

3 Years On: Reflections, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead



Photo by Axel Fassio/CIFOR

This report by the Interim Secretariat of the **International Tropical Peatlands Center** (ITPC) covers activities from the launch of the Center in Jakarta on 30 October 2018 until the end of December 2021.

A growing global network

The ITPC was formed in October 2018, following the historic Brazzaville Declaration to promote better management and conservation of tropical peatlands. The Center is the product of collaboration between the governments of Indonesia, the Republic of Congo (RoC), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Peru.

It is supported by a number of international organizations, the **Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)**; the **Global Peatlands Initiative (GPI)** of the **UN Environment**; and the **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**.

In February 2019, an interim secretariat was opened in Bogor, Indonesia, where it is hosted by the Indonesian government, coordinated by the Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF), and assisted by CIFOR.

CIFOR plays a significant role in supporting and implementing ITPC's communication strategy, including building collaborative international relationships by connecting different stakeholders through outreach and engagement.

Since its inception, the Center has been steadily growing its reach and profile. It has created a truly global and diverse network of experts who care deeply about protecting and promoting efforts to conserve and sustainably manage peatlands throughout Southeast Asia, the Congo Basin and Peru. There are currently over 1500 experts listed in the [ITPC directory](#), including researchers, scientists, policymakers, and more.

The Center is making consistent progress toward fulfilling its designated role as a go-to space for South-South cooperation, by convening international scientific events and disseminating scientific research on tropical peatland management for sustainable development.

The ITPC has also boosted the significance of peatlands in member countries' national agendas, particularly in terms of their importance as part of nationally-determined contributions to the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Photo by Ahtziri Gonzalez/CIFOR

Key achievements

Since its inception, ITPC – in collaboration with other partners – has convened and engaged in many global events and international forums in its efforts to promote conservation and sustainable management of tropical peatlands, including the UNFCCC's COP25 and COP26, the Ramsar Convention's 57th Standing Committee meeting, and the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4), among many others.

At UNEA-4, ITPC was mentioned in the first-ever global **Resolution on Conservation and**

Sustainable Management of Peatlands as an example of an institution making positive inroads into the important work of enabling inter-disciplinary research, knowledge exchange, capacity development, and enhanced cooperation among stakeholders to achieve effective conservation, restoration and sustainable management of peatlands worldwide. A preliminary report, **Progress and the way forward**, which covers the center's first year of operation, was published in December 2019.

Peru formally joins the ITPC

The Ministry of Environment of Peru (MINAM) declared the country's commitment to join the ITPC on 5 July 2021. The announcement took place during the fourth meeting of the Global Peatlands Initiative Partners, which was organized by MINAM and UNEP and included ministers and/or their representatives from Indonesia, DRC, RoC, and Peru.


The decision aligns with Peru's intention to protect and restore its peatlands to combat climate change, protect nature and promote sustainable development. The country has

recognized the importance of peatlands in national legislation through a Supreme Decree, and has begun mapping them.

At the high-level ministerial dialogue, Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Minister, Siti Nurbaya, officially welcomed Peru to the ITPC family. Following this announcement, the governments of Indonesia and Peru are in the process of formalizing the MoU on Peru's participation.



<https://bit.ly/3rmLbvU>

An aerial photograph showing a vast landscape. The majority of the area is covered in dense, vibrant green forest. A significant portion of the forest has been cleared, revealing a dark, brown, and uneven surface, which is characteristic of peatland. The cleared area is roughly rectangular and occupies the central-right portion of the image. A small, light-colored structure or clearing is visible within the forest on the left side, near the edge of the cleared area.

"We need a strategy to manage the peat outside of protected areas. Collaboration and exchange of information between the four nations about better practices and management, knowledge and strategies for funding should engage all stakeholders — public and private — and strengthen the capacity of peatland monitoring."

José Alvarez Alonso, Director General of Biological Diversity MINAM, Peru

Photo by Nanang Sujana/CIFOR

Peatland Knowledge Portal

The **Peatland Knowledge Portal** was soft launched in July 2021, and serves as an access point for finding and sharing information and knowledge on tropical peatlands all over the world. It aims to list, capture, and showcase all relevant and publicly-available knowledge relating to peatland information, in the service of knowledge exchange, capacity building, awareness-raising, new knowledge creation, and as media for a community of practice. The Portal is designed to help knowledge users such as researchers, academics, policymakers, students, and members of the public seeking reliable data to build and boost their own analyses for their own needs; and to assist knowledge providers such as research organizations, government agencies and private organizations to disseminate policy and best practice experience on sustainable tropical peatland management.

The site currently features a catalog; a knowledge repository of outputs and activities related to peatland information, including publications, datasets, audio/video, photos, presentations, blogs, news, and projects; and an expert directory, which provides profiles of subject experts, links to their works available online, and tools to enable users to reach out to them. Further developments to the portal will be put in place during 2022 (see Opportunities section.)



<https://bit.ly/3xDDbYr>



<https://bit.ly/3xDDmTB>

Collections

Publication



861
[2003-2021]

Media Hits



284
[2008-2021]

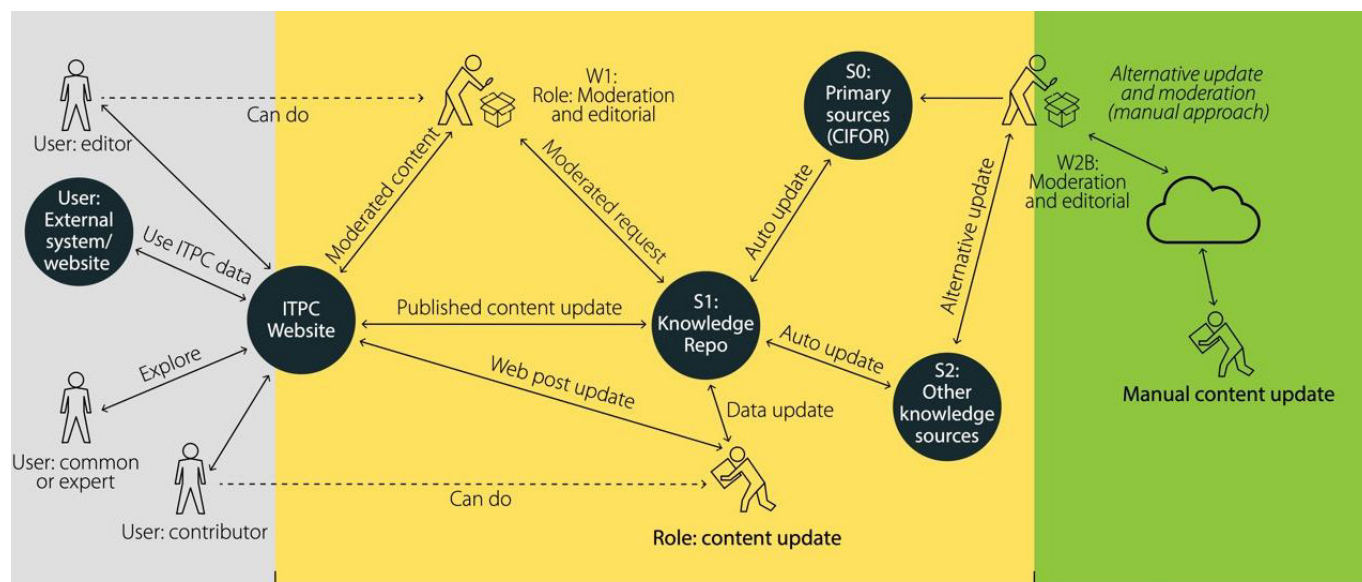
Experts by affiliation

- University of Birmingham
- Carleton University
- Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB)
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory
- Université Laval
- University of York
- Peatland Restoration Agency
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia
- Wageningen University, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
- Natural Resources Institute Finland
- Kyoto University
- University of Waterloo
- University of Alberta
- University of Leicester
- University of Exeter
- University of Nottingham
- University of Palangka Raya
- Tanjungpura University
- University of Helsinki
- Hokkaido University
- University of Leeds
- Center for International Forestry Research
- Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan Indonesia

1.070
affiliations

ITPC Knowledge Portal

Inter platform and people interactions



Who are the users?

What and how the platform are interconnected?
How to manage the content updates?

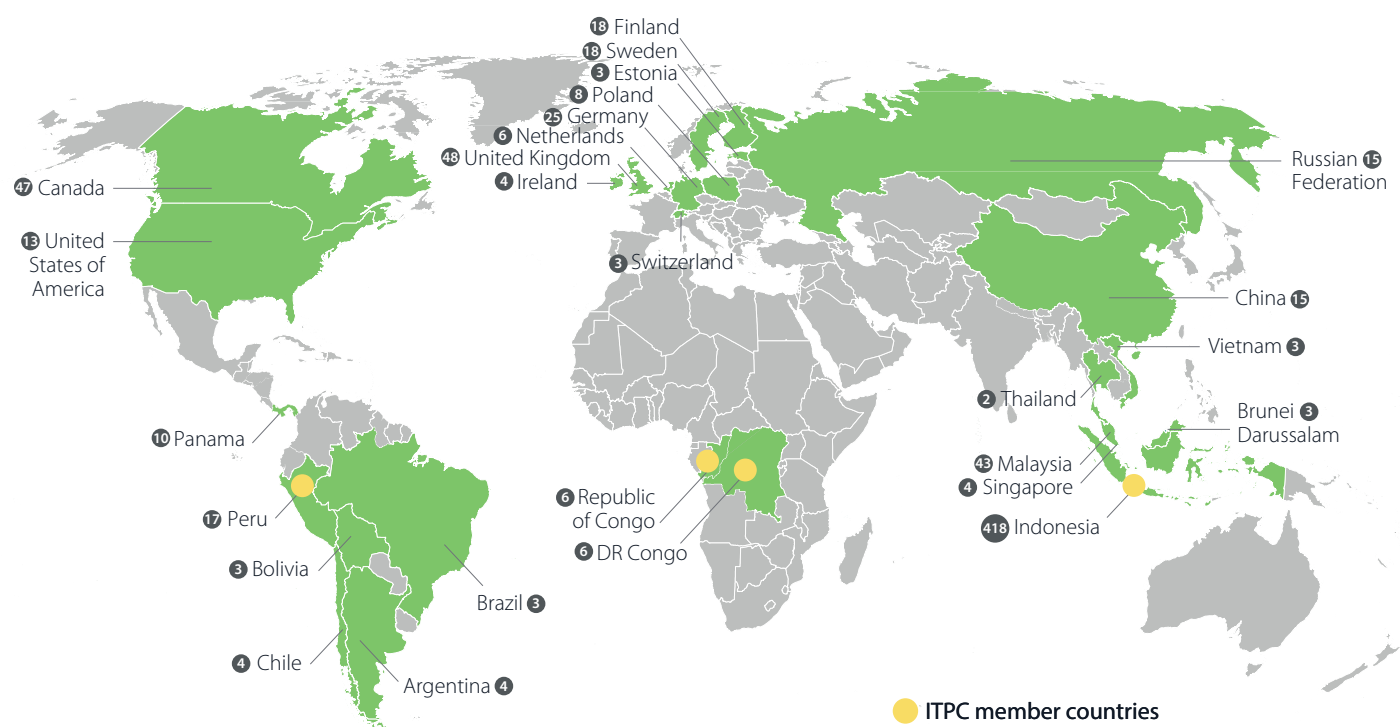
Alternative workflow:
how the updates are managed
when partners can not afford

This diagram illustrates how people use the knowledge portal and how the portal platform interacts with other platforms

The architecture

Knowledge Repository	Expert Directory	Collaborative Platform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repository of all outputs and activities related to the peatland information Covers metadata on publication, datasets, audio/video, photos, presentation, blog and news and also projects related to the peatlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject expert database providing profile of the expert and links to their works available online Expertise groups per subject and sub subject, classified and index to enable the retrieval Act similiar as LinkedIn, but on specific subject Tool to enable people to reach out to the experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community of Practices forum Maintain log of discussion for future reference Acces privileges Tools to enable people to discuss, consult and share information, ideas and thoughts

Experts by country origin






"We're building up a centre of excellence to share knowledge about managing tropical peatlands: researchers, scientists, practitioners, policymakers and others come together to work on peatland issues."

*Alue Dohong, Vice Minister,
Ministry of Environment
and Forestry, Indonesia*

Photo by Nanang Sujana/CIFOR

Key events





"Through systematic partnerships and the exchange of experiences, knowledge, and best practices, the ITPC has been successfully promoting the conservation of peatlands in the Global South, strengthening South-South Cooperation and raising the ambitious commitments of rich-peatland countries to protect these valuable ecosystems and address climate change. While the GPI encourages other governments and organizations to recognize the important role of peatlands worldwide, we envision Indonesia, Republic of Congo, DRC, and Peru setting an example for more countries to join the ITPC."

————— *Dianna Kopansky, Coordinator Global Peatlands Initiative,
UN Environment*

Photo by Nanang Sujana/CIFOR

National and International Forums

During the 2018-19 period, the ITPC participated in 11 major international forums (which are listed in detail in the 2019 report). Over the following two years, this high level of outreach and involvement in key events has continued – despite the notable challenges incurred by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the cancellation of a scheduled knowledge-sharing field trip for technical officials of ITPC member countries in 2020, and the migration online of many other events.

In April 2020, ITPC was a co-host of an online workshop, **‘Capacity Building on the IPCC 2013 Wetlands Supplement, FREL Diagnostic and Uncertainty Analysis’**. The event aimed to build capacity amongst Indonesian government officials to improve and develop Forest Reference Emission Levels (FREL) for the country’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change, specifically in terms of improving accounting for peatlands and mangroves.

In June of that year, the ITPC led a session at the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) Bonn Digital Conference entitled **‘Why Peatlands Matter for Food Security’**. The session shared lessons learned from ITPC partner countries, highlighting how healthy peatlands not only provide critical habitats for biodiversity, but also provide vital ecosystem services, including cleaning and storing water, and climate regulation, and support food security and livelihoods for many communities.

Then, in September 2020, the Center hosted an online workshop series, **‘Exploring Criteria and Indicators for Tropical Peatland Restoration’**, which facilitated the process of developing scientifically robust, reliable and practical criteria and indicators (C&I) to assess the progress and outcome of restoration efforts, and in so doing

allowing for restoration targets to be adequately quantified, and success measured.

The following month, in October 2020, ITPC participated in a session at the GLF Biodiversity Digital Conference, entitled **‘Peatlands, a Super Nature Based Solution – home and refuge for unique and threatened biodiversity’**. The session took the form of a virtual ‘world tour’, providing examples and sharing experiences and strategies, while highlighting the important role that partnerships can play in safeguarding peatlands’ critical biodiversity.

In January of 2021, the Center collaborated with the FAO and partners under the Global Peatland Initiative project to host another online workshop, **‘Peatland management and wet livelihood opportunities in Indonesia’**. The workshop aimed to support Indonesia’s efforts to integrate peatland considerations into relevant national planning and policy processes, including options for conservation, protection, restoration, sustainable use, and their monitoring.

Next, a **‘Virtual High-Level Ministerial Dialogue: Peatlands, a super nature-based solution’**, was held in July 2021. The event included representatives from Peru, RoC, DRC, and Indonesia, who explored the critical role that peatlands can play in securing livelihoods and regulating climate, and addressed the opportunities for South-South cooperation and how the exchange of knowledge, ideas and tools can benefit tropical peatland nations.

In November 2021, the ITPC made its presence known at COP26 in Glasgow, with several presentations at the Indonesia pavilion. The first, entitled **‘Knowledge platform fits for all: An all-in-one solution to exchange information on tropical peatlands’**, shared

information and raised awareness about its recently-launched Peatland Knowledge Portal. The second, **‘Managing C-rich Peatlands: from Research to Policy and Action’**, worked to facilitate dialogue between policy makers and scientific communities to improve the flow of information, and link scientifically sound policies to appropriate actions by practitioners in curbing climate change while enhancing local livelihoods. The third, **‘South-South Cooperation and lessons learned from Indonesia: corrective actions on its national agenda’**, opened dialogue about the lessons learned from Indonesia on how to govern peatlands to ensure sustainable ecosystems, and explored the similarities, differences and adaptations needed for sustainable peatland management policies in RoC, DRC, and Peru.

The ITPC has several presentations scheduled for the upcoming World Forestry Congress in May 2022: namely, **‘In the line of peatland restoration in SE Asia: Challenges and opportunities’** on May 2nd; **‘Can bioenergy from degraded peatlands provide a potential alternative to meet growing energy demands? Lessons learned from Indonesia’** on May 4th; and **‘Could a virtual collaborative platform help preserve tropical peatlands?’** on May 5.

Looking forward, the ITPC will continue to be involved in important global events focused on landscape issues and climate change, such as upcoming GLF conferences and COP meetings, among others.

Opportunities

The ITPC is continuing to develop its interdisciplinary and integrated research network, which is focused on advancing sustainable management of peatlands, with the governments of Indonesia, Peru, DRC, and RoC, and with research institutes such as the **Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC)**.

A number of countries, projects, and organizations have also expressed interest in collaborating with the ITPC. At the national level, these include Japan's International Forestry Cooperation Office at the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, and the Singaporean Embassy, among others. In terms of projects, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is seeking to collaborate with ITPC on the Measurable Action for Haze-Free Southeast Asia (MAHFSA) project, as well as its Technical Assistance and Knowledge Exchange for Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems project, which looks at facilitating knowledge exchange on sustainable peatland management within ASEAN and with the Congo

Basin countries. There has also been outreach by organizations such as Indonesia's Peatland and Mangrove Restoration Agency (BRGM); Climate Change Africa Opportunities (CCAO); the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI); as well as academic institutions such as the Peruvian National Agrarian University La Molina, and civil society groups such as the Kibengo Youths Care Activists collective in Uganda.

As the ITPC's connections and profile expands, the Knowledge Portal is also continuing to develop, and in 2022 it will enter its third phase, involving several new features. Firstly, the Expert Directory will be updated to allow users to add their own information. Also, a Discussion Platform will be launched, which will enable users to collaborate and connect more effectively – it is hoped that this development will facilitate discussions on how to improve existing content, and help initiate the process of new knowledge creation. Ongoing maintenance of the Knowledge Platform will also occur, specifically through content management and curation

Gray bentet (Lanius schach) is one type of bird commonly found in the Padang Sugihan Wildlife Reserve - Sebokor.
Photo by Rifky/CIFOR

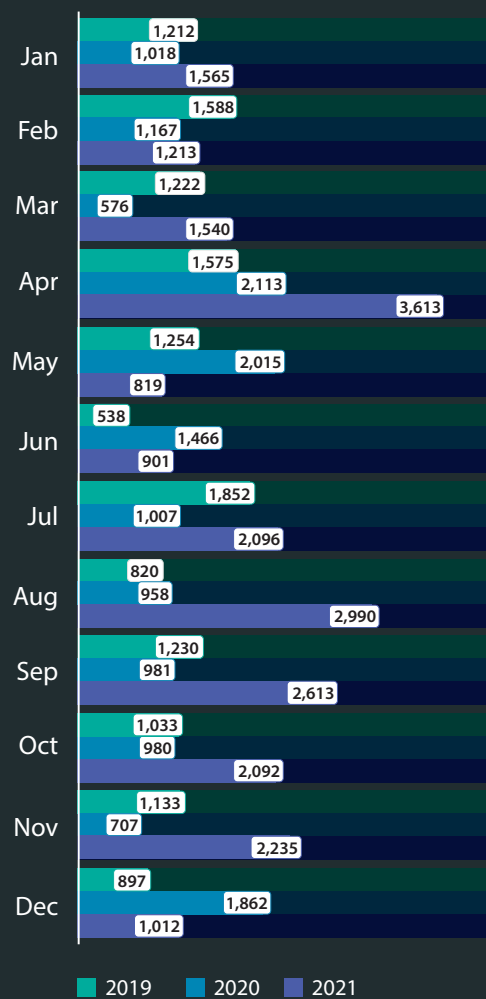


All time pageviews

User by country



Monthly Pageviews



Source: ITPC website





Ministry of Environment and Forestry
Republic of Indonesia



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ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT



Ministère de l'Environnement
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The International Tropical Peatlands Center is a multi-stakeholder cooperation and collaboration. All of its member countries will each provide input in contributing to its development.