

ASEAN PEATLAND NEWS 2013

The ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP) reached its fourth year in 2013. With the extension approved by IFAD and GEF, the project is slated to draw to a close in June 2014. Much progress has been made by the country components and here are some of the highlights. The SEApeat project will continue to early 2015.

ASEAN MINISTERS ADOPT UPDATED APMS

At the 14th Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and 9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution on 25 September 2013, Surabaya, Indonesia, Ministers reviewed regional cooperation on a number of environmental issues, and discussed new initiatives to further promote regional environmental cooperation.

The Ministers reviewed national, sub-regional and regional activities to address land and forest fires in the region and its associated transboundary haze pollution. The Ministers welcomed the significant progress in the implementation of the Work Programme of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, including concrete on-the-ground activities; the progress in the develop-



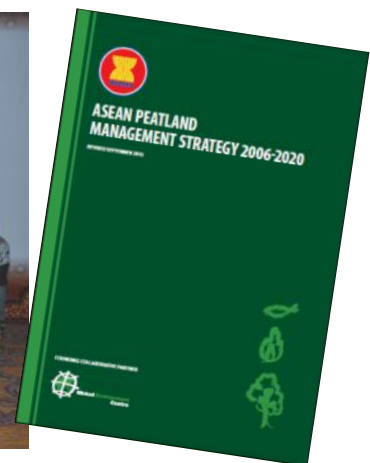
ment of the ASEAN-wide Fire Danger Rating System; implementation of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (2006-2020). The revised APMS updates some of the targets and actions and establishes a new ASEAN Peatland Task Force to oversee APMS implementation.

The Ministers adopted the updated ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (2006-2020) with the revision to the related

ASEAN structures and governance.

The Ministers noted the significant progress and achievements of the two projects on Rehabilitation and Sustainable Use of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia (funded by Global Environment Facility) and the SEApeat Project (funded by European Union) which will conclude in 2014. The Ministers supported the Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland

Ecosystems in ASEAN for the period 2014 to 2020 based on the lessons learned from these two projects in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy by the year 2020. The Ministers also supported the development of a similar longer term programmatic approach to address fires in the Mekong region which mostly originates from agricultural activities and forest areas.



VIETNAM

MASTER INNOVATORS : THE VIETNAM GREEN CONTRACT

In the 5 year masterplan for the U Minh Thuong National Park, a Green Contract development plans for farmers have been included.

To date, 51 households in the buffer zone are supported under the Green Contract. The contract provides incentives to the farmers for sustainable production

and income generation. It was an initiation between U Minh Thuong National Park and the households in the buffer zone to collaborate in the community livelihood development in Kien Giang province.

Similar patterns have been replicated in other wetland areas such as Lang Sen Wetlands Reserves in the Plain of Reeds of the Lower Me-

kong Delta by WWF, and in U Minh Ha National Park by the SEApeat project. The replication could be a positive sign of community development and awareness for sustainable livelihood.

The success stories and project implementation results are now highlighted and integrated in the environmental protection

and natural resources in schools especially in the Kien Giang province.

The exposure and customized guidelines of the local environmental scenario will be able to produce students whom are more familiar with the local concepts and sustainable development systems.



CONGRATULATIONS TO U MINH THUONG NATIONAL PARK FOR BEING DESIGNATED AS AN ASEAN HERITAGE PARK IN SEPTEMBER 2012

PROGRESSING TOWARDS A GOAL

With support of the APFP funded by IFAD and GEF, the National Action Plan on Peatland management has been drafted and submitted to the relevant ministries. The project focuses on strengthening capacity and institutional framework for sustainable peatland management, significant reduction of peatland degradation, integrated management and

rehabilitation of selected peatlands and involvements of local communities in sustainable peatland management with the support of various agencies and local governments. VEA is in the process of compiling the legal proceedings and it is currently in the process for approval by the government.

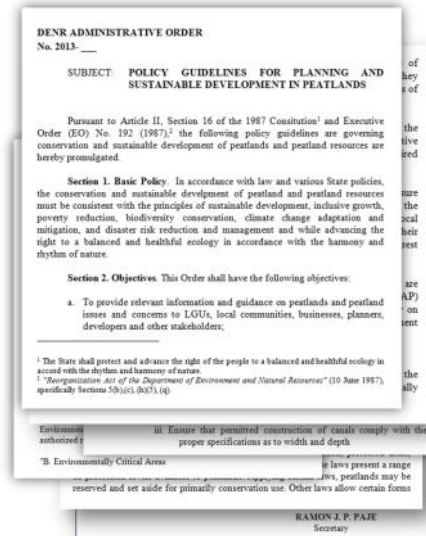


PHILIPPINES

LEGAL PROTECTION FOR PHILIPPINE PEATLANDS

To protect the peatlands in the Philippines, a Department Administrative Order for the Policy Guidelines for Planning and Sustainable Development in Peatlands was drafted by DENR. The draft document was reviewed by the Peatland National Technical Working Group and is now subject for review of the Technical Review Committee of PAWB.

Land-use planning and zoning for peatlands area is also ongoing. The ultimate objective is to include peatlands concerns in the updating of the Comprehensive Land Use Plans and Comprehensive Development Plan for Local Government Units concerned.



GREAT STRIDES IN THE PHILIPPINES



Other than finding new peatland areas and drafting new legislation to improve peatland conservation, the Philippines has also made great progress in sustainable use of its peatland areas. Many abandoned

agricultural lands have been made productive after adopting raised bed or sorjan techniques to enable planting in flooded areas. Information on suitable crops also helped local communities utilize their lands better.

DISRUPTION IN THE VISAYAS

On 8th November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan or locally known as Yolanda swept through Southern Philippines. The Category 5 Super Typhoon brought with it much destruction to the island and its inhabitants.

The APFP project site in Caraga was not spared.

Much of the sorjan farming developed by locals was swept away. The site office was flooded, resulting in the loss of important documents and damaged equipment.

Although there were no casualties among our team and community, the typhoon and flood damage have

disrupted the project activities in the area.

We wish the local communities and partners the best in their recovery efforts.



MALAYSIA

COMMUNITY POWER

The Forest Rehabilitation Program at Raja Musa Forest Reserve has been successfully carried out with multi stakeholder collaboration.

The program received tremendous support through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes and community engagement through “Friends of Peatland Forests” or “Sahabat Hutan Gambut Selangor Utara” (SHG).

CSR programmes help out by funding monthly tree-planting and canal blocking activities at the RMFR rehabilitation area. Community members assist in these activities by supervising and leading small groups.

To help protect the forest reserve, community members monitor areas close to their villages for ground



Weaving—a traditional skill and side-income generator



Traditional fishing demonstration as part of the ecotourism package.

conditions, fires and illegal activities. When necessary, they also help to suppress fires.

Some villagers have started nurseries which raise seedlings for rehabilitation efforts. They benefit from the sale of the plants, making it a truly win-win situation.

In Kg Ampangan, where a thriving homestay business provide additional income to villagers, ecotourism is being added to their repertoire of activities.

On top of these, they also help to create awareness by manning exhibition booths that tell the public about peatlands and their efforts to protect them.

SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO THE NORTH SELANGOR PEAT SWAMP FOREST (NSPSF)

In May and June 2013, the Forestry Department of Peninsular Malaysia (FDPM) organized a scientific expedition in NSPSF as part of the APFP project. This is timely as the last expedition organized in the NSPSF was held over 10 years ago.

25 research teams from 18 organisations including universities, government departments

and NGOs took part in this expedition. Among them were the Malaysian Nature Society, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Among the biodiversity observed were trees, herbs, mammals, birds, insects, fish and reptiles. The teams found a rich biodiversity still exists in the area, among them endemic and endangered fish species *Betta livida* and *Parosphromenus harveyi*.

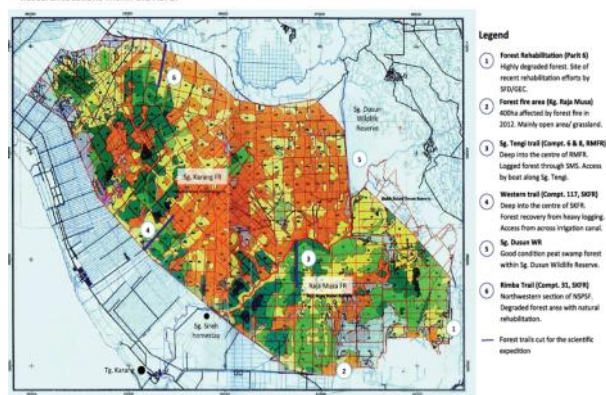
Mammals recorded included sunbears, leopard, tapir and banded linsang.

Higher plants included 27 families, 57 genera and 76

species of dipterocarp and non-dipterocarp trees.

Carbon content and DOC losses were also monitored in this exercise.

SELANGOR SCIENTIFIC AND BIODIVERSITY PEATLAND EXPEDITION 2013
Research locations within the NSPSF



INDONESIA

PEER LEARNING WORKSHOP IN BANJARMASIN, SOUTH KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA

Held on 15-16 June 2013, this activity was organized by the Indonesia component and attended by 44 participants from 6 countries in Southeast Asia.

The aim of the workshop was to share knowledge

and expertise among various communities living on peatlands.

Some key issues that were discussed were agriculture methods, fire control and alternative income generators.

Following the indoor sessions, a site visit was organized to nearby peatland areas where participants had the opportunity to witness the livelihood of local landowners, and interact with them.



DEVELOPING CHANGE IN PEATLAND AGROCUltURE

To encourage better management of peatlands in Indonesia, the APFP project is helping locals develop alternative income sources and sustainable agriculture systems suited for the soil.

Mixed cultivation of jelutung, corn and other



Crafts made from local materials for sale.

crops using the surjan system is catching on.

In West Kalimantan, controlled burning of farm waste in special containers fulfil the

communities' needs for ash and disposal while protecting the land from accidental fires.



THE BURNING ISSUE: HAZE

2013 marked a recurrence of a large scale transboundary haze pollution. This time the worst areas affected included Riau Province.

Beginning in early June, the southwest winds blew the haze towards the southern part of Peninsula Malaysia, badly affecting Singapore and Malaysia.

Indonesia too, suffered as communities lost crops and faced health problems

due to the polluted air.

Through the APFP project, meetings were organized between plantation companies in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. A workshop on peatland fire prevention was organized by the Indonesian component in October 2013. SEApeat assisted with community based fire control in Riau, by providing additional pumps, funds for fuel and patrolling teams.



A stand of oil palm trees destroyed by fire in a smallholding in Riau province.

REGIONAL

8TH PROJECT MANAGEMENT MEETING IN MANILA

On 9th July 2013, the 8th Project Management meeting was held in Manila to discuss the progress of the components. It was attended by the National Coordinators and National Experts from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam. Also present was Ms Kin Sunae, a representative from IFAD; and observers from the De-

partment of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB).

Various issues were discussed to ensure the project proceeds smoothly in its final year. At this meeting, it was confirmed that the APFP will be allowed a one year extension to enable com-



ponents to complete their ongoing projects.

This was followed by a field visit to several

barangays in Agusan Marsh, Caraga, Mindanao on the 10th.

ASEAN FDRS WORKSHOP AT THE MALAYSIAN METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT OFFICE IN PETALING JAYA, MALAYSIA

Forty participants from various departments and organisations in the region met at the Malaysian Meteorological Department office in Petaling Jaya, Selangor from 28th October to 1st November 2013.

The purpose of this workshop was to enhance the regional Fire Danger Rating System for predicting the possibility of fire in order to

reduce haze occurrences in the region.

During the workshop, participants were introduced to terminology commonly used in FDRS. The Fire Weather Index (FWI) system was reviewed, they looked into the details of the system and FWI system calculations. They explored the Fire management Cycle and the 5 key planning elements which



consist of Prepare, Detect, Respond, Recover and Prevent.

The group also visited an automated weather sta-

tion and the North Selangor Peat Swamp Forest to get a clearer idea of how the system is being implemented in Malaysia.

MANAGEMENT MEETINGS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA.



From 16th to 20th December 2013, several meetings related to peatland conservation and management in Shah Alam, Selangor.

The 9th APFP Project

Management Meeting was held on 16-17 December to discuss the progress of the country and regional components. NCs and NEs from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam presented their

efforts to representatives from other ASEAN nations and IFAD.

The 3rd Project Coordination Meeting for SEApeat was held on the 17th afternoon.

On 18th December, a meeting was held with Plantation companies from Malaysia and Indonesia to discuss the prevention of fire and haze in plantations on peat.

The following day's discussions focused on plans for the new ASEAN Peat-

land Programme which would involve all ASEAN nations in the conservation and sustainable development of peatlands in their respective countries.

The meetings were concluded on Friday with the 5th Project Steering Committee Meeting (PSC5) to confirm all that have been discussed in the previous days' meetings.

It is believed that the comprehensive set of discussions would assist in coordinating peatland conservation efforts in the region.

PUBLICATIONS

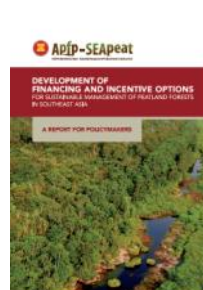
These were some of the latest publications produced in 2013. They are available online at <http://www.aseanpeat.net> (under Resources > Our Publications)



[Manual on BMPs for Mgmt & Rehab of Natural Vegetation Associated with Palm Oil Cultivation on Peat \(updated\)](#)
(3MB)



[RSPD Manual on BMPs for Existing Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat \(updated\)](#)
(3.7 MB)



[Development of Financing and Incentive Options for Sustainable Mgmt of Peatland Forests in SEA](#)
(7.5 MB)



[Peatlands and Climate Change in Southeast Asia](#)
(3.15 MB)

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