands, such as:

1. scientists, students, government representatives, researchers, staff of companies and all other persons interested in peat and peatlands (individual members) and
2. organisations dealing with peat and peatlands, e.g. non-government organisations, industrial associations, scientific organisations, companies, research offices etc. (corporate members)

National Committees should represent a good balance between science and industry, individual and corporate members as well as mirror the local importance and appearance of peat and peatlands.

It is recommended to organize the companies dealing with peat and peatlands in an industrial "peat producer's association", which, as a whole, becomes a member of the National Committee. The industrial association can also deal with industrial-only issues which may not be of interest to other members.

In the countries with a National Committee, all IPS members are member of the National Committee and vice versa. All membership applications are to be approved by the National Committee. In case the IPS

Secretariat receives membership applications from these countries, it will forward them to the National Committee.

Persons in a country without an IPS National Committee may apply for membership in the National Committee of a neighbouring country.

New National Committees will be asked to contact existing IPS members in their country to encourage them to apply for membership in the National Committee.

Membership categories and applications should follow IPS specimen. A complete list of members is issued every second year.

All National Committee members benefit IPS member status, its IPS publications, discounts on registration fees and other concessions.

Reporting and tasks

Strategic tasks

The National Committees are asked to:

- follow the Vision and Mission of IPS
- incorporate the IPS Strategic Plan and its objectives:
- be responsible to IPS members in matters relating to peat and peatlands
- provide communication, education, research support and advocacy in IPS members' business, scientific and environmental matters
- establish and/or enhance relationships with governmental, inter-governmental, and international organizations to influence matters directly or indirectly affecting peatlands and the use of peat and peatlands
- promote research into peatlands, peat and their utilization
- disseminate the information obtained
- communicate pro-actively with stakeholders within the membership and beyond
- provide the general public with information on the role of peatlands and peat in environment and economy, and their Wise Use
- promote partnerships in the interests of peat and peatlands
- obtain sufficient resources to achieve the IPS objectives

Operative rights and obligations

The National Committees have the right to:

- organize local events such as workshops, symposia and conferences for its members and other interested parties under the auspices of IPS
- participate and make decisions at the Annual Assembly of National Representatives
- nominate members of the Executive Board etc. (see Annual Assembly)
- participate actively in other events organised by IPS
- apply for the organisation of International Peat Congresses
- apply for the organization of Board Meetings and Annual Assemblies
- organize excursions, symposia and additional business meetings in connection with such events and seek sponsorship
- get regular information and publications from the IPS Secretariat

The National Committees are asked to:

- follow IPS Statutes and Internal Regulations
- submit a list of its members to the IPS Secretariat, including member categories, names, addresses, phone, fax, mobile numbers and e-mail addresses
- update the membership data continuously, at least annually in November
- distribute IPS publications, such as Peatlands International and Peat News to its members (the IPS Secretariat can take over this task on agreement)
- promote IPS to stakeholders in peat and peatland issues in its country

- enlarge the membership of the National Committee
- report annually on their activities to the IPS Secretariat, in January
- encourage members to participate in the work of IPS Commissions
- take part in National Committee Surveys
- pay National Committee and Industrial fees
- stay in regular contact with the IPS Secretariat

Fees

To enable IPS to carry out its tasks and to ensure the running of the IPS Secretariat, the National Committees are asked to pay the following annual fees (fee proposals for 2013):

1. National Committee fee of 1,386 euros basic fee plus 5,78 euro per member in case there are more than 30 members, according to the membership list of the IPS Secretariat on 31 December of the previous year, excluding IPS honorary members
2. Industrial Fee according to peat production and turnover in the country, which enables the representatives of the industry in its country to take part in the activities of Commission II, dealing with the industrial use of peat and peatlands

The National Committee Fees are determined in the Annual Assembly in May/June and invoiced immediately afterwards. Industrial fees are determined by the Executive Board and invoiced at the same time as National Committee fees to the National Committee Chair or a representative of an industrial association which is member of the National Committee.

The National Committees are authorized to collect membership fees from its members. These can be determined by the National Committee itself.

Honorary Members approved by the Executive Board have no membership fee obligations.

A single affiliation fee can be charged from a new National Committee on decision of the Annual Assembly by recommendation of the Executive Board. The Executive Board can exempt National Committees from payment of the annual membership fee for max. two years.

Annual Assembly of National Representatives

The Annual Assembly is the highest decision making organ of IPS. Each National Committee is allowed to send one official representative to the Annual Assembly. The official representative has to present a due proxy on the day before the Assembly.

Each representative has one vote. Most decisions in the Annual Assembly are made by a simple majority of votes. National Committees can send non-voting observers to the Annual Assembly.

Annual Assemblies are held not later than 30 June each year. The venue and date are determined by the IPS Executive Board following invitations of the National Committees.

Proposals to the Annual Assembly have to be submitted in writing four months before the Annual Assembly (usually in February). This includes new nominations for the Executive Board.

The agenda of the Annual Assembly is sent by post to each National Committee not later than 40 and not earlier than 60 days before the Assembly.

During an Annual Assembly, the National Representatives:

Ordinary items

- elect the chairman, secretary, two (2) scrutinizers of the minutes, and two (2) counters of votes
- approve the annual report, balance sheet and the Auditor's Report
- grant a discharge to the Executive Board and the Secretary General
- approve next year's plan of activities and budget
- determine affiliation fees and the membership fees of IPS on recommendation of the Executive Board
- elect one permanent Auditor and one substitute Auditor

- discuss on other matters and proposals taken up by the Executive Board or by the members of the Society if mentioned in the invitation

Extraordinary items

- elect the President and the Vice-Presidents every fourth year (year of an International Peat Congress)
- elect permanent Executive Board members every second year in place of retiring members
- determine the number of ordinary members on the Executive Board if mentioned in the invitation
- decide on the amendment of IPS Statutes if mentioned in the invitation
- decide on the location of the IPS Secretariat, if recommended by the Executive Board
- decide on the dissolution of IPS and the net balance if mentioned in the invitation
- authorize National Committees to organize an International Peat Congress on recommendation of the Executive Board and invitation by a National Committee four years in advance

Extraordinary Assemblies of National Representatives can be held if necessary.

Withdrawal

To withdraw from IPS membership, a National Committee can announce its withdrawal to the Executive Board, the IPS President or at the Annual Assembly. The withdrawal comes into force at the end of the calendar year.

The Executive Board holds the right to expel immediately any National Committee failing to abide the rules of IPS or damaging the interests of IPS. All members of the National Committee will be asked to join IPS as direct members in such a case.

Please note: These Guidelines are a summary of the Statutes and Internal Regulations of IPS and practical experience of the IPS Secretariat. Please note that they are meant as guideline only and not binding in case of an argument.

IPS Secretariat
Nisulankatun 78B
FIN-40720 Jyväskylä, Finland
Phone: +358 40 418 4075
E-mail: ips@peatlands.org
Web: www.peatlands.org