

Global Peatlands Assessment (GPA): The State of the World's Peatlands – Evidence for action toward peatlands conservation, restoration, and sustainable management

Process update Apr 2022

The Assessment

- Drawing on the best available science, the assessment will produce a global overview of the current state, extent, governance, and ecosystem services of peatlands and of the drivers of peatland ecosystem change. Each UN region will have its own section identifying hotspots of value, change and case studies of management responses.
- The assessment will show how peatland conservation, restoration, and sustainable use can offer a triple win for the climate, people, and biodiversity. It aims to help decision makers to define interventions and to plan for sustainable peatland management and to mobilize and inspire peatlands conservation and restoration action at scale.
- The GPA also addresses the urgency of more general definitions for peat and peatland and takes an interdisciplinary approach to make use of the best science and available data to develop improved peatland probability distribution maps.
- It will be a digital-first assessment, with the bulk of the information presented through storymaps and factsheets. A printed Summary for Policymakers will also be prepared.
- The assessment will provide a crucial baseline for future global peatlands assessments and as a basis for work towards a future Global Peatlands Inventory, illustrating the coordinated efforts of UNEP and the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention as requested by the [fourth United Nations Environment Assembly \(UNEA-4\) Resolution on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Peatlands \(4/16\)](#) (15 March 2019).
- The assessment is a flagship product of the [Global Peatlands Initiative](#) (GPI). Together with other GPI flagship products, such as the Global Peatland Map and the Global Hotspot Atlas of Peatlands, the assessment is part of the GPI's mission of supporting countries to address the challenges they face due to peatland degradation and loss.

The GPA process and the current stage

- The assessment is coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) on behalf of GPI. Its development is supported by a team that includes the UNEP Biodiversity, People and Landscapes Unit, the Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
- The assessment process is inspired by the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\) Guide for Production of Assessments](#). Its four stages are: (1) Preparatory stage – definition and approval of scope and partnerships; (2) Assessment stage – author nomination and development of the

assessment (main report and summary for policy makers - SPM) through three author meetings; (3) Approval stage – approval of final assessment report and SPM; and (4) Outreach stage – dissemination of the main findings.

- The concept and process of the GPA were approved by the GPI Steering Committee in February 2021, and presented to the public at the Peatland Pavilion during the UNFCCC COP26 (November 2021). The Global Peatland Map version 2.0 was also launched during the same session, improving the base knowledge on the extent of peatlands.
- The Coordinating Lead Authors (CLAs) were chosen in the first half of 2021, following nomination of authors by GPI partners and expressions of interest received through an open call for researchers. Thirty CLAs from all around the world are currently participating to coordinate the different chapters of the assessment, which will be divided in Global Chapters (focused on Peatland Extent, Status, Policy Context, Actions, and Recommendations), and Regional Chapters (including Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Oceania).
- During the First Author’s Meeting (September 2021), CLAs have worked to harmonize different global perspectives into a common overall goal, which is to bring together the best available evidence to improve the sustainable management of peatlands. The assessment process, sources of information, overall outline and collaborative work procedures were agreed.
- The selection of Contributing Authors (CA) has been made throughout the last quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022.
- The authors in each chapter are developing the first-order draft of the main report. They are being supported by a team of Contributing Authors (CAs) in the development of the different drafts. The Second Author Meeting will take place in Q2 2022 with the aim of developing a second order draft. The final draft of the GPA is expected to be concluded by the end of 2022.
- The contributors to the GPA have a diverse geographical representation, gender balance, and cover different areas of expertise in peatlands, making it an effective global assessment that fills the knowledge and research gaps identified.

The Ask/Action

- The Global Peatland Map 2.0 and Global Hotspot Atlas developed by GMC are crucial to the assessment. There is a current open call for additional spatial data to improve the Global Peatland Map, with all authors invited to share additional maps, layers, and datasets. Outreach to other scientists and other key stakeholders is underway.
- The GPA Development Team, through UNEP and the Ramsar Secretariat, will be reaching out to member states, to identify focal points that can provide an update on mapping as well as policy progress related to peatlands.
- If you have peatland/organic soil data that can be shared to improve the GPA or other relevant sources of information on peatlands, please kindly inform the GPA Development Team (focal point: Raquel Agra, raquel.agra@unep-wcmc.org).