

## **Report of the 3rd SEApeat Project Coordination Meeting 17 December 2013, Shah Alam, Malaysia**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Third SEApeat Coordination Meeting was held in Holiday Inn Glenmarie, Shah Alam, Malaysia on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2013 at 14.30. The meeting was attended by delegates from Brunei, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, the ASEAN Secretariat and the Global Environment Centre (GEC) as the Implementing Agency and representative from the EU delegation in Malaysia. The List of Participants is found in **Annex 1**.

### **AGENDA ITEM 1: WELCOME REMARKS**

1. Ms. Viktorija Kaidalova, Project Manager from the EU Delegation in Malaysia gave the welcome remarks for the meeting. She indicated her support for the project and noted that the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) mission in 2013 had again given a very positive rating for the project. She informed the meeting that the Operations section of the European Delegation in Malaysia would be closing down at the end of 2013 and in future the project would be managed by project management staff based in Brussels. She requested that any feedback be given to her during the series of meetings.

### **AGENDA ITEM 2: INTRODUCTION AND CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

2. Mr Faizal Parish, Director of GEC and Chair of the meeting, introduced and proposed the agenda and it was accepted by all present. The agenda appears in **Annex 2**.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3: CONFIRMATION OF PCM2 MEETING MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

3. The minutes of the previous meeting held in Pontianak, Indonesia introduced and accepted by the meeting. The matters arising were discussed as in **Annex 3**. Some of the key items included:
  - It was noted that the planned assessment in Lao PDR could not be carried out in 2013 due to the changeover in the project implementing agency. A new budget will be allocated for 2014 for assessment.
  - For Myanmar, there was a suggestion to engage the Ministry of Agriculture. Sann Lwin indicated that the ministry would be invited to a proposed national workshop in early 2014.
  - The Philippines is still waiting for confirmation of location for the peatland assessment with New Britain Palm Oil as suggested in the July meeting.
  - In Thailand, agreement was finalised and several activities have took place in 2013.
  - In Vietnam, several activities with local communities have been finalised and carried out.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: PROGRESS UPDATE OF OF SEAPEAT ACTIVITIES AND PRESENTATION OF 2014**

**WORKPLAN**

**a. Regional**

4. Fuad Shariff presented the progress at regional level in 2013 as in **Annex 4** and workplan for 2014.
5. Faizal Parish pointed out that there is a significant amount of budget left over. This will be allocated for activities in 2014 and if possible enable an extension to 2015.

**b. Cambodia**

6. No representatives were present from Cambodia due to unavoidable circumstances.

**Action 1: GEC to follow up with Cambodia to develop a workplan for further assessments in 2014**

**c. Indonesia**

7. Mr Zainuri Hasyim, Director of Mitra Insani Foundation (MIF) provided the updates on activities carried out in Harapan Jaya village, Riau province, Indonesia. The presentation is attached as **Annex 5**.
8. The plans for Teluk Binjai which is a secondary site is being finalised. Other villages are also interested in taking part in similar activities. He pointed out the importance of a comprehensive approach to work with local communities – focussing on assessing the overall needs of the community and supporting the community to take the lead in addressing these needs.

**Action 2: Mitra insani to follow up discussions with the provincial and local government as well as APFP project to explore how to scale up successful activities at the local level.**

**d. Lao PDR**

9. Mr Heuen Chanphana presented the progress and suggestions for activities that could be undertaken in Lao PDR in 2014. The presentation appears as **Annex 6**.
10. One possible activity is to conduct more assessment and laboratory analysis of suspected peat soils. Confirming the existence of peat soil would help in the development of a national action plan. This is followed by awareness and education about peatlands. A tentative costing for the activities is in the region of USD35,000 for a duration of 18 months.
11. Faizal Parish suggested that an allocation of about \$10-15,000 could be made for 2014 to support assessments in Lao PDR. Dr Quoi from Vietnam could assist in assessment and management of potential peatlands in Lao PDR. A national action plan may not be necessary if the peatland area is too limited – in which case a management plan may be sufficient.

**Action 3: Lao PDR to develop a proposal for peatland assessment and sent to GEC by January 2013.**

## e. Malaysia

12. Mr. Nagarajan Rengasamy presented the progress of the project in Malaysia in 2013. The presentation appears as in **Annex 7**.
13. The meeting noted the effective action under the project to support the engagement of the local community in the prevention of peatland fires in Raja Musa Forest Reserve.

## f. Myanmar

14. Mr. Sann Lwin from FREDa presented the updates for Myanmar in 2013, as is shown in **Annex 8**.
15. The meeting noted that significant peatlands areas have been found in the Inle Lake and Heho regions.

**Action 4: GEC to follow up with FREDa on the option to allocate additional funds to expand the peatland survey and management activities.**

## g. Philippines

16. Ms Armida P. Andres provided the updates and 2014 Workplan for Philippines as presented in **Annex 9**.
17. Faizal commented that additional funds can be channelled to Leyte Sab-a if necessary to rebuild systems that were damaged by typhoon Haiyan.
18. Dr Raman commented on the choice of crops grown in Philippines and encouraged them to learn from other countries about agriculture in peatlands.
19. He also encouraged all countries to procure augers for the purpose of identifying new and potential peatlands in their respective countries.

**Action 5: Philippines to provide feedback on the situation in Leyte and the need (if any) for additional support.**

## h. Thailand

20. Ms Chatchaya Buaniam/Surang Phornprasit presented the progress update for Thailand as in **Annex 10**.
21. The meeting noted that the activities in 2013 focused on education and awareness building
  - a. Awareness Materials in the form of posters n notebooks were produced.
  - b. Training courses were held in July, divided into 3 batches. Participants from these courses also formed volunteer fire brigade groups for their respective areas.
  - c. For the development of a National Action Plan, more data need to be collected to support the validity of their NAP.
22. Thailand requested the balance funds of USD 13,000 to be retained to support the project until March 2014. The Chairperson saw no problems with extending the project until March to enable completion of the NAP.

23. The chair also encouraged the documentation of their community based fire fighting organization so that other countries can learn from Thailand. .

**Action 6: Thailand to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the community firefighting groups in future reports**

**i. Vietnam**

24. Dr Le Phat Quoi presented the 2014 workplan for Vietnam, which is shown in ANNEX 11.
25. The Vietnam component has up to 2012, focused on U Minh Thuong National Park. Under the SEApeat project support - they are starting to look at U Minh Ha National Park. The main local partner for this project is the Center for Environment Science and Ecosystem (CESE) which is based in HCM City. Among others, the Green Contract system is being transferred to UMH National Park.

**AGENDA ITEM 5: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

**a. Project Reporting Schedule**

26. The project management schedule was discussed (Annex 12) and it was highlighted that the deadline for submission of financial reports and 2014 budget requests to GEC is already due as of 12<sup>th</sup> December.

**Action 7: All components provide a proposal for 2014 budget by 19<sup>th</sup> December so that it can be finalized by the end of the meeting.**

**b. Feedback/Finding from Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM)**

27. The findings for the 2013 ROM was presented by Ms. Kaidalova as shown in **Annex 13**.
28. The ROM for 2013 was conducted by Mr. Egger Topper who visited project sites in Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam. Overall, the grade is very positive and similar to last year's results. The score for Relevance (A) was maintained while Efficiency (B) dipped slightly. Effectiveness (B) stayed the same while Impact (A) improved. The last factor potential sustainability (B) fell compared to the year before.

**Action 8: GEC and respective components to follow up the recommendations in the ROM report.**

**c. Progress against LFA**

29. The Chairman presented the draft report of progress against the LFA targets and asked for feedback from the countries.

**d. Linkage between APFP and SEApeat**

30. The meeting was reminded that the APFP project would end in June 2014, while SEApeat is scheduled to close in December 2014. Dr. Raman highlighted that the projects is already very much interlinked in a very positive and synergistic way. It was agreed that there should be some synchronization of the work to ensure that resources from APFP are all allocated by June and that if appropriate follow-up after June could be supported by SEApeat.

**Action 9: Respective APFP and SEApeat country coordinators to communicate to ensure effective coordination in the phase out of APFP support.**

**e. Inventory Reports and Data**

31. The need to ensure all peatland information is collected centrally and kept in the main system was discussed.

**Action 10: All countries undertaking peatland assessments need to provide completed datasheets in standard SEApeat format and provide photographs, maps, reports and related documents to GEC by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014.**

**AGENDA ITEM 6: OTHER MATTERS**

33. Faizal briefed the meeting on the outcome of the EU audit which was undertaken in April-May 2013 based on the 2011 and 2012 financial statements. In general the audit indicated that most of the accounting records were adequate. However a number of problems were identified including:

- a) Receipts written in local language without translation. All receipts in local language need a short summary in English to be written on them
- b) Missing documentation – Several receipts were missing although vouchers were present. In some cases this referred to Boarding passes for return journeys for workshop participants. EU is very strict about boarding passes – in case these are missing it should be adequate to provide a declaration of honour ( ie a signed document by the person travelling that their boarding pass was misplaced)
- c) Lack of invoices – The EU auditors asked for formal invoices to be provided wherever possible – in addition to receipts.

34. In the case of one country the amount of expenditure without receipts was more than US\$5000. If adequate documentation could not be provided – then the respective countries would need to return the funds.

35. Some aspects in the Audit report – were still not clear and need to be resolved.

**Action 11: Respective countries with audit queries to work with GEC to resolve issues**

**Action 12: GEC to follow up with EU and try to seek clarification on outstanding issues.**

**Action 13: All country components to ensure that they maintain adequate financial records and documentation in future.**

36. No other matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 18.30