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What are the most critical barriers — whether physical, economic, financial, institutional, technological or social — preventing the halting and reversing of deforestation and forest degradation?

Deforestation of forested peatlands is generally associated with the construction of a dense net of ditches/canals to float the timber out. After deforestation, this drainage infrastructure increases - in combination with the drying and mineralization of the no longer shaded peat soil and remaining wood trash - the risk of long-term smouldering peat fires. These fires cause huge emissions of GHGs and toxic haze, which affect global climate, regional and national health and livelihoods. Peatland forest barriers and gaps have been identified in the [2022 Global Peatlands Assessment](#), the most comprehensive assessment to date on the state of the world's peatlands, developed by UNEP and the Global Peatlands Initiative with contributions from 226 experts worldwide (extracted below and prioritized).

- a. Physical
 - i. Deforestation of forested peatlands leading to direct and indirect drainage
 - ii. Drainage and afforestation of peatlands leading to irreversible degradation
 - iii. Peatland forest fires incl. smouldering peat fires
 - iv. Hydrological disruption at landscape scale
- b. Economic
 - i. Opportunity costs (conserving peatlands vs converting for agriculture or secondary forests)
- c. Financial
 - i. Insufficient funding for peatland conservation and restoration
 - ii. Perverse incentives/subsidies that support harmful land uses (peatland drainage)
 - iii. Underdeveloped finance mechanisms (PES, carbon and biodiversity credits, etc.)
- d. Institutional
 - i. Weak governance systems that do not empower stewardship by Indigenous Peoples and local communities
 - ii. Limited implementation capacity and coordination across agencies
 - iii. Lack of peatland-specific policies or integration into national frameworks
- e. Technological
 - i. Gaps in peatland mapping and inventories
 - ii. Weak MRV systems
 - iii. Limited technical and human capacity
- f. Social
 - i. Lack of awareness of peatland value and ecosystem services
 - ii. Limited recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities rights and roles



- iii. Underrepresentation of women and marginalized groups in decision making

B. What potential levers, whether economic, financial, institutional, social or technological, exist for accelerating the implementation of the commitment to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation?

- a. Physical
 - i. Protect intact peatlands and expand protected areas
 - ii. Rewet drained peatlands to restore hydrology and stop emissions
 - iii. Establish buffer zones to prevent encroachment and degradation
 - iv. Sustainable land-use management at landscape and basin levels
- b. Economic
 - i. Promote sustainable wet livelihoods (incl. paludiculture) and associated value chains that use peatlands responsibly (e.g. NDPE standards)
 - ii. Create incentives for conservation, restoration, and sustainable management
 - iii. Phase out harmful economic activities and support transition pathways
- c. Financial
 - i. Redirect subsidies toward sustainable practices and remove harmful incentives
 - ii. Scale blended finance
 - iii. Strengthen carbon and ecosystem services finance
- d. Institutional
 - i. Integrate peatlands into national climate, biodiversity, and land degradation/management policies
 - ii. Develop cross-sector governance and coordination mechanisms
- e. Technological
 - i. Develop national peatland inventories
 - ii. Strengthen MRV frameworks
 - iii. Use data to inform policy (science-policy-action interface)
- f. Social
 - i. Ensure inclusive, transparent, and gender responsive governance
 - ii. Recognize and empower Indigenous Peoples and local communities
 - iii. Promote co-management and community-led conservation
 - iv. Build capacity and support knowledge exchange across stakeholders

C. What country, regional or sector experiences, best practices, and lessons learned can be shared regarding forest conservation and restoration?

- a. Coordinated networks and global platforms to enable global and local scale action for peatland forests:
 - i. The Global Peatlands Initiative (established, UNEP-led) is an award winning multistakeholder partnership that brings together 67 members across 23 countries, serving as a global knowledge and coordination hub across science, policy, finance, and action, promoting South-



- South and Triangular Cooperation, and working to conserve, restore, and sustainably manage peatlands for people, nature, and the planet.
- ii. The Peatland Breakthrough, pre-launched at COP30.
 - iii. The International Tropical Peatlands Centre (established, Indonesia-led) promotes South-South and Triangular Cooperation by facilitating knowledge exchange, capacity building, and joint action among tropical peatland countries.
 - iv. The IUCN UK Peatland Programme (established, IUCN-led) is a collaborative initiative hosted by The Wildlife Trusts focused on restoring and conserving peatlands in the UK.
 - v. The [Venice Agreement for Peatlands](#), a living and evolving community-driven platform for transdisciplinary peatland conservation that brings together artists, scientists, Indigenous leaders, policy makers, and land stewards, weaving diverse knowledge systems to support locally-grounded action with global relevance
 - vi. The European Peatlands Initiative (emerging)
 - vii. The Patagonian Peatlands Initiative (emerging)

D. How can forest conservation, sustainable management, and restoration best reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development, the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities, and different degrees of forest cover?

- a. Consider the different ecological characteristics of tropical peatland forests (linked to development contexts). Tropical peatland forests differ significantly from temperate and other forest types, particularly in their hydrology and carbon storage, leading to inequalities that need to be addressed. For example, Indonesia's results-based payments are linked to forests in general rather than peatland forests, despite their different ecological functions and higher GHG carbon storage, resulting in unfair compensation. In addition, there are increasing challenges in applying IPCC standards for accounting and compensation, as peatlands are not fully captured by either the Forest or the Wetlands Supplement alone. This highlights the need to update existing frameworks and consider peatland forests as a distinct category under both IPCC Forest and Wetlands Supplements.
- b. Consider using the emerging Global Ecosystem Typology to improve alignment between the Paris Agreement and GBF target tracking.
- c. Address inequalities in conservation jobs between diverse realities of countries, ensuring fair access, distribution of benefits, and opportunities across countries and communities.