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## **Long-term responsibility in managing Baltic peatlands**

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### Abstract

Peatland management is a complex task requiring simultaneous attention of several aspects of peatlands: nature value (biodiversity; fauna and flora habitats), water regime, climate impact; resource (peat) management; land management (forestry and agriculture) and others. In more recent years it has become a tendency to only consider good management or practice those activities that are directed to keeping peatlands in their natural state or reviving them to a close to natural state. This being directly in line with the Paris climate agreement and other similar documents. However, global demand for all kinds of resources is constantly growing, putting pressure not only on peatlands, but to all natural landscapes. Already now, and definitely in the future, it will be a cause for a lot of heated arguments and conflicts. Without doubt, environmental protection is a top priority. Nevertheless, we have to choose carefully the means of achieving this noble goal. This applies also to peatland management. There are plenty of large areas of peatlands in the Baltic countries. Unfortunately, a big proportion of them are drained or affected by drainage – largely for the purposes of forestry and agriculture, somewhat also for peat production. Most of these peatlands are actively in use. As they make up a large part of the total usable land of the Baltics, rewetting of all these peatlands is just not possible, neither in short- nor long-term. This means that the definition ‘responsible management’ of peatlands must cover not only restoration and conservation but also other uses. One must not forget that ‘responsible’ peatland usages also have direct and indirect environmental impacts. Keeping that in mind we must always consider the big picture.