

ASEAN Peatlands Newsletter

JUNE 2015 marks an important milestone for peatlands in ASEAN with the first meeting of the ASEAN Task Force on Peatlands in the Philippines. Over the last six months, many activities took place all over the region. New peatlands continued to be identified in Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR; and efforts are well under way to develop proposals for the endorsed ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems 2014-2020 (APSMPE). In principle, funding has been agreed by EU and ASEAN Member States from their respective GEF6 STAR Allocation. Thus work is much focused on the necessary consultation and paperwork to secure continuous peatland conservation efforts in the region. In addition, six EU Ambassadors visited to Raja Musa Forest Reserve in Selangor State, Malaysia – one of the key project sites.

Knowledge Workshop in Riau, Indonesia

Following the completion of the ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP), a Knowledge Workshop was held in Pekanbaru, Riau (Sumatra) on 10 November 2014. The objective was to share the experience and lessons learnt through the project with other stakeholders. The meeting was attended by ASEAN delegates, officials from relevant government agencies, funding agencies, private companies, NGOs and educational institutions. This was followed by an APSMPE workshop, 5th SEApeat Project Coordination Meeting and 6th APFP Steering Committee Meeting. Photos are available at [APFP-SEApeat Knowledge Workshop](#).



On 13-14 November, a number of delegates joined a field visit to Giam Siak Kecil Biosphere Reserve, project sites in Sepahat, Pelintung, Guntung and Tanjung Leban, Siak and Dumai Districts. Photos are available via this link [Field Visit, Riau November 2014](#).

Consultation Workshop and Field Survey in Lao PDR

A “Consultation Workshop for Implementation of Peatland Forest Management in Lao PDR” was held on 3 February in Vientiane Capital to shared constructive comments that facilitating peat assessment and forming a peat survey team that involved relevant line agencies. Approximately 30 representatives from the line agencies participated in the workshop. Surveys of peatlands were conducted in Lao PDR between 4-12 February 2015 by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment of Lao PDR with technical support from the Global Environment Centre. 13 sites were surveyed in 2 provinces - with 7 sites in Vientiane Province and 6 sites in Champassak Province.



Fibric and high organic content



Hemic/ Sapric



Silty peat (firm)

For Vientiane Province, 3 previously surveyed sites were verified and presence of peatlands was confirmed. For Champassak Province, 5 sites were verified to be peatlands. In total, about 800 ha of peatlands had been confirmed in both Vientiane and Champassak Provinces, with peat depths of 0.7m to 4m. In summary, peatlands in the country are relatively small and scattered. The biggest area of peat found is located in Beung Kiat Ngong, also a RAMSAR site in Champassak Province. Generally, the organic layer/ peat that was found in this survey showed a lot of variation in terms of colour, texture and its content. Some sites have been degraded by peat extraction for fertilizer - but generally this has been stopped now.

APSMPE Development: GEF 6 Consultation Meeting



A consultation meeting, attended by Peatland Focal Person and representatives of GEF Operation Focal Point of almost all ASEAN Member States, was held in Kuala Lumpur from 4-5 March 2015. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the preparation of proposals for the ASEAN Programme for Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems 2014-2020. The meeting discussed possible funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and European Union.

Second Peatland Assessment in Cambodia

Peatland assessments were conducted in Cambodia from **18-28 April 2015** in **Botum Sakor National Park** in **Koh Kong Province**. The team comprised of regional peat expert, Dr. Le Phat Quoi from Center for Environment Science and Ecology, Viet Nam and Ms. Julia Lo from Global Environment Centre, representatives of Department of Wetland and Coastal, Ministry of Environment, Sun Visal, Hong Lurk, Pech Moran, Sotha Tann and Nalin Phon with the assistance of two students from local university Phallis Eang and Taing PorChhay.



*Peatland with mangrove forest *Bruguiera sexangula* dominated forest with *Xylocarpus granatum* and other species*

Seven days of survey by speed boats was undertaken in Botum Sakor and up to 1,000ha of peatlands were identified; mostly less than one metre deep and half less than 0.5m. This is the second peatland described in Cambodia after the first discovery in 2012 in Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary (PKWS) of 4,976ha of peatlands; both within mangrove ecosystem.



Typical peat sample with underlying marine clay layer.

In Botum Sakor, the most common species are *Rhizophora apiculata*, *Bruguiera gymnorhiza*, *Xylocarpus granatum* and *Bruguiera sexangula*. *Rhizophora apiculata* dominate in river bank with sedimentation or mudflats, while mixture species such as *Xylocarpus granatum*, *Bruguiera gymnorhiza*, *Heritiera littoralis*, *Nypa fruiticans*, and *Pheonix paludosa*, dominate in river banks which face erosion. In term of vegetation, flora in Botum Sakor mangrove area more diverse in compare to PKWS. In some areas, the forest floor is overgrown with undergrowth plants such as ferns and *Acanthus*, which make it very hard to walk.

Selangor Centre of Excellence for Peatland Awareness and Conservation

The Selangor Centre of Excellence for Peatland Conservation was launched on 1 June 2015 by Ms. Elizabeth Wong, Executive Council for Selangor State Tourism, Consumer Affairs and Environment Committee. Located at Compartment 73 of the Raja Musa Forest Reserve, the Centre is accessed via Kampung Raja Musa in Bestari Jaya. The event was held in conjunction with the Selangor World Forestry Day celebration. 1500 Ramin Melawis (*Gonostylus bancanus*) saplings were planted during the event. The updated Integrated Management Plan for North Selangor Peat Swamp Forest (2014-2023) was also launched during this event. The plan covers 81,000ha of peatland areas in four forest reserves and 15,000ha of buffer zone with agricultural and plantation activities.



ASEAN Social Forestry Network Conference and Annual Meeting, Myanmar



A team comprising representatives from Global Environment Centre, FREDA and Environmental Conservation Department of MOECF Myanmar attended 6th Conference of ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) and 9th Annual Meeting in Inle Lake, Nyaung Shwe Township, Southern Shan State from 1-5 June. The participation to the ASFN was to link the peatland work to the ASFN. The Conference was officiated by the Union Minister of MOECF, H.E. U Win Tun. The conference also attended by Mr. Patrick Sieber, representative of Global Programme on Climate Change of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Six EU Ambassadors Visit Raja Musa Rehabilitation Site and Centre of Excellence



In conjunction with World Environment Day, six EU Ambassadors in Malaysia and their families joined over 200 volunteers to rehabilitate the peat swamp forest in Compartment 100, Raja Musa Forest Reserve on 13 June 2015. Together they planted 600 tenggek burung and an additional 20 ramin melawis saplings. The group also visited the Centre of Excellence for North Selangor Peat Swamp Forest and a nursery run by local villagers. The nursery raises saplings for rehabilitation efforts in the Forest Reserve. They were hosted by the Selangor State Government, the Selangor State Forestry Department and the Global Environment Centre.



ASEAN Task Force on Peatlands, Manila, 23 June 2015



The first meeting of the ASEAN Task Force on Peatlands was held on 23 June in Manila, the Philippines. This new body was established by the all 10 ASEAN Member States. The Task Force is tasked to oversee the implementation of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy 2006-2020 and the ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems 2014-2020 (APSMPE) under the umbrella of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP). The meeting reviewed the progress of each country in implementing the APMS and development of associated National Action Plans on Peatlands. The meeting also reviewed and supported further development of proposed support of about US\$50 million from the European Union, German Government and the Global Environment Facility for the implementation of the APSMPE.

Published articles:

 International Peat Society magazine,
 issue 1/2015

[New Mangrove Peatlands Found in Cambodia](#)

 International Peat Society magazine,
 issue 2/2015

[New Peatland Areas Confirmed in Myanmar](#)

A blackwater canal in Raja Musa Forest Reserve, Malaysia
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