



International Permafrost Association

Opening note

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we present the September Newsletter highlighting the work of IPA Action Groups and other permafrost-related activities.

After the northern hemisphere summer break, the IPA Executive started its work again. Per invitation, we added an ex-officio member to the EC: Anne Morgenstern, working at AWI in Potsdam, with a long-standing insight into the work of the

IPA and a lot of experience in scientific cooperation with Russia and also coordinating AWI's cooperation with Alaska, both of high relevance to understanding Earth's permafrost environments. We are looking forward to working with Anne and take the chance to thank for her support and commitment to the IPA.

The EC has also continued to work on the new image of the IPA and more specifically in

the design of the new logo. We thank the adhering bodies and PYRN for several comments sent following the two logo proposals discussed in May's Council Meeting. We have been working since July with the graphic designer Pablo Ruiz on the two finalists that will be voted on by our national representatives in October.

Stay tuned and contribute!

Isabelle and Gonçalo

Welcome Anne Morgenstern as an ex-officio member to the IPA Executive Committee

The International Permafrost Association (IPA) is pleased to welcome Dr. Anne Morgenstern as an ex-officio member to the IPA Executive Committee (EC).

Dr. Anne Morgenstern is a research scientist in the Permafrost Research Section at the Alfred Wegener Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) in Germany. She has more than two decades of experience in



Arctic permafrost research, with a particular focus on the degradation of ice-rich permafrost and associated landscape and ecosystem changes. Most of her fieldwork has been conducted in Siberia, while in

recent years she has expanded her research activities to Alaska and Canada.

Alongside her scientific work, Anne has long been engaged in fostering international scientific cooperation in Arctic research. For many years, she served as AWI's Coordinator of Scientific Cooperation with Russia, supporting long-term research partnerships and scientific exchange across the Russian Arctic. In recent years,

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she has taken on a corresponding role focused on scientific cooperation with Alaska. Across these roles, she has worked to connect researchers and institutions, develop long-term partnerships, and facilitate collaborative research across disciplines and national boundaries.

Anne has been a member of the IPA International Advisory Committee since 2016, represents Germany in the Cryosphere Working Group of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), and serves as a co-editor for permafrost at the journal *The Cryosphere*. She is committed

to fostering scientific exchange and long-term international collaboration, as well as strengthening meaningful and respectful engagement between researchers and local and Indigenous communities in Arctic and permafrost research.

IPA Action Group: InICE recent activities and research progress

The InICE Action Group has continued its research on ground ice mapping and actively engaged in academic exchanges to share recent findings and discuss future research directions.

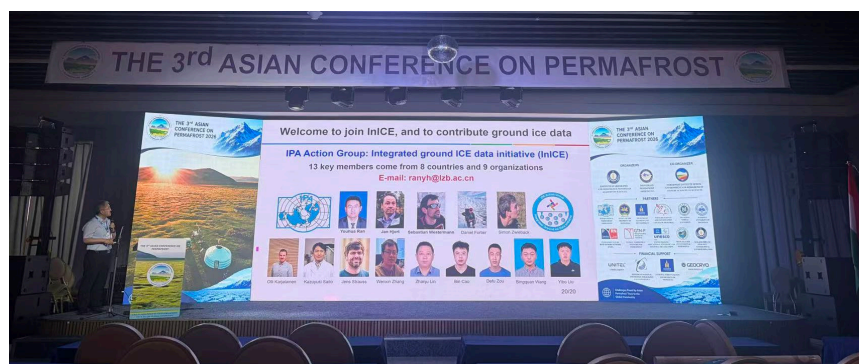
priorities for future work. These exchanges also helped strengthen connections with colleagues across the permafrost community and laid the groundwork for further collaboration.

group's mapping efforts to ground ice at greater depths.

In the next phase, the Action Group will develop ground ice mapping methods that integrate expert knowledge, process-based understanding, and multi-source observations to produce a high-resolution dataset of deep ground ice across Northern Hemisphere permafrost regions. This work aims to advance understanding of the spatial distribution, volume, and environmental controls of ground ice, providing essential data to support assessments of climate change impacts on permafrost environments.

Through these efforts, the InICE Action Group aims to address gaps in ground ice data and will continue to share research progress, methods, and findings with the wider permafrost research community.

Provided by Youhua Ran



From 26 June to 2 July 2026, members of the group attended the Asian Conference on Permafrost (ACOP) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where they presented their research through oral presentations and posters. The conference offered valuable opportunities to share advances in ground ice research, discuss methodological approaches, and explore

A major achievement was the publication of a near-surface ground ice dataset in *Science Bulletin* in February 2026. The dataset provides a foundation for characterizing the spatial distribution of near-surface ground ice and supports research into permafrost environments and their changes. It also serves as a starting point for extending the

IPA Action Group: Permafrost-Associated Gas Hydrates

The IPA Action Group on Permafrost-Associated Gas Hydrates has made considerable progress building its geospatial directory of relevant gas hydrate and subsea permafrost metadata. Thanks to our student assistant, Lars Ebel (AWI/GFZ), the repository has evolved from a GIS-based platform to an AI-assisted online dashboard. The dashboard now features a data entry form, allowing permafrost community members to easily upload metadata. You can explore it [here](#)! In addition, we are integrating the repository with terrestrial and subsea permafrost distribution maps, as well as other thematic datasets. Lars

Ebel presented this work at the International Conference on Gas Hydrates (ICGH) in Lyon, France in June/July 2026. In addition to contributing to the dashboard, several members of our Action Group are co-investigators for an International



Continental Scientific Drilling Program (ICDP) initiative that has reached the full proposal stage. The ICDP initiative is targeting a land-to-sea transect in the Western Canadian Arctic and our geospatial data repository will serve as a metadata compilation to help plan this endeavour. As we look ahead towards the second phase of our Action Group, we aim to use the dashboard as the foundation for a pan-Arctic paper about permafrost-associated gas hydrate occurrence and indicators.

Provided by Michael Angelopoulos

When presidents and kings experience climate change – science meets politics

On September 1, 2026, I accompanied the heads of state of the German-speaking countries (Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Austria, and Switzerland) to the Stubai Glacier. At the invitation of Austrian Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen and the State of Tyrol, I joined colleagues from the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the Alfred Wegener Institute (Germany), and the Free



University of Brussels in explaining the dramatic impacts of climate change.

At the “Top of Tyrol” viewing platform, we presented the realities of glacial retreat and permafrost warming and vanishing to our high-ranking guests, discussing the critical consequences for the Stubai Valley, the Alps, and beyond.

During the evening state banquet, Prince Alois of Liechtenstein highlighted the raised awareness of climate change-prompted by the “striking yet sobering images of the glacier”—in his speech. The scientists now hope that this newfound awareness among heads of state will provide concrete impetus for national and

international cryosphere monitoring. A particular focus is placed on supporting the UN Decade of Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034)—a crucial period for better understanding, communicating, and addressing global climate change.

Provided by Isabelle Gärtner-Roer

A regional effort in advancing permafrost research in the Hindu Kush Himalaya takes shape

From 27–31 July 2026, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) convened regional experts and partners for technical training, inclusive science communication, and dialogue to advance permafrost research across the Hindu Kush Himalaya.

Permafrost is widespread across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH), yet remains poorly studied. Beyond the Tibetan Plateau, the region still lacks sufficient boreholes, standardised monitoring methods, and an operational monitoring network. As warming accelerates, understanding permafrost distribution, degradation, and related hazards is increasingly important for mountain communities and decision-makers.



Experts agreed that the HKH has a strong scientific foundation but needs better observation systems. Research is expanding in permafrost mapping, remote sensing, rock glacier inventories, climate modelling, and field studies.

"This week showed us what's possible when scientists, institutions, and

communities work from the same evidence base. We have to turn that shared understanding into a lasting, coordinated monitoring system for the region." Qianggong Zhang, Head, Climate and Environmental Risks, ICIMOD.



A three-day workshop on energy balance modelling selected 20 early-career researchers from more than 100 applicants. Training covered model setup, input-data preparation, surface energy fluxes, snow and ground-temperature dynamics, model evaluation, and interpretation for Himalayan permafrost environments.

“We brought together the people who are doing the actual work on the ground, those who are deploying sensors, mapping rock glaciers, running the models. That’s where the gaps in our knowledge become obvious, and also where the solutions start”, Mohd Farooq Azam, Senior Intervention Manager for Cryosphere intervention, ICIMOD.

ICIMOD began permafrost research in 2013 by mapping HKH-wide distribution using rock glacier polygons, followed by ground-temperature sensor deployment in Nepal’s Langtang Valley in 2014. Research has since expanded to Nepal’s Limi Valley with Tribhuvan



University and Bhutan’s Shodug

Glacier with the National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology.

ICIMOD also held a session on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and science communication, stressing accessible and relevant communication of cryosphere research to policymakers, practitioners, and mountain communities.

Recent hazard events highlight the impacts of changes beneath high-mountain landscapes. A thermokarst-related event in Humla, Nepal, in May 2025 affected local communities, while a June 2021 hill collapse in Bhutan, likely linked to permafrost thaw, further

underscored the need to translate science into practical knowledge. Participants emphasised clear and inclusive communication to support preparedness, policy engagement, and community resilience.

The week concluded with a regional dialogue among scientists, government representatives, and institutional leaders from Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Participants called for stronger data sharing, sustained collaboration, and greater political commitment to improve decisions affecting mountain communities.

Provided by Qianggong Zhang

Announcements

• **PYRN 2026-2028:** Applications are now open to join the Permafrost Young Researchers Network (PYRN) Executive Committee for the 2026-2028

term. If you would like to get involved with PYRN, contribute to the network, and connect with early-career permafrost researchers from around the

world, we would love to hear from you! Applications are open until 2nd October 2026.



Further information and the application form can be found here ([link](#)).

• **III International Scientific and Practical Conference on Geotechnical Engineering in Cold Regions** will be held in Moscow, Russia, from 10–12 February 2027. **The registration deadline has been extended until 15 October**

2026. Further information, including details on registration, abstract submission, and the conference program, will be available on the conference website ([link](#)).

• **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)** has opened the call for abstracts for the international conference:

Advancing Science, Policy, and Regional Cooperation in the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034). The conference will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 25–27 November 2026. For further information, please visit the ICIMOD Call for Abstracts page ([link](#)).

Editorial Board

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For future newsletters, contributions or input are always welcome. Please feel free to contact the **IPA Secretariat at secretariat@permafrost.org (c/o Lin Chen)**.