

# Strategic Plan of the International Peatland Society 2020-2024





IPS Strategic Plan 2020-2024  
International Peatland Society  
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# Foreword

Since its establishment in 1968, the International Peatland Society (IPS) has served the broad needs of peatland and peat stakeholders around the world, representing scientific, commercial and social interests. It has endeavoured to present and exchange balanced information on the extent, importance and use of this resource by facilitating dialogue and debate on its Wise Use and Responsible Management documents.

The IPS is registered in Finland with headquarter in Jyväskylä. The Annual Assembly of National Representatives is the ultimate decision-taking body. Routine management is undertaken by the Executive Board of elected members, supported by a Secretariat consisting of a Secretary General and Communications Manager.

The IPS Strategic Plan directs the work of the Society between quadrennial Congresses through a Scientific Advisory Board, Commissions and Expert Groups.

The IPS represents the combined strength of its members, partners and stakeholders, bringing together peatland scientists, universities and research centres, non-profit organizations, professionals from peat industry, governments, regulators, consumers of peat and peatland enthusiasts.

The IPS has over 1700 members from 42 countries, the majority of whom are affiliated to one of 17 IPS National Committees. For over 50 years the IPS has enabled peatland and peat scientists, managers and regulators to interface and share views.

Peatlands contain the world's largest terrestrial carbon stock and are key biotopes in the context of climate change mitigation and adaptation. As terrestrial wetland ecosystems, peatlands also deliver essential ecological services and natural resources that are important for local livelihoods, health, and water availability and management.

These properties must be balanced in economic, environmental and societal terms to achieve both the greenhouse gas emission targets of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and the UN SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Peatlands face immense challenges in the future, some of which are addressed in this Strategy.

The IPS serves all those involved in management of peatlands and peat through the acquisition, exchange, promotion, and communication of knowledge and experience, by means of communications, events and projects which address key issues, including climate change, biodiversity, and the need for responsible use and restoration.



Photo by Maksim Shutov

# Introduction

## Who we are

The International Peatland Society (IPS) is a non-governmental, non-profit multidisciplinary organisation dealing with peatlands and peat.

It respects the economic, social, and environmental values of peatlands.

The IPS will strive to be recognised by the international community and others as an impartial and knowledgeable organisation for the provision of science-based advice and knowledge on peatlands and peat.

## Vision

To be the leading international organisation promoting the responsible management and wise use of peatlands and peat.

## Mission

To serve all those involved in peat and peatlands through the promotion, gathering, exchange and communication of knowledge and experience, by means of events and projects which address key issues, in particular climate change and diversity.



Photo by Shane Rouge

# Strategic Goals, Actions & Objectives

## Strategic Goal 1: To acquire, assess, exchange and disseminate up-to-date information and knowledge

The IPS will continue to organise events, work with partners and stakeholders, participate in projects, and implement actions to promote this goal.

The IPS will focus on particular peatland themes. Key themes for 2020-2024 include climate change, restoration, agricultural use of peatlands and the role of peat and peatlands for food security and human well-being.

Under these themes, actions and tasks will be developed, implemented and monitored. The IPS will also collect data on important aspects of peatlands and peat and provide objective and scientific information.

### Measurable Objectives:

By definition, measurable objectives are goals that can be measured with a number. For an NGO like IPS, such measurable objectives are most likely related to e.g. outcome, revenue, cost or culture & communication.

- Projects implemented (e.g. questionnaire and data collection projects)
- Counselling and participation in dialogues with stakeholders, policy makers etc
- Published information (articles, reports, book)

### Actions

We will:

- A1/1 Direct IPS Expert Groups to respond to changing priorities, and undertake tasks identified by the Executive and Scientific Advisory Boards
- A1/2 Focus the forum of IPS experts to identify, discuss, prioritise, and take action on important and emerging cultural, scientific and economic issues to develop initiatives, partnerships and projects
- A1/3 Disseminate information to peatland managers, peat supply chain and growing media companies (including horticultural companies), and policy makers on the importance of peatlands and peat in climate change and food security
- A1/4 Organise events and lectures to inform, discuss and debate the importance of peatlands and peat GHG emissions in climate change processes
- A1/5 Encourage members to contribute articles to Peatlands International, Peatland Snippets and Website Blog
- A1/6 Update the Peatlands and Climate Change Book (2nd Edition to be completed by Autumn 2021)
- A1/7 Develop the IPS Concept 2050



## Strategic Goal 2: To participate in scientific programmes and projects and communicate the results

We will continue to encourage peatland and peat experts to collaborate in interdisciplinary events and projects. The IPS will, if appropriate, take a lead in obtaining funding and managing projects.

### Measurable Objectives:

- Evaluate project needs
- Establish project group(s)
- Applications for project funding
- Events organised/co-organised/participated
- UN Decade of restoration involvement

### Actions

We will:

- A2/1 Establish project planning group(s) to identify and take advantage of opportunities for research and development of emerging peatland and peat issues, prepare project proposals, and apply for funding
- A2/2 Participate in scientific events organized by third parties
- A2/3 Update continuously and improve the IPS website and its knowledge hub
- A2/4 Establish In collaboration with National Committees (NCs) and national peat associations, a workflow to receive and collate annual peatland and peat statistics
- A2/5 Commit to and become involved in the UN Decade on Ecological Restoration



Photo by Simon Fanger

## Strategic Goal 3: To improve governance of peatlands through involvement with International Conventions

The IPS will contribute to the better understanding and responsible management of peatlands, by forming partnerships with NGOs and other organisations related to all aspects of peatlands and peat, and liaising with international conventions, agencies, agreements, programmes and regional bodies.

Through our National Committees we will seek to establish dialogue with national and regional governments and their policy advisors.

### 3.1. Contribution to international policy making

The IPS will actively promote and contribute to the dialogue between stakeholders and decision makers by providing fact-based and balanced information at national and international levels.

### Measurable Objective:

The IPS will establish (by date) a mechanism to stimulate and monitor the provision of information to and contacts with policy makers and will solicit regular feedback from policy makers.

- Participation in dialogues with stakeholders, policy makers etc
- Event organised/co-organised/participated
- Published information (articles, reports)

### Actions

We will:

- A3.1/1 Engage with policy makers to determine the nature of the information on peatlands and peat needed to be incorporated in policy advice to decision makers
- A3.1/2 Organise briefing meetings, seminars and workshops with policy makers to

disseminate balanced information about the importance of the responsible management of peatlands and the wise use of peat

- A3.1/3 Participate in similar events organized by third parties
- A3.1/4 Establish, together with National Committees, a database of national/regional peatland strategies and policies
- A3.1/5 Hold peatland and peat policy meetings every second year in a focal country to which policy makers from that country should be invited

### 3.2. Establishment of partnerships

We will confirm and reinforce existing partnerships, and form new ones with organisations and institutes with similar objectives. The purpose of these partnerships is to undertake the sharing of information and views, discuss joint activities and prepare joint position papers. The IPS will attend key international conventions and related meetings.

#### Measurable Objectives:

The IPS will continue to participate at relevant international events and through the provision of joint position papers with appropriate partners. It will provide members and stakeholders with information on the work of international organisations and conventions relevant to peatlands and peat, and with reports on IPS attendance at meetings of these bodies.

- Convention & International Organisation events attended
- Other events (organised/co-organised/participated)
- Side-events organized/co-organized
- UN Decade of restoration involvement
- Published information (articles, reports)

#### Actions

We will:

- A3.2/1 Conclude, reaffirm or renew agreements with environmental NGOs, including IMCG, SWS, ISHS, Wetlands International, as well as with and peat industry stakeholders like CSPMA, GME and IVG, and forge new ones if necessary



- A3.2/2 Consolidate our relationships with international conventions, agencies and programmes (FAO/MICCA, GPI and Ramsar/STRP) and strengthen relationships with CBD, UNEP, UNFCCC and IPCC
- A3.2/3 Provide information to relevant international conventions and other organisations to promote responsible management of peatlands and wise use of peat.
- A3.2/4 Monitor the activities of international conventions, agencies and programmes and European Union agencies, Directorates and other bodies that have interests in or exert influence on aspects of peatland and peat. Provide reports on these activities to our members and principal stakeholders on an annual basis
- A3.2/5 Maintain an annual timetable of events and meetings of international and regional organisations and international NGO partners, highlighting those of importance on which IPS should be represented
- A3.2/6 Ensure a strong and active involvement of the IPS in the Global Peatlands Initiative (GPI) through regular communication and participation in GPI events
- A3.2/7 Organise and/or co-organise side-events at International Convention COPs, such as Ramsar, UNFCCC and CBD
- A3.2/8 Organise joint meetings every 1-2 years, between the IPS Executive Board and the Boards of Growing Media Europe (GME) and CSPMA to discuss and share views on the impact of national, regional and international rules, regulations and policies on the economics of peatland and peat management

# Strategic Goal 4: To strengthen services to members

## 4.1. Communication with members

The IPS will continue to develop a discourse with its members and stakeholders, provide IPS members with information on current developments as well as possibilities to meet other relevant stakeholders on peat and peatland issues in a safe and professional environment

### Measurable Objectives:

- Video/F2F meetings arranged
- Reports & feedback
- Published information (articles, reports)
- NC events organised/co-organised/participated

### Actions

We will:

- A4/1.1 Evaluate and adapt current IPS communications strategy to convey the Society's role in promoting the scientific, cultural and economic values of peatlands and peat
- A4/1.2 Investigate how to expand IPS membership beyond the current National Committees, especially in Africa and Central and South America
- A4/1.3 Encourage National Committees to organise local conferences and seminars
- A4/1.4 Encourage NCs to host a side event at each International Peatland Congress

## 4.2. Strengthening of membership

We will prepare a recruitment strategy to increase IPS membership and encourage National Committees to play a major role in its implementation.

### Measurable Objectives:

Increase membership in tropical and southern temperate peatland countries, such as Vietnam, Thailand, Congo, Peru, and Chile, as well as consolidate the membership of Eastern European

countries, including Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

- New NCs & members
- Involvement/participation in IPS or other peatland related event
- Published information (articles, reports)

### Actions

We will:

- A4/2.1 Launch a membership campaign in partnership with National Committees to recruit new individual, corporate, institute, NGO and student members
- A4/2.2 Contact and encourage individuals of these target groups to present the results of their research or related experiences of peatland management at IPS events
- A4/2.3 Provide terms of reference for National Committees, setting out their objectives, responsibilities, and tasks

## 4.3. Strengthening of funding

The funding model of the IPS needs to be updated.

### Measurable Objectives:

The Executive Board will establish a working group to review and evaluate current and future funding requirements to ensure IPS is sustainable.

- Video/F2F negotiation arranged
- Negotiation outcome
- Funding received

### Actions

We will:

- A4/3.1 Prepare a four-year NGO Business Plan that states what and who the IPS is, and what it does; defines target groups; reviews the current funding model, income and expenses, and determines minimum funds needed to implement the strategy
- A4/3.2 Determine future industry contributions in consultation with industry members
- A4/3.3 Initiate dialogue with NCs in order to review and adapt membership and fee structures
- A4/3.4 Evaluate alternative NGO funding

# Strategy

# Implementation

## Monitoring and Amendment

This is the fifth IPS Strategic Plan since 2004. The current Strategy (2016-2020) is being used as the baseline and is being adapted to prioritise current challenges by the Secretariat, Executive Board and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).

Discussions on the present Plan, and modifications to it, may continue throughout the remainder of 2020, including also National Committees. The Strategy will be presented to the General Assembly at IPC2021 in Tallinn.

The progress of implementation of the Plan will be monitored annually by the Executive Board. The Executive Board will carry out an in-depth

review of the 5th Strategic Plan at its midway point. It will report to the Annual Assembly that will be held at the 17th International Peatland Congress in China in 2024.

## IPS values

The IPS will implement this Strategy in Accordance with the following values:

### **Accountability and transparency**

IPS membership is open to everyone (individual and corporate) with an interest in any aspect of peatlands and peat. The Statutes and Regulations confirm our open structure of governance and the responsibilities these places upon members.

### **Professionalism and addressing members' needs**

We take a pride in providing services and running events to a high professional standard and advise members through communication on education, research and advocacy in matters related to their professional, scientific and environmental activities.

### **Impartiality and evidence based**

The IPS encourages divergent opinions to be expressed and discussed based on verifiable scientific data and information in an unbiased way.

### **Research and development**

The IPS promotes scientific research into peatlands and peat, development of state of the art technology, and best management practices in the achievement of responsible management and wise use, including for conservation and non-use, and to disseminate the information obtained.



Photo by Ivana Cajina

## Communications

We communicate positively within our membership and beyond, providing information on the role of peatlands and peat in the environment and the economy, and their wise use to society at large using traditional and electronic means.

## Contributing to public policy

The IPS cooperates with governmental, intergovernmental, and international organisations and provides them with impartial, science-

based information relevant to policies directly or indirectly affecting peatlands and peat and their use.

## Forging partnerships

The IPS has established partnerships with other NGOs, international conservation organisations and international conventions, agencies, agreements and programmes to enhance the knowledge of, discussion on and understanding of the importance and vital role of peatlands and peat in global environmental systems.

# Acronyms

AA	Annual Assembly of the IPS	IPC	International Peatland Congress
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
COP	Conference of the Parties	IT	Information Technology
CSPMA	Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association	IPS	International Peatland Society
EB	Executive Board	ISHS	International Society for Horticultural Science
EG	Expert Group	IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
EU	European Union	IVG	Industrieverband Garten e.V.
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	MICCA	Mitigation of Climate Change in Agriculture (FAO)
F2F	Face-to-Face	NC	National Committee
GLF	Global Landscapes Forum	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
GME	Growing Media Europe	SAB	Scientific Advisory Board
GPI	Global Peatlands Initiative	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
IMCG	International Mire Conservation Group	SER	Society for Ecological Restoration
		SG	Secretary General
		SRPM	Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management
		STRP	Scientific and Technical Review Panel (Ramsar Convention)
		SWS	Society of Wetland Scientists
		UN	United Nations
		UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
		UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
		UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
		WI	Wetlands International



Photo by Stefan Sidén