

Strategic Plan of the International Peatland Society 2024-2028

Agreed 12 December 2023 EB 138, formally approved by 3 January 2024.

Who we are

The International Peatland Society (IPS) serves the broad needs of peatland and peat stakeholders worldwide, representing scientific, commercial and social interests. It has endeavoured to acquire, present and exchange verifiable information on their extent, importance and use by facilitating dialogue and debate.



The IPS combines the strength of its members, partners and stakeholders, bringing together peatland scientists, universities and research centres, non-profit organisations and representatives of the peat and substrate industry, governments, regulators, consumers of peat and peatland enthusiasts in its publications, and at meetings.

The IPS was established in 1968. It is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation registered in Finland with headquarters in Jyväskylä. The Annual Assembly of National Representatives is the ultimate decision-making body. The Society is managed by an Executive Board of elected members, supported by a Secretariat consisting of a Secretary General and the Scientific Officer.

The IPS Strategic Plan guides the work of the Society between quadrennial Congresses through its National Committees, Scientific Advisory Board, Commissions and Expert Groups.

The IPS has over 1500 members from 37 countries, the majority of whom are affiliated to one of 16 IPS National Committees. For over 55 years, the IPS has enabled peatland and peat experts to interface and share views.

Raison d'être (reason for being)

Continuous and urgent need for factual, scientific and technical information on peatlands and peat from a transboundary perspective.

Vision

To continue to be the leading international organisation promoting the responsible management and wise use of peatlands and peat and providing a platform for unbiased information exchange.

Mission

To acquire, assess, exchange and communicate knowledge and experience on peatlands and peat, by means of events, publications and projects which address key issues, in particular climate change, food security, biodiversity, and restoration.

Goals, actions and objectives

Strategic Goal 1: INFORMATION

To acquire, assess, exchange and disseminate information and knowledge.

The IPS will, through its Secretariat, National Committees, Commissions and Expert Groups, continue to organise events, collect data, work with partners and stakeholders, participate in projects, publish reports and implement other actions to provide scientific and other relevant information on peatlands and peat to its membership and beyond.

Actions

We shall:

- Disseminate general information on peatlands and peat to the IPS membership and beyond.
- Encourage IPS members to develop initiatives, partnerships, events and projects on important and emerging scientific, economic and cultural issues.
- Encourage members and stakeholders to contribute articles to Peatlands International, Peatland Snippets, the Science Wire, Mires and Peat, the IPS Blog and the website.
- Inform peatland and peat industry value chain managers as well as policymakers on the importance of peatlands and peat in climate change and food security.
- Develop and use the IPS Concept 2050 and support the industry towards the requirements of 2030-2050 legislation with regard to climate, biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals.

Measurable Objectives:

- International Peatland Congresses every 4 years.
- Annual meeting combined with a seminar once a year. 4 issues of member magazine/year. Regular issues of Mires and Peat. 12 issues of general newsletter/year. 12 issues of scientific newsletter/year. Blog contribution 1/month.
- One event per Commission and one per National Committee per year, online or virtually.
- National peat extraction and other relevant statistics at least once a year.

Strategic Goal 2: MEMBERS

To provide membership services, attract new members and continue to foster a professional discourse on peat and peatland matters.

The IPS will, through its Secretariat, National Committees, Commissions and Expert Groups provide IPS value and the opportunity to contribute to different activities in peat and peatlands matters.

Actions

We shall:

- Review and update membership services for each member category.

- Require National Committees to organise regular local conferences, excursions and seminars.
- Encourage National Committees to host side events at IPS conferences.
- Lead an international membership campaign.
- Engage young persons within IPS.

Measurable Objectives:

- National Committee Round Table at least once a year.
- Face-to-Face meeting for members once a year in connection with the Annual Assembly.
- National Committee and Commission events at least once a year/group.
- Annual member survey and dissemination of results.
- Review of communication tools and strategy.
- Increasing number of new members, reduction of leaving members.

Strategic Goal 3: INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

To improve governance of peatlands through involvement with International Conventions, Agencies, Agreements, Partnerships and Programmes

The IPS will contribute to the better understanding and responsible management of peatlands, by liaising with international conventions, agencies, agreements, programmes and regional bodies.

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.

Actions

We shall:

- Consolidate our relationships with international conventions, agencies and programmes and strengthen cooperation, especially with the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (Scientific and Technical Review Panel), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the Global Peatlands Initiative, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the United Nations Environment Programme.
- Continue to engage with policy makers to provide information on the nature and importance of peatlands and peat.
- Provide advice to international conventions and other organisations on responsible management of peatlands and wise use of peat.
- 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.
- Support relevant side-events at international conventions' Conferences of the Parties.

Measurable Objectives:

- Number of convention & international organisation events attended, 3-5 year.
- Side-events organized/co-organized.
- Two reports on convention activity in Peatlands International/year; regular updates in IPS' publications.
- Meetings with relevant non-government organisation/convention/government persons, preferably annually.
- Statements on policy papers, book reviews and event manifests.
- Publications sent to decision makers and conventions.

Strategic Goal 4: PARTICIPATION

To participate in international and regional scientific programmes and projects and communicate the results

We shall continue encouraging peatland and peat experts to collaborate in interdisciplinary events and projects. The IPS should, on a case-to-case basis, take a lead in obtaining funding and managing projects.

Actions

We shall:

- Involve Commissions, Expert Groups and National Committees in international projects on behalf of the IPS.
- Participate in scientific events organised by third parties, speak on behalf of IPS and report the results.
- Identify knowledge gaps for which projects could be implemented.
- Take advantage of opportunities for research and development of emerging peatland and peat issues, prepare project proposals, and apply for funding.

Measurable Objectives:

- Number and impact of projects carried out.
- To cooperate with three events of related organisations each year.
- Funding obtained via projects.

Strategic Goal 5: PARTNERSHIPS

To engage with partners to achieve common goals and enlarge networks

We shall renew existing partnerships and forge 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.

Actions

We shall:

- Conclude, reaffirm or renew agreements with other non-governmental organisations, including the International Mire Conservation Group, the Society for Ecological Restoration, the Society of Wetland Scientists, the International Society for Horticultural Science, Wetlands International, the Global Peatlands Initiative; and with the peat industry stakeholders Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association, Growing Media Europe and Industrieverband Garten, and forge new ones if appropriate.
- Maintain an annual timetable of events and meetings of international and regional organisations and international partners, highlighting those of importance at which IPS should be represented.
- Organise joint meetings between the IPS Executive Board and the Boards of Growing Media Europe and the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association to discuss and share views on the impact of national, regional and international rules, regulations and policies.

Measurable Objectives:

- Number and quality of joint meetings.
- Number and quality of joint position papers, e.g. 1-2 a year.
- Improving of funding and perception of the IPS as expert body.

Strategic Goal 6: NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

To increase IPS engagement at national level within the membership and beyond

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

Actions

We shall:

- Organise, with the help of Commissions and National Committees, briefing meetings, excursions, seminars and workshops to inform policy makers and disseminate information about the importance of the responsible management of peatlands and the wise use of peat.
- Participate in national and local events related to peat and peatlands organized by third parties.
- Maintain, together with National Committees, a database of national/regional peatland strategies and policies.
- Hold peatland and peat policy meetings every year in a focal country to which policy makers from that country should be invited.

Measurable Objectives:

- Two to three local meetings a year, hosted by a National Committee (spring/summer/autumn).
- Database on peatland strategies on IPS website.
- Increase of National Committee membership figures and commitment.

Strategic Goal 7: FUNDING

The funding model of the Society will be constantly developed and stabilised.

Actions

We shall:

- Update the four-year IPS NGO Business Plan.
- Maintain a task force within the Executive Board to ensure stable funding.
- Determine future industry contributions in consultation with industry members and ensure commitment.
- Continue dialogue with National Committees in order to review and adapt membership and fee structures.
- Seek alternative and additional funding.

Measurable Objectives:

- Funding of €200,000 annually secured to employ a minimum of 1.5 persons.
- Funding more evenly shared between industry and other stakeholders.
- Ensuring payment of membership fees within the membership year.

Strategy Implementation

Monitoring and Amendment

This is the 6th IPS Strategic Plan since 2004. The previous Strategy (2020-2024) was used as the baseline and has been adapted to prioritise current and emerging challenges by the Secretariat, Executive Board and Scientific Advisory Board.

The Strategy will be presented to, and ratified by, the Annual Assembly at the 17th International Peatland Congress in Taizhou, China in August 2024.

- The progress of implementation of the Strategy will be monitored annually by the Executive Board.
- The Executive Board will carry out an in-depth review of the 6th Strategic Plan at its midway point in 2026.
- The Executive Board will report to the Annual Assembly that will be held at the 18th International Peatland Congress in 2028.

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 Internal Regulations confirm our open structure of governance and the responsibilities these place upon members.

Professionalism and addressing members' needs

IPS takes pride in providing services and running events to a high professional standard and advising 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.

Jyväskylä, December 2023

We warmly thank all members and partners for their support.

The Executive Board