International Workshop

Exploring Synergies for Peatlands –
Detecting and enhancing the global importance of peatlands in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

International Academy for Nature Conservation Isle of Vilm,

21th – 25th May 2019

Workshop report

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1. Executive summary

In response to various international resolutions and decisions[1] that call for cooperation on peatland conservation, restoration and wise use, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) invited the Secretariats of relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) - the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD, CMS/AEWA, Water Convention – as well as contracting parties, international organisations and peatland experts[2] to a workshop at its International Academy for Nature Conservation. **The objective of the meeting was to explore existing and potential synergies and opportunities for joint activities to safeguard the multiple ecosystem services of peatlands. Besides, a road map was sketch that identified entry points for enhanced collaboration and the creation of future synergies**.

Recent **assessments and reports**[3] confirm the huge importance of peatlands for the maintenance of global environmental integrity including services related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Therefore, peatland ecosystem services need to be taken into account at all levels of decision-making, and synergies should be realized with respect to policy development and implementation, strategic planning, and local activities for safeguarding and managing peatlands wisely.

The workshop identified gaps and opportunities for synergies in the fields of **information, policies** and **implementation** and elaborated a matrix of activities with priority for collaboration.

Information

1. The scope of **information** on peatlands (e.g. to be used by IPCC and IPBES) can be improved by contributions from specialised networks and organisations. The need to integrate indigenous knowledge on peatlands in a fair manner was highlighted. Specifically, the clear lack of expertise and information on hydrological aspects of peatlands in many thematic and geographical spheres was stressed.

Policies

2. **Policies** related to peatlands are in numerous instances contradictory at different levels and between sectors by either supporting or counteracting peatland conservation and restoration. The implementation of MEAs' and national policies at the local level requires awareness of stakeholders (for the natural capital value of peatlands) and especially the engagement of civil society and the private sector. The effectiveness of **implementation of policy** could be enhanced if realised through existing global territorial **networks** such as Ramsar sites, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, WCPA networks.

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[1] E.g.: Ramsar Convention Resolution XIII.13: Restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity and disaster risk reduction; UNEA-4 Resolution: Conservation and sustainable management of peatlands; CBD Decision 14/5: Biodiversity and climate change.

[2] **Representatives of the international organisations**: UN Environment/Global Peatlands Initiative, FAO, IPBES, Ramsar STRP and RRI for the Nile Basin, Wetlands International, IUCN UK Peatland Programme, International Mire Conservation Group, International Peatland Society, Greifswald Mire Centre; **Representative of National and Subnational governments**: Canada, Denmark, Germany, South Africa, Sweden, Ukraine; **International experts** from Austria, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland.

[3] E.g.: Global Wetland Outlook (2019); IPBES Global Assessment (2019)

Implementation

3. **Peatland-related strategies and action plans** at the **regional, national and subnational level** serve as effective, integrative tools for the implementation of international policy decisions. (Existing frameworks developed by MEAs and International Organisations are potential platforms for a comprehensive generation and use of information, the development and formulation of policies and their implementation **globally**.)

4. **Economic incentives for the implementation** of wise use policies are supported by existing schemes of certification of peatland products/operations. The involvement of the private sector remains insufficient and could be enhanced by the establishment of clear regulations to phase out drainage-based land use including peat extraction, support for adapted land use on wet peat soils and replacement of products derived from drained peatlands.

Cooperation, networks, actors

5. The representatives of **MEAs** confirmed their commitment to utilize synergy at the global level through **cooperation between Secretariats** based on existing Resolutions, MoUs and joint working plans. For new formal agreements were not suggested.[4]

6. Synergies could also be realized **by more intensified cooperation among international organisations** and the **private sector** (including business and NGOs) and by increasing coordinated efforts focused on implementation of MEAs and involving organisation such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organisation that due to their mandate to some extent relate to peatlands.

7. **Existing global area-based conservation networks and initiatives** can be effectively used for implementation of an integrative approach to peatlands conservation and wise use **at the global level**.

8. The **Global Peatlands Initiative (GPI)** was acknowledged as a useful **coordination** body for partners focused on collating information as well as local action. In the UNEA-4 Resolution on peatlands the UNEP Executive Director was requested to coordinate efforts to create a comprehensive and accurate inventory of global peatlands in consultation with the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention.

Besides, a schedule 2019-21 with the following events as major opportunities for stakeholders to act jointly for peatlands was drawn up. This included: CBD post-2020 framework workshop in Bern (June 2019), Ramsar SC57 in Gland (June 2019), biodiversity conference in Trondheim (July 2019), nature-based solutions session of the UN Climate Summit in New York (September 2019) – Heads of State to engage, Climate COP in Chile (December 2019), CMS COP in India (February 2020), IUCN congress (July 2020), and CBD COP in China (October 2020). Moreover, peatland inputs to the up-coming joint IPCC-IBPES report, the new round of NDC declarations, and the Global Biodiversity and Wetland Outlooks were suggested.

[4] More specifically cooperation could include: Regular liaison between the Secretariats of the MEAs (also via the Biodiversity Liaison Group, the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions) and mutual information about Resolutions or Decisions taken and the drafting ongoing process for new Decisions. These exchanges will in turn allow each Secretariat to provide coherent information and policy guidance to its contracting parties (through national focal points).

2. Aim and structure of the workshop

Peatlands cover 3% of the global land area[5] and fulfil a number of ecosystem services critically important for life on earth and human well-being[6]. These services include, for instance, storage and purification of fresh water, biodiversity conservation and the reduction of flood risks. In addition, peatlands contribute to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts through carbon storage or by providing important climate smart livelihood options[7]. Peatlands store twice as much as all global forest above-ground biomass[8]. Peatlands under natural conditions are a long-term net carbon sink. However, carbon dioxide emissions from peatland drainage, fires and exploitation cause emissions equivalent to 5% of global anthropogenic CO_2 emissions[9]. Along with enhanced greenhouse gas emissions, also other ecosystem services deteriorate with drainage.

Peatlands therefore concern a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and international organizations that aim on maintenance of their ecosystem services and to avoid further emissions caused by degradation. As progress in peatland conservation and restoration is urgently needed, efforts should be combined and synergies utilised. At its 4th Session (March 2019), the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) adopted a resolution on "Conservation and Sustainable Management of Peatlands" (UNEP/EA.4/L.19). Among others it "urges Member States and other stakeholders to give greater emphasis to the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of peatlands worldwide …".

A workshop held on the Isle of Vilm, Germany, 21-24 May 2019, was jointly organised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, the Global Peatlands Initiative, the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention, the Greifswald Mire Centre, and Wetlands International to follow up on the implementation of this UNEA Resolution. Specifically, the workshop aimed at identifying synergies and related collaborative actions to safeguard peatlands' ecosystem services that evolve from the interest and mandate of relevant MEAs, international organizations, member states, and other stakeholders.

The workshop allowed participants to:

° Better understand synergies that derive from coordinated action on peatlands among concerned MEAs (e.g. UNFCCC, CBD, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, UNCCD, CMS etc. and international organizations (e.g. UN Environment, FAO, WMO, WHO etc.);

° Based on emerging collaboration and programmatic synergies, discuss major gaps (e.g. peatland inventories) and limitations for safeguarding peatland ecosystem services;

° Identify suitable policies, instruments (e.g. a joint declaration) and action for implementation by different stakeholders and

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[5] Joosten, H. (2009): The Global Peatland CO_2 Picture. Peatland status and emissions in all countries of the World. Wetlands International, Ede. 10 p.

[6] Bonn, A., Allott, T., Evans, M., Joosten, H. & Stoneman, R. (2016): Peatland restoration and ecosystem services: science, practice, policy. Cambridge University Press. 493 p.

[7] Joosten, H., Tapio-Biström, M.-L., Tol, S. (2012): Peatlands - guidance for climate change mitigation by conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable use. Mitigation of climate change in agriculture Series 5. FAO and Wetlands International, Rome. 114 p.; Wichtmann, W., Schröder, C. & Joosten, H. (2016): Paludiculture – productive use of wet peatlands. Climate protection – biodiversity – regional economic benefits. Schweizerbart Science Publishers, Stuttgart. 272 p.

[8] Joosten, H. (2009): The Global Peatland CO2 Picture. Peatland status and emissions in all countries of the World. Wetlands International, Ede. 10 p.

[9] Joosten, H., Sirin, A., Couwenberg, J., Laine, J. & Smith, P. (2016): The role of peatlands in climate regulation. In: Peatland Restoration and Ecosystem Services: Science, Policy and Practice (ed. by A. Bonn, T. Allott, M. Evans, H. Joosten & R. Stoneman), Cambridge University Press, pp. 63-76.

° Outline a potential road map of activities to support consolidated processes and activities for conserving, restoring and sustainably managing peatlands that involve a multitude of actors.

To achieve this, a group of dedicated peatland experts from Europa, Africa and North America (see Annex 1) was gathered on the Isle of Vilm. The participants included experts from Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, South Africa, Sweden, Ukraine, and United Kingdom, representatives from the Secretariat of Ramsar, UN Environment (Global Peatlands Initiative), FAO, Ramsar STRP and RRI for the Nile Basin, IUCN UK peatlands programme, Wetlands International, Greifswald Mire Centre, International Peatland Society. Several representatives from other MEA secretariats (UNFCCC, CBD, CMS/AEWA; expert for UNECE Water Convention), international organisations/panels (IPBES), and national governments (Sweden and Denmark) were remotely connected for selected sessions. UNCCD apologized, but remains ready for collaboration. All remotely connected contributors had been involved by email correspondence and a newly developed questionnaire to receive written input to all other sessions prior to the workshop.

The workshop has been prepared and facilitated by Bettina Hedden-Dunkhorst (BfN), Tobias Salathe (Ramsar Convention Secretariat), Dianna Kopansky (UN Environment Programme, Global Peatlands Initiative), Franziska Tanneberger and Jan Peters (both Greifswald Mire Centre), Arthur Neher (Wetlands International), and Tatiana Minayeva (Wetlands International/Care for Ecosystems).

The workshop was funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. Workshop preparation was additionally funded through the 2015-2016 BiodivERsA COFUND call for research proposals, with the national funder Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG).

The workshop report presents main findings of the sessions, both from presentations and interactive work and breakout groups.

2. Main findings from the session 'Setting the scene'

The purpose of this session was to introduce all participants to a goal, objectives and structure of the workshop (Bettina Hedden-Dunkhorst), to give insights, inspiration and an idea about potential synergies (Tobias Salathé , Dianna Kopansky), and to identify the background and geographic distribution of the participants (including remote participants).

Introduction about peatlands (Tobias Salathé)

- Peatlands are the most space-effective long-term carbon store and are crucial for meeting the Paris Agreement goals.
- Peatlands emit 5% of all anthropogenic emissions, and to reduce the emissions, undrained peatlands should be protected and drained peatlands restored.
- Making use of synergies will help to involve all relevant sectors.
- NDCs give a good opportunity to use this approach and to address issues beyond climate change - soil conservation, water regulation and management, biodiversity, local livelihoods and sustainable markets.

Proposed focus and possible synergies of using peatland conservation/restoration with NDCs.

Introduction to the Global Peatlands Initiative (Dianna Kopansky)

- UN Environment has the honour of leading the Global Peatlands Initiative - an initiative to save peatlands as the world's largest terrestrial organic carbon stock.
- Peatlands are believed to be present in at least 180 countries with extensive occurrences in the tropics and in temperate, boreal and arctic zones. However, being poorly understood, peatlands across the globe are under threat from drainage and burning for agricultural, forestry, infrastructure and other developmental uses.
- Under the umbrella of the Global Peatlands Initiative 28 partners are trying to counter and avoid these threats and save peatlands globally.
- Keeping peat carbon in the ground is crucial if the world is to meet the target of the Paris Climate Change Agreement to keep the global average temperature increase under two degrees Celsius. To achieve this target, every country and its citizens need to undertake "**business unusual**" so that global carbon emissions reach net zero by around 2050 - a date and target just around the corner.

Members of the Global Peatlands Initiative (as of May 2019).

Panel discussion with Tobias Salathé and Dianna Kopansky – key needs and issues raised

- To bring further the message about the uniqueness and importance of peatlands
- To set up priorities and identify synergies
- To meet challenge of rapid environmental changes (e.g. the Congo peatlands have just been discovered and are threatened by land use around them, including oil and gas extraction)
- To fill knowledge gaps – to provide equal knowledge on peatlands all over the world
- To look for balanced approaches, to resolve conflicts, including one between human needs and impact on nature
- To involve new partners connected to peatlands (e.g. the World Health Organisation)
- To unify peatland major concepts and peatland terminology
- To achieve cooperation between relevant organisations spread all over the world

Global distribution and background of participants (Franziska Tanneberger & Tatiana Minayeva)

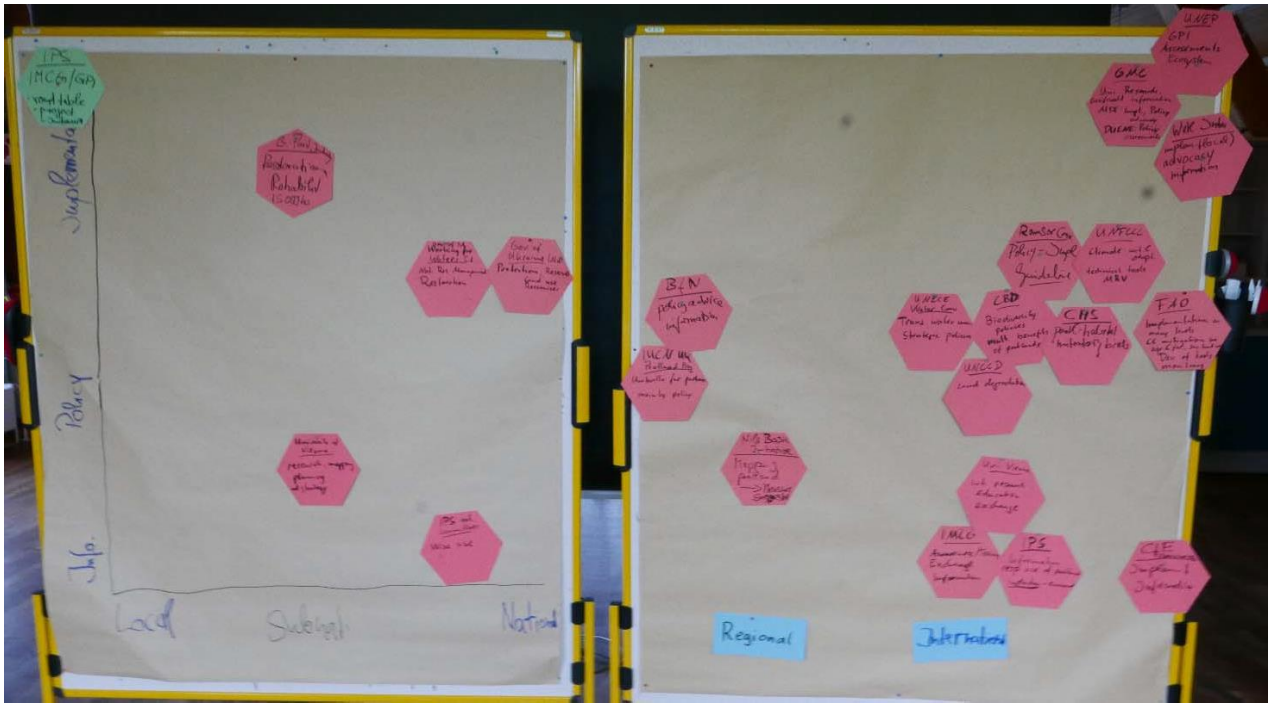
- The workshop was attended by 28 participants (including 6 participating remotely)
- They were presenting governments (5), MEAs secretariats (4), intergovernmental organisations (3), international NGOs (3), other NGOs (3), university/academia (3), business (2) and industry (1). Some of the participants were representing 2 organisations.
- The participants mostly represented (by origin and focus of their activity) Europe, with some presence of Africa, North-America and Southeast-Asia (see Annex 1 for more detail).

3. Main findings from the session 'Identifying synergies to safeguard peatlands and their ecosystem services' (session 2)

The session aimed at identifying synergies and gaps/trade-offs among stakeholders for three over-arching issues: information (including monitoring and reporting), policy, implementation. The work of MEAs is organised along these three main crosscutting areas.

At the beginning, **main work areas and level of efforts of organisations present at the workshop (chaired by Bettina Hedden-Dunkhorst & Jan Peters)** were mapped**.** This was captured by asking participants to identify and depict the position of the organisation they are working for along the two-dimensional matrix: level of operation (local, subnational, national, regional, global) and area of operation (policy, information, implementation).

The organisations present at the workshop cover a wide range of levels and areas of operation. One organisation could work on implementation at local level, on policy at national level and on information at global level. This fact opens wide opportunities for the expanding synergies vertically and horizontally using existing capacities.



Main work areas of organisations present at the workshop.

Later, the three work areas (information, policy, implementation) were presented in impulses and discussed in the format of a World Café.

Impulse on information on peatlands: concepts, data availability and gaps, harmonisation, monitoring and reporting (Jan Peters)

Information on peatlands and organic soils depends on commonly used concepts and definitions. English and local terms often do not differentiate between peatlands and wetlands with mineral soil and minimum content of organic matter of the "peat" varies across definitions. The 2006 IPCC Guidelines thus largely follow the FAO (1998/2006) definition of "histosol" and link (and even equate) organic soils to peat soils.

Existing global assessments and reports providing information on peatlands are the following:

- GEC/WI Global Assessment (2008)
- FAO Guidance Report (2012)
- GPI RRA „Smoke on Water“ (2017)
- Ramsar Global Wetlands Outlook (2018)
- IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity (2019)
- GPI Global Peatlands Assessment / Inventory (in prep.)

Beside global information, regional, national and local data sets are sources for information. They have higher resolution than global datasets and can be quite accurate addressing location and types of peatlands and organic soils, but often using country-specific definitions, concepts and methodologies. Therefore, it’s difficult to ‚harmonise‘ data for the global level. It is fragmentary in coverage and the data is widespread among archives, the internet, different scientific disciplines and authorities.

Knowledge and information gaps exist on peatland distribution and their relation to climate change and other ecosystem services. Largest knowledge gaps are in the tropics, specifically in alpine/mountain, coastal and floodplain environments. Areas, which are not that huge as Congo Basin or Indonesian peatlands are often neglected although they add considerable areas on national levels. In addition, there is a lack of high-resolution data applicable for national/regional/local spatial planning.

Aggregated outcomes from the discussion **on information:**

1. How could we achieve that the same basic concepts on peatlands are consistently used by MEAs? → Common **definitions** on peatlands **developed under GPI (e.g. as an introductory chapter/annotated glossary of the Global Peatlands Inventory)** which will be **adopted by MEAs and parties** and which are easily accessible for all stakeholders at a **web space**.

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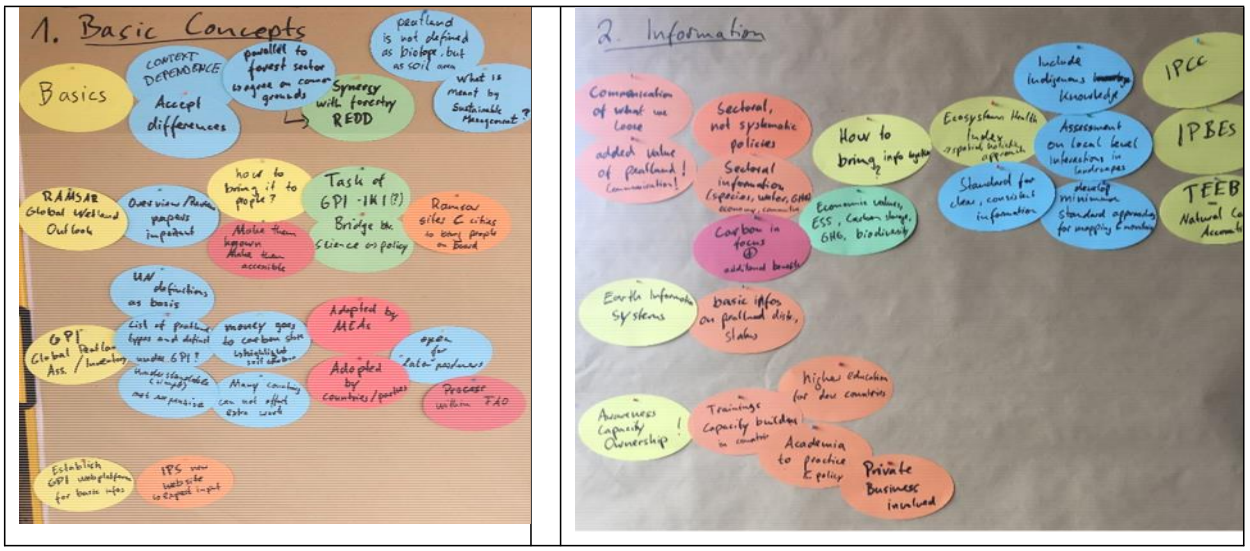
2. Which information is needed, available, still missing to ensure synergies between stakeholders on any policy, plan or action on peatlands? How could the Global Peatlands Inventory improve information for MEAs? → Available sectoral information needs to be **integrated into a standard, more holistic database**, which includes **natural, social, cultural, and economic information** to highlight the **added value** of peatlands and to reach **awareness and ownership** by civil society, policy makers and private sector.
3. What could be possible synergies in gathering and communicating information (e.g. in MEA’s MRV schemes, assessments, studies)? → **Minimum standard approaches** integrating various available data sets from global earth observation systems to indigenous knowledge could provide **clear, consistent basic information** on peatland distribution and status for use of MEAs and parties.

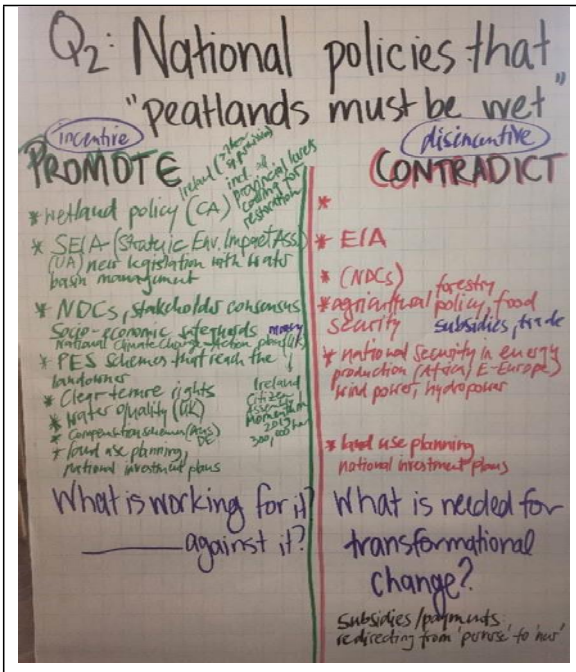


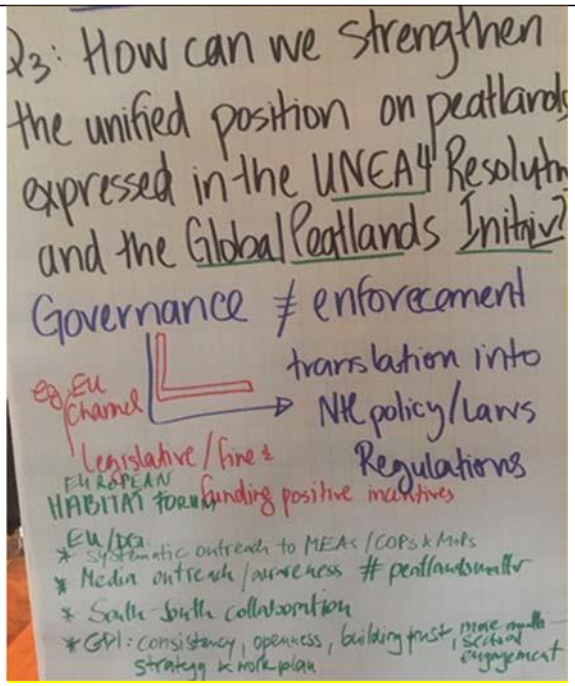
Impulse on policy: making use of synergy (Franziska Tanneberger)

- What kind of policy is needed: 'peatland must be wet' – now!
- Various policy-relevant Resolutions/Decisions on peatlands are already taken by MEAs
- Challenges are to ensure that they are integrated in the Resolutions/Decisions of other MEAs, to ensure that they do not contradict each other, and to upscale successful national policies to regional/global level
- Case study on the Aquatic Warbler: CMS MoU, flagship species for healthy peatlands, relevant to the Ramsar Convention, UNFCCC, CBD etc.
- Information and integration needed: e.g. FAO changed its policy towards peatland rewetting; WHO made inventories for peatland drainage in the 1970s in Africa (can be used as information!), but has not yet officially declared a position on peatlands that considers current circumstances and discussion (clear figures on peatland degradation and health issues are available e.g. for Indonesia and Russia)

Aggregated outcomes from the discussion **on Policy**

1. What are global/regional policies, which promote or contradict the policy 'peatlands must be wet'? How enforceable are the global agreements, and which incentives can make them more attractive? → Promoting elements widely spread across MEAs but scattered; contradicting at supranational level e.g. EU Common Agricultural Policy
2. What are national polices which promote or contradict the policy 'peatlands must be wet'? What is working for it/what against? What is needed to make the transformational change at the national level? → Promoting e.g. wetland policy (Canada), Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment, NDCs, land use planning, PES schemes that reach the land owner; contradicting e.g. agriculture, food, energy safety policies
3. How can we strengthen the unified position on peatlands expressed in the UNEA resolution and in the GPI partnership? → Translation into national policy/laws is needed as well as for future GPI consistency openness, building trust, strategy and work plan are utterly important





Impulse on implementation: synergy for effective use (Tatiana Minayeva, Wetlands International/CfE)

MEAs have a huge variety of implementation mechanisms and instruments, often unknown to or overlooked by others. For example, all conventions have national reporting or technical documents where some areas are overlapping. At the same time, MEAs usually have developed a number of unique implementation mechanisms and instruments, which could have added values and provide inputs for the implementation of policies. These include:

CBD implementation mechanisms include National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); Lifeweb for financing Protected Areas; Financial Resources and Mechanism; Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM); Cooperation and Partnerships; Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; Species strategies; Ecosystem restoration target under Aichi targets; **Ramsar Convention implementation mechanisms include** Ramsar Sites Network and Info Service; Ramsar Advisory Missions; National Ramsar Committees; Regional initiatives and several Grant, Award and thematic programs; MOUs with other conventions; **UNFCCC** implementation mechanisms – National inventory reports, NAPAs and NDCs; **CMS** has species strategies and Flyways/species agreements (MoU); **Water convention** supports river basin management entities etc.

Yet, the impacts of these implementation mechanisms is to some extent limited. There are coordinating attempts in place such as MoUs between MEAs and liaison groups. Peatlands could benefit from the cross-cutting application of conventions' implementation mechanisms and instruments. The discussion aimed to identify which implementation mechanisms could be coordinated, what are challenges and successful examples, and to develop a road map towards synergy.

Questions and aggregated outcomes

1. What are the unique implementation mechanisms focused to keep peatlands wet? Please list any mechanisms used by MEAs, UN programmes, international organisations or alliances of national governments.

The following **implementation mechanisms and instruments** were recognized as valuable by the participants: UNCCD Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN); NDC of Paris Agreement; Ramsar Convention: Ramsar sites, ecosystem approach, STRP as think tank; EU:strict governance, possibility of sanctions; SENDAI: ECO-DRR -adaptation, risk reduction with focus on peatlands.

New Mechanisms: GPI: developing synergies among MEAs

2. What are existing overlapping mechanisms focused to keep peatlands wet? Please list any mechanisms used by MEAs, UN programmes, international organisations or alliances of national governments.

MEAs could look at **benefits of coordination efforts on peatlands within overlapping implementation mechanisms:** MEA Resolutions and Decisions, especially those which are widely discussed; National reporting, especially fed by local and regional initiatives; Water convention and water directive can include peatlands and help to focus on integration of peatlands into the basin management; the CEPA programmes of different conventions should be coordinated and used to promote peatlands; Resolutions of the international organisations (like IUCN etc.) could help to promote the work of the conventions.

Networks and associations: Different regional (e.g. on flyways or river basins) and species strategies; Conservation sites networks (Ramsar sites, World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves, Bern Convention) (see Decision CBD 14/8. Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures); National reporting on SDG.

Economic mechanisms: Certifications of peat products/operations: RPP (EU), RSPO, Veriflora (Canada)

3. What suggestions for optimising the use of MEAs' implementation mechanisms do you have, and which new mechanisms can you suggest?

Suggestions for MEAs include: Strengthening the links between conventions; Use funds of some conventions for the benefit of the others (for example climate and nature based solution); Enhance and built in nature based solutions in agreements; Integrate peatlands in the new UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. **MEAs and other stakeholders should build up coordinated Awareness framework:** Promote result-based actions on peatlands; Analyse cross-cutting benefits of peatlands; Improve knowledge for CEPA – outreach multifunctional role of peatlands; Use feedback from the public on climate change negative events.

Involvement of Economy: Market and finance (main drivers); Certification of products from rewetted peatlands; Connecting Disaster Risk Reduction with business interest (for eg. insurance); Natural Capital thinking should be improved; Traditional non-destructive use of peatlands without changing hydrology; Creating alternatives for peat use.

4. Main findings from the session 'Input in fostering synergies on peatlands' (session 3)

Sub-session 3.1 Input from Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs)

In this session, input from several MEA secretariats (Ramsar Convention, CBD, CMS, UNFCCC, UNCCD, Water convention) was provided and discussed. The MEAs presented their work in relation to peatlands, and reported on MEA-specific mechanisms that could be used to foster synergies.

Caridad Canales Davida (CBD)

- Already in COP9, CBD recognized that peatland conservation is needed for biodiversity and climate protection
- Key ecosystems such as peatlands are important in the context of the debate on planetary

boundaries
- COP14 (Nov 2018) Decisions: on protected areas (peatlands considered as an particularly important ecosystem) and on sustainable use of peatlands
- A 2019 Decision on peatlands would need to be set in relation to global goals, the new Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework, Aichi targets…
- It is now very timely to discuss synergies, especially in the CBD context (Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework)
- At COP15 (October 2020) the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework will be approved → create a coherent narrative for this, and not only talk about synergies, but realise them!
- For synergies, the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio conventions is important → it should be used for forging synergies within the UN system and, in general, to foster a more holistic approach.

Jenny Wong & Peter Aarup Iversen (UNFCCC)
- Both from Unit on Sectoral approaches; long-term experience with UNFCCC
- Importance of terrestrial reservoirs & sinks is being recognized → peatlands important here
- Parties are to promote sustainable management →PA Art.5 'Conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs…'
- REDD+ framework: Developing countries encouraged to tackle reforestation and manage forests sustainably, very well taken up
- GHG inventories go through technical review process
- Key mechanisms: through global stocktaking mechanisms
- UNFCCC usually does not talk about 'peatlands' but considers forest & agriculture as very important
- Some countries have recognized that peatlands are important and included them in their national plans
- Climate change summit September 2019: focus on land-based solutions
- IPCC report on climate change and land to be published in August 2019 will include something on peat and carbon
- An important task of the secretariat is to liaise, so that all frameworks under all MEAs are coherent, e.g. when CBD developed a Decision on biodiversity and climate change, CBD contacted UNFCC to achieve coherence → this exchange needs to be more frequent.

Tilman Schneider (CMS)
- Peatlands are not a specific focus of CMS until now; a lot of guidance in this regard comes from CBD
- Migratory birds are the largest group of species under CMS → many synergies here with other MEAs with regard to peatland management & protection, especially towards the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework.
- COP12: Outlines importance of synergies & partnerships, part of biodiversity liaison group
- Specific tools for data: Wing & wetlands project, with Birdlife International, for water birds, on monitoring & better conservation, showing best practice, in a number of countries
- CMS climate resilience network
- AEWA: provides online resources, for all water bird species and habitats they depend upon
- Very interested in joined work plans, already have a number of joint work plans (Arctic, CITES, etc.)
- Important: Connectivity of critical habitats, including peatlands
- Have flagship species under convention → useful for conveying messages; maybe peatlands can be part of that?

Tobias Salathé (Ramsar Convention)

- Peatlands used to be underrepresented in the Convention → COP VIII (2002) first Resolution on peatlands
- With climate change coming up higher on the agenda → peatlands gained importance, but there was also a reluctance of some parties that feared Ramsar would deal too much with climate change aspects, which was the mandate of UNFCCC
- COP XII (2015) Resolution on climate change, wetlands & wise use → asked for collaboration with other MEAs, create capacity
- COP XIII (2018) two Resolutions on peatlands (1st Resolution on how to identify peatlands as important Ramsar sites, and how to use GIS for identification; 2nd Resolution more comprehensive than 1st, on climate change, biodiversity and disaster risk reduction, asks countries to report on guidelines adopted in early 2000s, not only including natural peatlands, but also degraded peatlands, on conservation, restoration and shift of agricultural practices to paludiculture
- Reasons to co-organise the workshop: The Ramsar Convention supports the Global Peatlands Initiative; it should foster synergies with other MEAs and organisations; STRP developed a work programme for next years and calls to work on synergies with IPBES & IPCC.

Heide Jeckel (Water Convention, written input)

- The Convention was opened for global accession a couple of years ago → important partner for feedback
- It has been cooperating with a lot of other organisations, also in the nature conservation sector, like with the Ramsar Convention or with IUCN, but not with a focus on special habitats like peatlands
- It focuses on the improvement of transboundary water management, also from an ecosystem's perspective. It is not a nature conservation instrument, but more a strategic or management directive.

The statements were followed by a **discussion**, with key messages on:

- Joint actions should be coordinated via the Biodiversity Liaison Group through joint work plans, further collaboration should take place in the context of the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework
- Use upcoming meetings of MEAs as platforms to interact with MEAs and country delegations
- Apart from the CBD Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework, also the IUCN world congress is crucial → expected to create follow up to last congress; no hierarchy between events, existing platforms are equally important
- When anybody would go into a drafting mode for Resolutions for new cooperation on peatlands, other MEAs should be contacted → there was no consensus that a joint MEA peatland declaration would bring added value, better taking advantage of existing Decisions/Resolutions (eg UNEA) and possibly developing a joint work programme
- The parties' reporting burden should be reduced, and better reporting coherence should be achieved
- The UNEA-4 Resolution is something anybody can already commit to and support.

Sub-session 3.2: Input from the viewpoint of international and national organisations

In this session, inputs from international and national organisations such as UNEP, IUCN, FAO, WCMC, IPS, Nile Basin Initiative, national governmental agencies were gathered. The organisations were asked to inform on their capacity and gaps to foster synergies.

Lars Dinesen (speaking about IPBES):

- IPBES has currently two foci: new work programme and global assessment; massive response on global assessment in many countries (e.g. Denmark) → important to stress peatlands in coming 1.5 years
- The Ramsar Convention had proposed to specifically include peatlands in the IPBES process (in the form of an assessment) → outcome: peatlands to be covered in a technical paper by IPBES and IPCC
- Successful collaboration: In Ukraine, IPBES focal point is part of Ramsar committee – living synergies…

Leonard Akwany (NBI):

- Initiative works with 10 countries and helps them to meet obligations of MEAs & reporting → synergies
- Have regional working groups with different sectors represented.

Gilbert Ludwig (IPS):

- Prepared booklet on MEAs

Serena Fortuna (FAO):

- Supports consistencies on reporting, and tries to make countries consider peatlands in their reports & strategies
- Cooperation with several MEA secretariats, but also with parties (on implementation) → collaboration is crucial.

Stuart Brooks & Clifton Bain (IUCN UK Peatland Programme)

- Process towards IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) 2020 → plan to inspire other countries there to adopt similar country level strategies
- GPI emerged at similar time to last WCC; whatever comes up at IUCN progress → has to be delivered through GPI;
- We need to raise the bar, and have high level of ambition in statements
- IUCN Resolution 43: Each country should make a peatland strategy; Newcastle University looked at which countries have a peatland strategy, only few countries have a national strategy

Dianna Kopansky (UNEP):

- UNEP recently published a Frontiers report on emerging environmental issues with chapter on peatlands and permafrost
- UNEP → working with all countries, 'knowledge broker' → share information & innovation
- New work streams on blue economy, and green finance
- Global Peatlands Initiative: Roll out systematic & inclusive process & draw on expertise; assessment on peatlands, calls upon all partners to contribute to that.

Wetlands International (Arthur Neher)

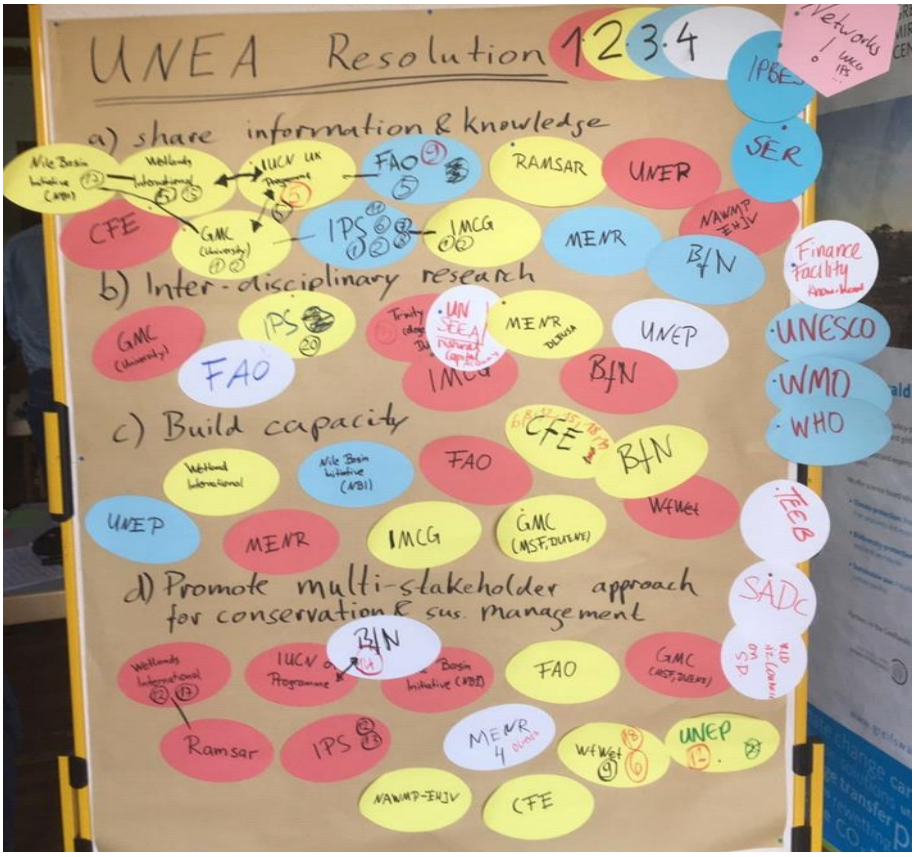
- WI is interested in collaborations, also in supporting others.

5. Main findings from the session 'Best use of existing frameworks' (session 4)

Sub-session 4.1: UNEA resolution on peatlands

Impulse (Dianna Kopansky)

- Glad to discuss how we can use UNEA Resolution as an umbrella
- History: Indonesia drafted the Resolution → 2-week meeting: Indonesia discussion with other countries who were concerned with narrow focus, but also swift support from UK, US & others
- It is a purposeful document that calls for action of national and regional organisations
- Priorities of organizations represented at the workshop regarding UNEA Resolution: a) share information & knowledge, b) conduct interdisciplinary research, c) build capacity, d) promote a multi-stakeholder approach for conservation & sustainable management (see flip chart below).

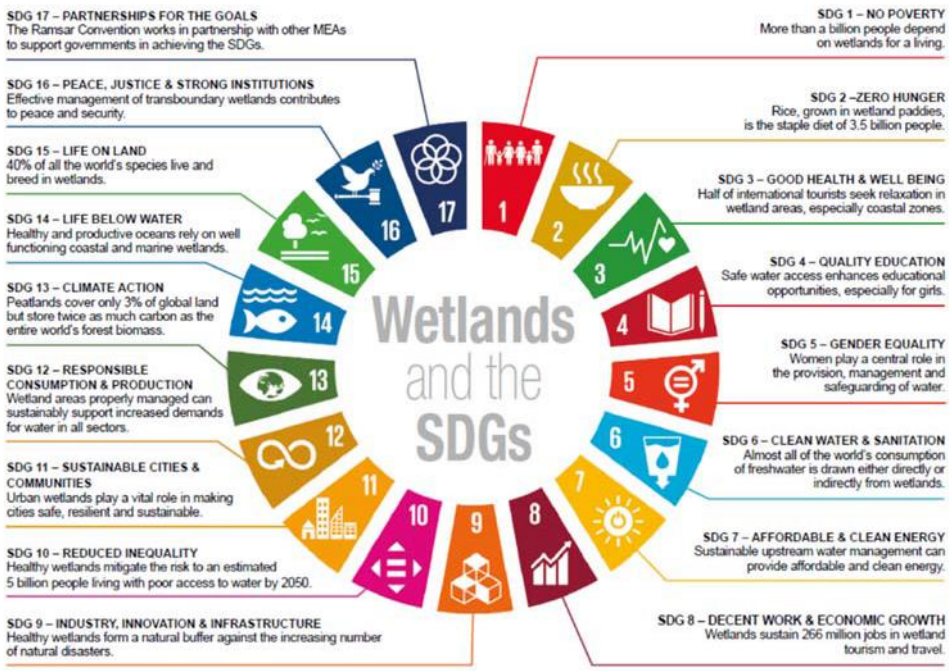


Sub-session 4.2: SDGs and Synergies on Peatlands

Impulse (Arthur Neher)

Sustainable Development Goals – the framework which involves various stakeholders in the reporting on sustainability. It became recently common practice to involve stakeholders based on their commitment to meet SDGs. At national levels various sectors are reporting on SDGs. It is wise to use the SDGs for engaging multilateral stakeholders to work for synergy on peatlands.

The figure below, taken from the Global Wetland Outlook (2018) published by the Ramsar Convention provides a useful example for linking individual SDGs with issues and current facts related to wetlands. A similar exercise for peatlands would be useful, also as a communication tool.



Workshop participants are invited to identify which action on peatlands could contribute to which SDG. An interactive session had been organised to plot inputs of different activities on peatlands (negative and positive) against all 15 SDGs.

Output of interactive session: according to the participants, the most relevant SDGs in which actions on peatlands would contribute are SDG 2 (hunger), 3 (health), 4 (education), 6 (water), 13 (climate), and 15 (life on land). Water and climate are at the most affected by the negative actions on peatlands.

The **discussion** highlighted diverging opinions on the effectiveness of using the SDG framework for enhancing synergies on peatlands. The representatives of MEAs and International Organisations stated that the SDG framework is effective, it involves a wide range of stakeholders, has concrete indicators and a reporting system and a mechanism of joint messaging – which is important. Other participants expressed concern that the SDG approach is too multidimensional and complex, and should be simplified in application for peatlands.

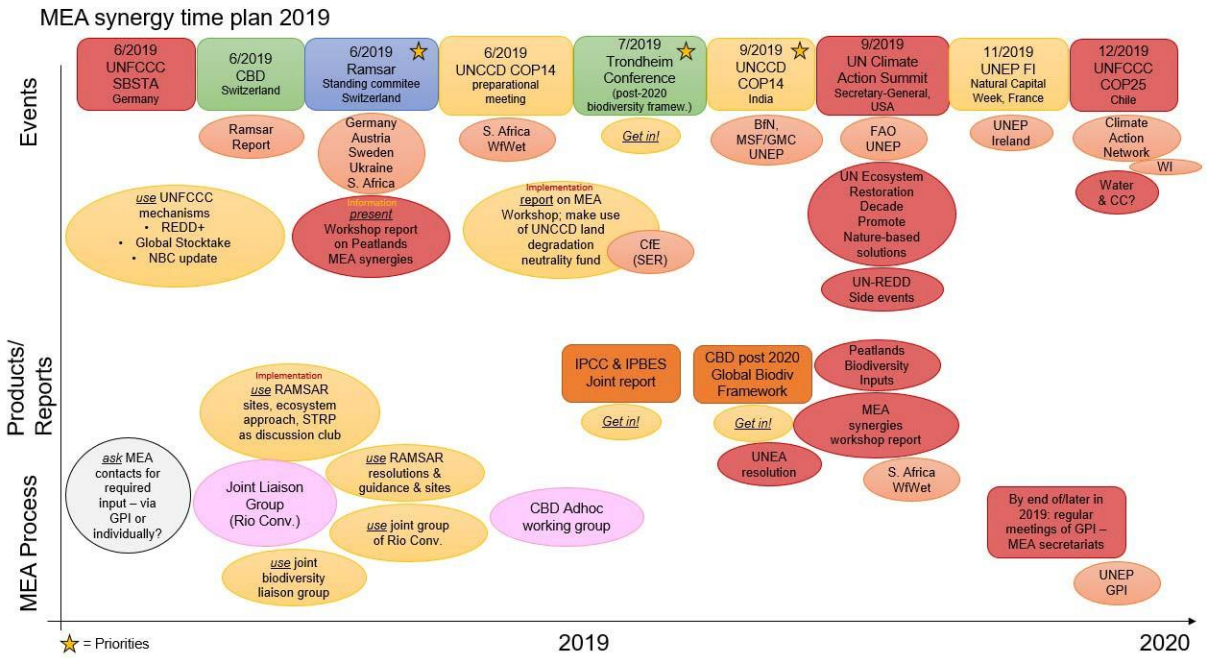
6. Main findings from the session 'Developing specific follow-up steps and a road map for better utilizing synergies (session 5)

A **List of action points** was discussed and organisations represented at the workshop indicated their current or future action regarding the points listed (allocation of organisations not complete and not exclusive! see Annex 1 for abbreviations regarding names of organisations):

1. Create a standard, more holistic database on peatlands (GMC, IMCG, IPS)
2. Make common peatland definitions of GPI accessible at a neutral webspace (GMC, IMCG, IPS)
3. Involve World Forum on Natural Capital (Trinity College)
4. Address and involve the European Habitat Forum more intensively
5. Share successful means of communicating policies promoting wet peatlands (WI, IUCN UK PP)
6. Capture stories how peatlands provide ecosystem services worldwide (cf. IUCN demonstrating success) (WI, WfWet, IPS, CfE)
7. Promote GPI as a cross-cutting mechanism/initiative (all)
8. Integrate peatlands into UN Ecosystem Restoration Decade (UNEP, FAO, CfE)
9. Identify champions & approach countries/celebrities to be champions …all benefits of synergies (WfWet)
10. Use existing UNFCCC Paris Agreement Article 5
11. Use & disseminate UNEA-4 Resolution on peatlands (IPS)
12. Realize public-private-partnerships (WI, IPS, UNEP)
13. Motivate countries to more interaction between conventions (BfN)
14. IUCN to request National Peatland Strategies
15. Help countries in MEA reporting (WI, CfE)
16. Bring other conventions into Ramsar National Committee (cf. Ukraine)
17. Make use of river basin management entities (WI, NBI)

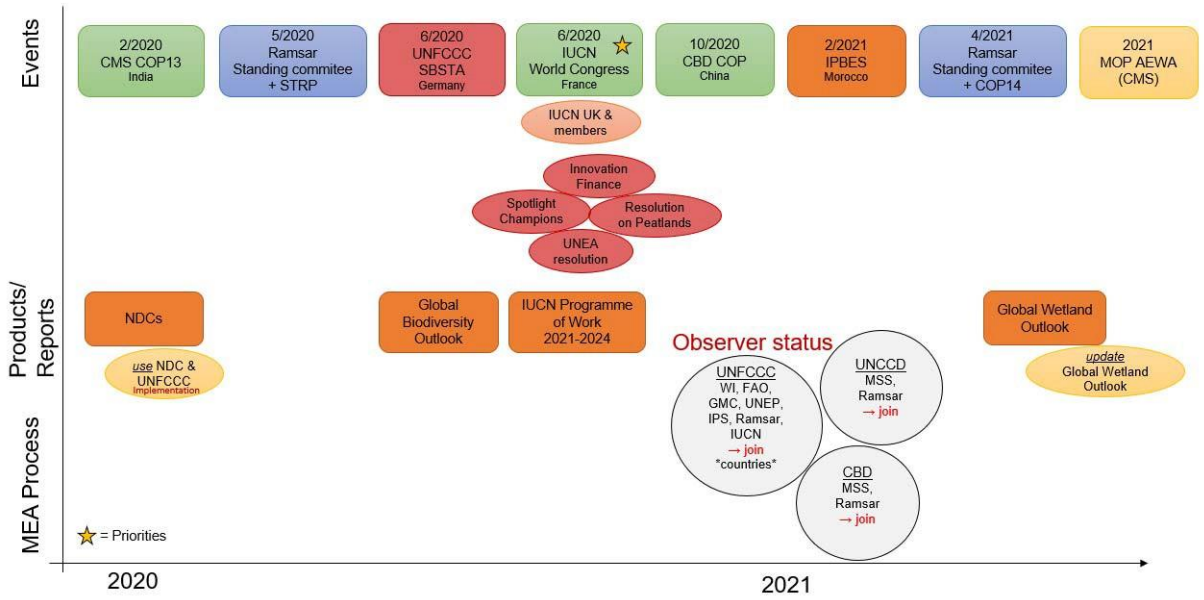
18. Improve methods for MRV of peatlands (coverage and restoration) (FAO, GMC, WfWet, CfE)
19. Foster country collaboration to develop peatland strategies (IUCN & BfN)
20. Study alternatives to drainage-based land use and seek opportunities to accelerate the use of such alternatives (IPS, GMC)
21. IPBES – propose topics for inclusion of peatlands into upcoming assessments.

In a **second step, a time plan** for MEA synergy activities on peatlands was drafted for the years 2019 and 2020. Several overarching, permanent activities were identified (below, on top). Then key events with their products/reports were discussed and topics were identified to be addressed prior to and during the events. In addition, also MEA internal processes were discussed (below, at the bottom) and meeting times identified. There was agreement that MEA contacts should be asked for the required input, ideally via GPI. At the end, organisations with observer status to conventions were identified (below, bottom right).



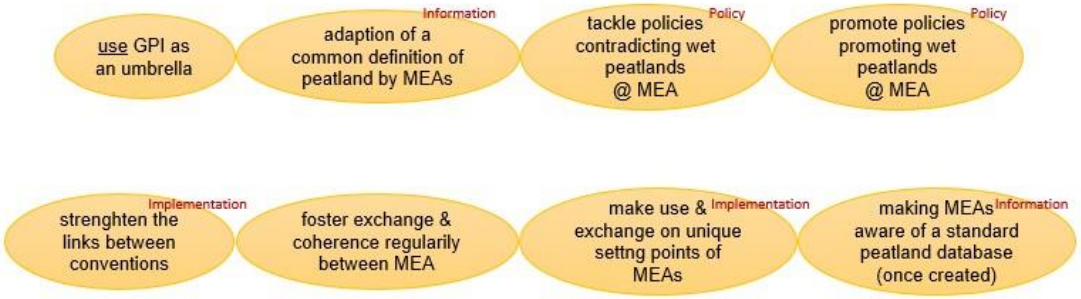
MEA synergy time plan 2019. Orange: products of MEAs; pink: MEA internal processes; red=UNFCCC, blue=Ramsar Convention, green=CBD/CMS/other biodiversity.

MEA synergy time plan 2020 - 21



MEA synergy time plan 2020-21. Orange: products of MEAs; pink: MEA internal processes; red=UNFCCC, blue=Ramsar Convention, green=CBD/CMS/other biodiversity.

In addition, the following overarching issues were identified:



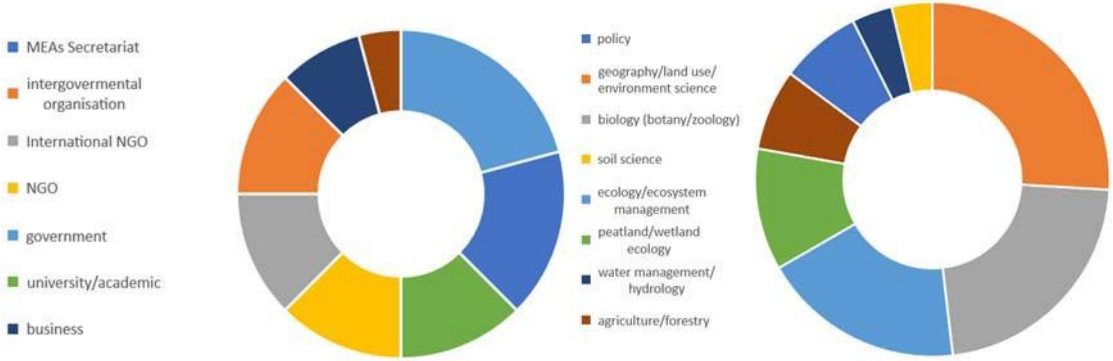
Annex 1: List of Participants and results of the survey about the participants' background

Name	Institution
Leonard Akwany	Nile Basin Initiative (NBI)
Adina Arth	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
Caridad Canales (remote participation)	CBD Secretariat
Clifton Bain	IUCN UK Peatland Programme (IUCN UK PP)
Stuart Brooks	IUCN UK Peatland Programme (IUCN UK PP)
Lars L. Dinesen (remote participation)	Ramsar STRP, Head of Section Danish Nature Agency, Ministry of Environment
Dr. Catherine Farrell	Peatland Ecologist, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
Serena Fortuna	FAO
Prof. Dr. Stephan Glatzel	University of Vienna
Dr. Piet-Louis Grundling	Working for Wetlands, South Africa
Dr. Bettina Hedden-Dunkhorst	German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)
Jenny Lonnstad (remote participation)	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
Peter Iversen (remote participation)	UNFCCC Secretariat
Dianna Kopansky	UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
Dr. Gilbert Ludwig	International Peatland Society (IPS)
G. Randy Milton	Department of Lands and Forestry, Manager, Ecosystems and Habitats, Nova Scotia, Canada
Dr. Tatiana Minayeva	Care for Ecosystems (CfE)
Jürgen Nauber	Care for Ecosystems (CfE)
Arthur Neher	Wetlands International (WI)
Jan Peters	Michael Succow Stiftung, Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC)
Fabian Petrick	Michael Succow Stiftung, Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC)
Dr. Olesya Petrovych	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine
Prof. Jack Rieley	UK Peatland Society
Dr. Tobias Salathe	Ramsar Convention Secretariat
Tilman Schneider (remote participation)	CMS Secretariat

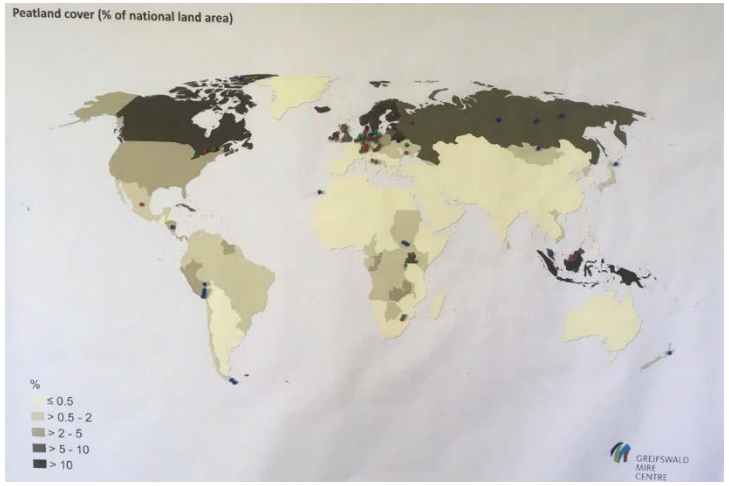
Gert Michael Steiner	Vienna University Dept. Botany & Biodiversity
Dr. Franziska Tanneberger	Greifswald University, Greifswald Mire Centre (GMC)
Jenny Wong (remote participation)	UNFCCC Secretariat

Global distribution and background of participants

- The workshop was attended by 28 participants (including 6 participating remotely)
- They were representing governments (5), MEAs secretariats (4), intergovernmental organisations (3), international NGOs (3), other NGOs (3), university/academia (3), business (2) and industry (1). Some of participants were representing 2 organisations.
- The background education of participants is in geography/land use/environment science (7); biology: botany/zoology (6); ecology/ecosystem management (5); peatland/wetland ecology (3); agriculture/forestry (2); policy (2); soil science (1); water management/hydrology (1).



Type of organisation and background education of participants.



- Participants designated the following initial personal sources of information on peatlands: education (9); job (7); childhood/life (3); conferences (1); international organisations (1)
- The participants indicated to have an expertise in the following fields of knowledge regarding peatlands: biodiversity (12); restoration (9); policy (9); management (6); carbon balance (6); hydrology (4); agriculture (3); forestry (2); economics (1); peat extraction (0)
- The participants mostly represented by origin and focus of their activity Europe, with some presence of Africa, North-America and Southeast-Asia, while the focus of interest is more widely spread – in Siberia, South America, Oceania, Central and West Africa and Caribbean.

Annex 2: Workshop programme

"Exploring Synergies for Peatlands - Detecting and enhancing the global importance of peatlands in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals", Isle of Vilm, Germany, 21-24 May 2019

Facilitators and input presentations: Bettina Hedden-Dunkhorst (BfN), Tobias Salathe (Ramsar Convention Secretariat), Dianna Kopansky (UN Environment Programme, Global Peatland Initiative), Franziska Tanneberger and Jan Peters (Greifswald Mire Centre), Arthur Neher (Wetlands International), Tatiana Minayeva (Wetlands International/CfE)

21st May, Tuesday	22nd May, Wednesday. Challenges and Best Practices	23rd May, Thursday. Way towards Synergy	24th May, Friday
	7:30 - 9:00 Breakfast	7:30 – 9:00 Breakfast	7:30 – 8:00 Breakfast
	09:00 Welcome and brief introduction to the Isle of Vilm 09:10 **Recap of day 1** 09:30 **Interactive session: Identifying Synergies to Safeguard Peatlands and their Ecosystem Services** 10:15 **Impulses for the group work**: • Information on peatlands: Concepts, data availability & gaps, harmonisation • From international decisions to national policy: making use of synergies • Implementation mechanisms of MEAs: synergy for effective use *10:45 Coffee break* 11:00 **World café on the synergies in information, policies and implementation**. 30 minutes for each session	09:00 **Input from FAO monitoring workshop on information (from Rome)** 09:30 **Recap of day 2 and plenary discussion** 10:00 **Round table on the UNEA resolution on peatlands** • Impulse: UNEA resolution – status, content, stakeholders • Interactive discussion UNEA resolution Framework for Synergies *11:00 Coffee break* 11:30 **Round Table on SDGs and Synergies on Peatlands** • Impulse: SDGs as a Framework for Synergies • Overall interactive discussion Peatland action contribution to SDGs	08:00 Departure Optional excursion on the mainland "Restored coastal flood peatland Karrendorf meadows and Greifswald" 13:00 End of the excursion (at Greifswald train station)
Arrival Please take a ferry from Lauterbach Mole (the latest ferry departs 18:10) For ferry schedule see: https://www.bfn.de/ueber-das-bfn/das-bfn-auf-vilm.html	12:30 Lunch	12:30 Lunch	
	13:30 Vilm Gallery 14:30 Reporting from world café on three topics 15:00 **Input on fostering synergies on peatlands from MEAs (including remote session)** • Inputs from: Ramsar Convention, UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD, CMS, Water convention • What MEA specific mechanisms should be use to foster synergies? *16:30 Coffee break* 17:00 **Potential Synergies from the viewpoint of international and national organisations** • Inputs from: UNEP, IUCN, FAO, WCMC, IPS, Nile Basin Initiative, national governmental agencies; including remote input from other organisations	13:30 Guided tour around the Isle *14:30 Coffee break* 15:00 **Developing specific follow up steps and a road map for better utilizing synergies** • Impulse: Summarizing reports from previous discussions - actions • Working groups 17:30 **Finalisation of the outcomes of the discussion on the road map and way forward**	
18:15 Dinner	18:30 Dinner	18:30 Dinner	
19:00 **Setting the Scene** • Introduction to the workshop and its broader context • Introduction of participants and their organisations' work on peatlands (interest, focus, functions) 20:30 **Informal Gathering**	19:30 **"Side Events"**: Presentations of participants' peatland activities that would benefit from making use of synergies: case studies	19:30 **Summing up the workshop results, presenting a draft road map** **Followed by Informal Farewell Evening**	

Annex 3: Links to most recent peatland declarations

United Nations Environment Assembly: Resolution adopted by UNEA-4 on 15 March 2019
Resolution 4/16. Conservation and sustainable management of peatlands
http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28480/English.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

Convention on Biodiversity: Decision adopted by COP14 on 29 November 2018
Decision 14/5. Biodiversity and climate change
https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-05-en.pdf

Convention on Wetlands: Resolution adopted by COP13 on 29 October 2018:
Resolution XIII.13 Restoration of degraded peatlands to mitigate and adapt to climate change and enhance biodiversity and disaster risk reduction
https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/xiii.13_peatland_restoration_e.pdf

Annex 4: List of presentations during "Side Event" presenting case studies on peatland activities that would benefit from making use of synergies

Experiences in implementing SDGs for mires and peat soils in Austria (Stephan Glatzel)

Nile Basin Initiative (Leonard Akwany)

Towards achieving peatland conservation objectives in MEAs: The role of formal and informal initiatives in southern Africa (Piet-Louis Grundling)

Contribution of peatland related work in Canada to MEAs implementation (Randy Milton)

IUCN UK Peatland Programme including reference to the IUCN World Congress motion on peatlands agreed at Hawaii in 2016 (Stuart Brooks, Clifton Bain)

The Greifswald Mire Centre's work on peatlands (Franziska Tanneberger)