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Introduction

The year 2023 was much about the development of RPP in the context of the Dutch Covenant on the Environmental Impact of Potting Soil and Substrates. An important part of the covenant is the goal of the sector to reach the RPP label (or equivalent) on substrates containing peat raw materials 100% of the time in 2025. In addition to the usual work of managing certification processes for new applications, this also included the initiation of several actions, such as exploring platforms to investigate possibilities for contributions to large-scale restoration, enhancing insights into after-use valuation, and developing improved guidelines for assessments.

About RPP

Board

Mr. Guus van Berckel - VPN - representing growing media production
Mr. Bert von Seggern - GME (Growing Media Europe) – representing growing media production
Ms. Ilze Ozola - Latvia Peat Association – representing peat production
Mr. Tomi Koivula - GME (Growing Media Europe) - representing peat production
Mr. Jüri-Ott Salm - ELF (Estonian Fund for Nature) – representing environmental NGO
Mr. Hans Schutten - Wetlands International- representing environmental NGO

Committee of Experts (CoE)

Ms. Silke Kumar - peat production
Ms. Sabine Jordan - peatland science
Mr. Bernd Hofer - legislation - technical aspects
Mr. Ron Bleijswijk - certification
Mr. Nerijus Zableckis- environmental aspects- after-use

Secretariat

Mrs Maureen Kuenen – Executive Officer
Mr Hein Boon - Director RPP



2023 Activities and outreach RPP

RPP continued to spread its message and increase name recognition throughout 2023. National and 'local' questions/discussion about responsible sourcing' of peat:

Presentations were given and discussions were held with numerous organisations or on events : IVG substrate, working group AFAÏA, the German Landpartie + BMUW, responding to articles in press, RHP Productgroup Peat, the Dutch Substrate Knowledge Day, IPM Essen, Peatland Round Table, Scottish Consultation, IPS, Torf und Humus-Tag, the Dutch Covenant, peat-item NDR, Horticultural week, and more.

RPP participates in the European project MERLIN. The project brings together knowledge and practical experience from research in peatlands. It offers perspective, but it is not a fast-paced process. In MERLIN, the emphasis is on Nature-based Solutions (NbS), with the focus on large-scale restoration of peatlands. This includes the production of renewable raw materials through paludiculture, which involves cultivation on peatlands with groundwater levels maintained close to the surface.

During the second roundtable with the peat extraction sector, an inventory was made of the obstacles the sector encounters regarding (large-scale) restoration and what information is still lacking. Bottlenecks often arise from regulations related to ownership, land use, and differences in permit conditions across EU countries. But there is also a need for things such as best practices for after-use implementation, data on economic applications, clarity on financing, information on how to achieve net-zero emissions, and cross-sector collaboration within catchments. In the next round table the strategy of the peat extraction sector will be discussed, followed by a cross-sectoral round table.

Dutch Covenant on the Environmental Impact of Potting Soil and Substrates.

November 2022, in the Netherlands, an agreement was made on the environmental impact of substrates and growing media. The aim of the contract is to reduce the environmental impact of substrates in the supply chain. To achieve this reduction, the focus will be on:

- Increasing the use of renewable raw materials
- Using only responsibly sourced peat

Objectives for 2025 in the covenant are, as presented by the VPN (Association of Dutch Growing Media Producers):

- Consumer market substrates will be composed of 65% renewable organic materials
- Professional market substrates will be composed 35% renewable organic materials
- 100% of the substrates will carry the RPP label

A further determination of longer-term targets (2030 and beyond) will be made after a thorough study of materials, availability, qualities, economic aspects, etc. This study is performed in 2023 by WUR in consultation with the involved parties. In 2024 further targets will be presented.

Achieving 100% RPP-labelled substrates by 2025 seems both realistic and attainable. In Europe, approximately 30 million cubic meters of peat are used in substrates annually, with around 5 million cubic meters used in the Netherlands alone. Notably, over 11 million cubic meters of RPP-certified peat were available in 2023, indicating a strong foundation for meeting this goal.

Further growth in the EU to high percentages in 2025 and beyond will largely depend on the industry's positioning and demand across Europe.

Certification peat harvesting sites

The new certifications and regranted certifications in 2023 are based on the fact that the company meets the requirements of RPP certification scheme version 3.0 for the location in concern. The year 2023 resulted in 21 new certifications and 16 recertifications based on RPP-scheme version 3.0. New certification were granted to:

22/089	ERA Valduse Aktsiaselts	Illaste, License No. Rapm-045
23/090	Torf und Humuswerk Uchte	Darlaten, License No. Az.: 552-023/2007
23/091	AS Nurme Turvas	Nurme Turvas, License No. KMIN-009
23/092	Aurich-Wiesmoor-Torfvertriebs GmbH	Neudorfer Moor, LK-Leer, site no. 3 + 4
23/093	Aurich-Wiesmoor-Torfvertriebs GmbH	Marcardsmoor - Duvelshorn 2009, License No. AZ: 909/2009/GIS Nr. 365
23/094	Aurich-Wiesmoor-Torfvertriebs GmbH	Marcardsmoor - Duvelshorn 2013, License No. IV-60-610/1742/2013
23/095	Aurich-Wiesmoor-Torfvertriebs GmbH	Marcardsmoor - Duvelshorn 2021, License No. IV-60-610-2567/2021
23/096	Scanpeat AB	Golmossen, license No. 551-4758-12
23/097	Van der Knaap Eesti OÜ	Meelva, License No. PoIM-10
23/098	SALDUS MELIORACIJA SIA	Kirmenieku-Dadzu, License No. CS20ZD0068
23/099	SALDUS MELIORACIJA SIA	Tirela, License No. CS20ZD0077
23/100	SALDUS MELIORACIJA SIA	Spundinu, License No. CS18ZD0165
23/101	SALDUS MELIORACIJA SIA	Vilisu, License No. CS16ZD0102
23/102	Jiffy Unitorf AB	Bottnaryd, License No., 551-349-2019
23/103	Jiffy Unitorf AB	Grälebo, License No., 551-5947-15
23/104	Neova AB	Norrbomuren, License No. 543-16576-06
23/105	Neova AB	Hällaryd 2, License No.543-6937-2011
23/106	Neova Oy	Jämiänkeidas-Hirvikeidas, License No. 135/2006/4, LSY-2003-Y- 411
23/107	Neova Oy	Okssuo, License No. 133/2007/4, LSY-2004-Y-143
23/108	Neova Oy	Valkianeva, License No. 95/2016/1, LSSAVI/5358/04.08/2014
23/109	Neova Oy	Haukineva, License No. 54/2018/, LSSAVI/5455/2014

Inspection peat harvesting sites

Inspections are carried out by four independent inspectors by means of a desk assessment and on-site inspection checking compliance to the Principles and Criteria of the RPP certification scheme. Both assessments are validated by a second inspector (cross-check). Depending on the results of the inspections, the inspector gives a recommendation for certification. Certification processes are evaluated by the secretariat under responsibility of the Board. In case of any uncertainties or objections, this is handled by the Committee of Experts and the Board.

Chain of Custody

The Chain of Custody is based on mass balance to make trade of peat feasible. Peat is often shipped in bulk, comes from different sources and is blended for quality purposes. At participating companies, the volumes of RPP-peat sold and the volumes of RPP-peat produced or sourced are checked administratively. Full explanation of the Chain of Custody is available on the RPP-website (2nd block).

Companies that wish to trade RPP-certified peat or use it in the production of growing media can join the RPP Chain of Custody by selecting either Option 1 or Option 2. Participating companies must agree to an annual inspection of their data and records to verify the volumes of incoming and outgoing RPP-certified peat. In 2023 no new companies were registered and the list of companies participating in the RPP Chain of Custody remained the same (listed on the RPP website):

<u>Company</u>	<u>Registration #</u>	<u>option</u>	<u>Info activity</u>
Griendtsveen	RPP-16-0100	1	Producer
LENSLI	RPP-16-0103	2	Producer and User
Mokura	RPP-17-0106	1	Producer
Agaris	RPP-17-0107	2	Producer and User
Kudras Energija	RPP-17-0108	1	Producer
Nevema BV	RPP-17-0112	1	Producer and trade
Stender(Euflor)	RPP-17-0113	1	Producer and User
Kraver AS	RPP-17-0114	1	Producer
Bolpeat	RPP-18-0115	1	Trade
Compo	RPP-18-0117	2	Producer and User
Klasmann-Deilmann GmbH Geeste	RPP-18-0119	1	Producer and User
Nord Agri	RPP-20-0120	1	User
Hortimed	RPP-20-0121	1	User
Kekkilä BVB	RPP-20-0122	1	Producer and User
Kalloveen	RPP-20-0123	1	Trade
PokonNaturado	RPP-21-0124	1	User
Biolande	RPP-21-0125	1	User
ICA substrates	RPP-21-0126	1	User and trade
G&C materials	RPP-21-0127	1	Trade
Freepeat BV	RPP-22-0128	2	User
Meegaa substrates New BV	RPP-22-0129	2	User
Legro potgrondbedrijf BV	RPP-22-0130	2	User
Legro Mushroom Casing Solutions BV	RPP-22-0131	1	User



Inspection Chain of Custody

Inspections for the Chain of Custody in 2023 is performed for the year 2022 by the RPP-secretariat on location and/or online. There were no significant irregularities. About 60% of the RPP-certified peat in the market was used for growing media. Most of it is traded in bulk and as RPP-labelled growing media in bags. There is more communication at the company level regarding the use or production of RPP-certified peat, such as on websites or in sustainability reports, than there is specifically at the level of the growing media itself.

In 2023, the use of RPP-certified peat in growing media continued to grow. In the Netherlands the percentage of certified peat in 2023 is assumed to have grown to 60% (2022 53%) and in Germany the share in 2023 was 40% (data provided by IVG). The official Dutch figure for 2023 will be available in September 2024. These percentages are expected to grow the coming years due to the signing of the Dutch covenant. Nine additional companies registered for the Chain of Custody in 2021-2022 and started to market RPP certified peat in 2022/2023.

Financial results

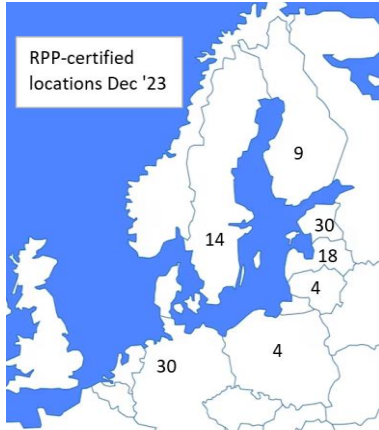
<u>RPP Financial result 2023</u>		
<u>Gains and losses Foundation RPP</u>	<u>Profit/Loss 2023</u>	<u>Profit/Loss 2022</u>
<u>Income</u>		
Contribution and annual fees	124.553	97.162
Inspections & certification	74.282	88.434
Total:	198.835	185.596
<u>Expenses</u>		
Organisation & management	182.343	139.043
Certification	43.383	41.410
Total:	225.726	180.453
Result	-26.891	5.143

audit financial statement by Blaak & Breederveld accountants Naaldwijk, NL

The loss in 2023 is covered by savings in the past.

Outlook 2024

The RPP Principles & Criteria are now applied by companies in all peat extraction areas. Knowledge of the RPP values is spreading across Europe. Ideally, this will contribute to national governments also conforming to the RPP Principles & Criteria



RPP's target of achieving mainstream status is coming within reach, not only in terms of the total certified area but also in the distribution of certified locations across the main peat-producing countries.

RPP will make every effort to achieve this status by the end of 2024 and early 2025, providing a solid foundation for further discussions/cooperation with the industry, NGOs, and policymakers in the relevant countries.

Furthermore RPP will continue its role in the Dutch Covenant and the MERLIN project

