



## Report of the Second Project Steering Committee Meeting

3 November 2010, Manila, Philippines

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Project Steering Committee Meeting for the ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP) was held on 3 November 2010 in Manila, Philippines. The Meeting was attended by representatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam, the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Global Environment Centre (GEC) as the Regional Project Executing Agency (RPEA). The List of Participants is in **ANNEX 1**.

2. Ms. Theresa Mundita S. Lim, Director of Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), DENR, Philippines, officiated the Meeting. In her remarks, she highlighted that the Philippines have gained significant progress in addressing the needs of their peatlands from the almost zero knowledge on peatlands in 2005, through the implementation of the Philippine Component of the APFP, as well as through projects and research that promote the wise use of peatlands in the country. She further highlighted that although the area of peatlands in Philippines is small compared to other countries in ASEAN, their involvement in the Project shows an eagerness to know more about this unique wetland forest type. PAWB is also working hard, in coordination with other relevant government agencies and authorities at the pilot sites, to implement proactive measures to ensure that peatlands in the country are not further degraded either by fire, by conversion, and by inappropriate management practices.

3. The Meeting was chaired by Dr. Raman Letchumanan, Head of Environment Division of the ASEAN Secretariat as Project Director. Dr. Raman highlighted that the project is being closely monitored and its progress is being reported to the ASEAN Environment Ministers, in various forums, such as through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment (AMME), the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (COP), and the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution (MSC). In view of the recent fires in Riau, Indonesia and the associated haze affecting the region, the implementation of the project needs to be expedited especially in fire-prone areas.

### AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4. The Meeting adopted the Agenda, as in **ANNEX 2**.



# ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP)

Rehabilitation and Sustainable Use of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia



## AGENDA ITEM 2: SUMMARY PRESENTATION ON PROGRESS OF APFP

5. The Meeting noted the progress of the various components as described in the reports to the earlier Project Management Meeting (**Annexes 4-7**). The Meeting was informed that for the Indonesia Component, approximately 40 per cent of the planned activities for 2010 have been implemented mainly with co-funding, and the remaining activities will be shifted to the 2011 CAWPB. The Meeting noted the challenges in project implementation, including changes in personnel such as National Coordinator and the staff. Indonesia informed the Meeting that the current multi-agency National Committee for Peatland Management Strategy will serve as the National Project Implementation Committee (NPIC). The Project Director stressed the importance of ensuring that project activities are in line with national efforts, and therefore the NPIC should be formalized as soon as possible.

6. The Meeting also noted that for the Malaysia component, some activities such as the NPIC Meeting, two workshops and preliminary work at the pilot site had been implemented but that most activities planned for 2010 have been rescheduled due to the delay in the receipt of funds. Some initial work should be completed by the end of 2010 and the balance will be included in the 2011 CAWPB. The contributions of the Malaysian Government to preparatory activities at the project site were elaborated.

7. The Meeting noted the substantive progress of the Philippine Component. From August to October 2010, the Philippines Component has utilized PHP 935,090 or 24% of the first installment of funds from IFAD. The Meeting also noted that a training program for a core group of peatland managers scheduled for September 2010 was re-scheduled to November 2010.

8. The Meeting noted that Viet Nam has finally set up a bank account to receive the funds and submitted the Withdrawal Request to the ASEAN Secretariat. Some activities have been implemented in 2010, with co-funding from the Government of Viet Nam and other external sources.

9. On progress of Regional Component, the Meeting noted among others, the successful completion of the Workshop on Options for Carbon Financing to Support Peatland Management, which was held in October 2010 in Riau, Indonesia. The Meeting also noted the challenges faced in the first year of project implementation, such as the process of fund withdrawal by countries, ASEAN Secretariat and IFAD.

10. The Meeting also noted that the RPEA has set up the Project web portal (<http://www.aseanpeat.net/>) and that respective National Coordinators are encouraged to provide relevant information for inclusion in the portal.

11. Myanmar expressed interest to join the APFP and willingness to use their GEF country allocation. For this purpose, the Meeting agreed that RPEA will assist Myanmar in preparing a proposal for an allocation of USD 500,000 to 1 million and that all parties would work to expedite Myanmar's involvement as a fully participating



country. IFAD Indicated that it was in the process to establish a programme in Myanmar and could assist with this. Other non-participating countries (Thailand, Lao PDR and Cambodia) in the region were also encouraged to consider allocating resources from their GEF-5 allocation to facilitate involvement in the Project.

12. As highlighted in the Project Procedure Manual (PPM, Annex 1), countries need to put in place all institutional arrangements including the appointment of national coordinators/ experts as appropriate, establishment of National and Local Project Implementation Committees, etc. These administrative arrangements should all be in place by the end of 2010 at latest.

### **AGENDA ITEM 3: 2011 ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND BUDGET OF RESPECTIVE COMPONENTS**

13. The Meeting discussed the 2011 PAWPB, comprising CAWPBs presented by respective country representatives, and RAWPB presented by the RPEA. The Meeting endorsed the 2011 RAWPB, as in **ANNEX 3**.

14. The Meeting agreed that CAWPBs should follow the specified format, and include more detailed input budgets and implementation plans (including reference to lead agencies, co-finance, etc). It was also agreed that the countries need to put in place proper systems for procurement and accounting including the maintenance of necessary procurement and accounting files to facilitate audit and supervision.

15. The Meeting proposed that each country should produce a video documentary of the pilot sites, which will serve as baseline documentation. The Meeting also suggested that the videos from the various pilot sites in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Viet Nam will be presented to the 11<sup>th</sup> Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee Meeting (MSC) scheduled to be held on 16-17 February 2011 in Singapore. In this regard, the videos should be ready and submitted to the ASEAN Secretariat by 31 January 2011.

16. The Project Director stressed the importance to focus on site-level work and scale up the activities at the pilot site. The Meeting acknowledged the need to coordinate the production of awareness materials in the various countries at country and regional levels. The Meeting also acknowledged the Project's engagement with the private sector, in this regard the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), and the interest in the Project expressed by various companies.

17. With regard to the Training of Trainers, scheduled for March 2010 in Thailand, the Project Director requested countries to nominate the appropriate officers to attend the training. He also highlighted the importance to ensure that activities at country level are aligned with the regional activities, in particular for activities like the technical visit to Thailand and the TOT training.



## AGENDA ITEM 4: APMS COMMUNICATION PLAN

18. The Meeting adopted the Communication Plan for the APMS, as in **ANNEX 4**, as a guide for the communication activities for the project. It was acknowledged that appropriate linkages should be made with the ASEAN Communication Plan. The countries should prepare their own plans based on the overall plan and provide copies to the RPEA.

## AGENDA ITEM 5: SCHEDULED EVENTS/ MEETINGS

19. The Meeting noted the proposed calendar of main events and outputs at regional level for 2011 as in **ANNEX 11**. Countries scheduled to host regional events were asked to allocate necessary resources for national arrangements either from their national component or from other sources.

## AGENDA ITEM 6: NEXT STEPS

20. Ms. Shashi Kumaran of GEC presented the schedule for the preparation of the Semi-Annual Progress Report covering the period of July to December 2010 as in the table below. The meeting agreed that the countries should provide their reports according to the schedule.

Milestone	Report	Reporting Period	Due Date to ASEAN Secretariat	Due Date to IFAD
Progress Reports	2. Semi Annual Progress Report (SAPR) including unaudited financial statements	Jan-June/ July-Dec (semi-annually)	NC to submit to RPEA within 2 months (by 28 Feb 2011)  RPEA to compile and submit to ASEC within 2 weeks (by 15 March 2011)	Within 3 months after reporting period (i.e. 31st March and 30th Sept every year)

21. The Meeting agreed that the Peat Profile will be produced in volumes with specific topics, namely: (i) Peatlands in ASEAN; (ii) Peatland Management in ASEAN (Best Management Practices); (iii) Fire Prevention in ASEAN's Peatlands; (iv) Peatlands and Climate Change; and (v) Priority Peatland Areas for Conservation. The video documentary will also serve as baseline documentation of the various pilot sites. All countries were requested to contribute information, case studies and illustrations for these publications.

22. In order to produce a more interesting progress report on the Project to the Ministers, the Meeting agreed that the first two volumes (i and ii) would be produced



before the 11<sup>th</sup> MSC Meeting in February 2011 in Singapore, to be presented to the Ministers.

## **AGENDA ITEM 7: DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

23. It was agreed that the 3<sup>rd</sup> PSC Meeting would be held back-to-back with the 5<sup>th</sup> PMM in November 2011 in Viet Nam.

## **AGENDA ITEM 8: OTHER MATTERS**

24. The meeting noted that GEC has secured a grant from the European Commission which will provide some co-funding for the Project. The EU co-funding will be used to enhance or expand some of the existing APFP activities and support non-participating countries from the Mekong region to participate in the regional activities of the Project. The information paper is in **ANNEX14**.

25. The Meeting agreed that since the project was granted direct to GEC through an NGO funding window – GEC would be fully responsible for the project administration and reporting. However the focal points of the APFP project have been identified as associates in the project and would be kept informed of developments. It was agreed that the APFP PSC/ Management meeting would be used to monitor and provide guidance on the use of the EU funding.

26. Noting the interest expressed by countries in the northern ASEAN region, namely Myanmar, Lao PDR and Thailand, the Meeting suggested that GEC consider expanding the allocation of funding activities in these countries to support capacity building or even small-scale pilot activities. GEC indicated that it anticipated the arrangements for the project grant would be finalized by December 2010 – after which it would inform countries of the final arrangements.

27. IFAD suggested that the ASEAN Secretariat formally inform IFAD/ GEF regarding the EU grant, for information and record.

28. A field visit to the Agusan Marsh, which is Philippines' pilot site in southern Philippines, was scheduled for 4-5 November 2010. However, due to unfavourable weather condition, the flight to Butuan City was cancelled by the airlines, hence the whole field trip programme was also cancelled.

## **AGENDA ITEM 9: ADOPTION OF REPORT**

29. The Report of the Second Project Steering Committee Meeting was adopted ad-referendum.



# ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP)

Rehabilitation and Sustainable Use of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia



## Acknowledgements

30. The delegates expressed their appreciation to the Government of the Philippines and GEC for the arrangements made for the meeting. The delegates also expressed appreciation to the ASEAN Secretariat for the support provided for the Meeting.

31. The Meeting was held in the traditional spirit of ASEAN cooperation and cordiality.

---