

INTERNATIONAL PEAT SOCIETY

- A scientific and technical organization for the study of peatlands and peat -

PRESS RELEASE

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Global Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management Launched

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The [International Peat Society](#) (IPS) is launching a 'Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management', which for the first time defines objectives and actions for the conservation, management and rehabilitation of mires and peatlands globally, based on the principles of Wise Use.

According to the Strategy, peatland management includes organising, controlling, regulating and utilising peatland and peat for specific purposes, which should be appropriate to the peatland type and use while respecting cultural, environmental, and socio-economic conditions.

Donal Clarke, President of the IPS, explains: "The Strategy is applicable to all types of peatland under every use – including non-use – and it is directed to everyone responsible for or involved in the management of peatlands, or in the peat supply chain."



Donal Clarke, IPS President

The Strategy was formulated during a two-year consultation and discussion process facilitated by IPS and involving a broad range of mire, peat and peatland stakeholders. These included scientific experts from a range of peatland interests, peatland managers, private sector companies and other environmental NGOs.



Peatlands cover 3% of the Earth's land surface.

Conservation, Economic Use and Rehabilitation Combined

IPS President Donal Clarke emphasises that "the overall purpose of the Strategy is to improve standards and increase knowledge of responsible peatland management. The principal aims are, among others, to ensure that high conservation value peatlands are identified and conserved, utilised peatlands are managed responsibly and drained or otherwise degraded peatlands are rehabilitated to reinstate as many ecological and landscape functions as possible."

In order to implement the Strategy, and thereby promote responsible peatland management, it is

recommended priority is given to: biodiversity, hydrology and water regulation, climate and climate change processes, economic activities, after-use, rehabilitation and restoration, human and institutional capacity and information dissemination and engagement of local people and good governance.

For each of these priorities the Strategy sets out key objectives and specific actions.

400 Million Hectares of Peatlands on Earth

Globally, peatlands cover an area of 4 million square kilometres in 180 countries, which equals 3% of the Earth's land surface. The majority of the global peatlands (3.4 mill km²) are still in a near natural condition, are valuable habitats for wildlife and biodiversity and many are managed as nature reserves.

The largest uses of peatlands has been for agriculture (300,000 km²), forestry (150,000 km²), growing media production (2,000 km²) and energy generation (2,000 km²), mostly in the northern hemisphere. Around 120,000 km² have been drained in tropical regions for a variety of purposes, but especially for plantations of oil palm and paper pulp trees.

The International Peat Society

The [International Peat Society](http://www.peatsociety.org) (IPS) is a non-governmental, non-profit multidisciplinary organisation of scientific, industrial and regulatory members. It aims at bringing people and organisations together to foster the advancement, exchange and communication of scientific, technical, cultural, social and economic knowledge of all aspects of peatlands and peat.



The majority of global peatlands is still in a near natural condition.



Around 120,000 km² of peat swamp forest have been drained in tropical regions.

To achieve its goals, the IPS organises conferences, symposia and workshops, nationally, regionally and internationally, and publishes research results. The IPS has 1400 members in 29 countries, with National committees in 19 countries in Europe, North American and Asia. Its headquarters is located in Jyväskylä, Finland.

The Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management is available in English at <http://www.peatsociety.org> or can be ordered as printed copy from the IPS.

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