

Sustainable Management of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia (SEApeat)

How can it be achieved?

Development and implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) as well as strengthening regional cooperation is key to ensuring the sustainable management of peatland forests in Southeast Asia. Under the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS), deforestation and degradation of peatland forests can be reduced through better enforcement and management practices.

Activities

a) Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building

The development and implementation of NAPs help countries build capacity and conserve peatland forest resources.

b) Development of Incentive Mechanisms

Various incentive mechanisms which promote Best Management Practices (BMPs) help provide alternative sustainable livelihoods, prevent fires and mitigate climate change.

c) Fire Prediction and Monitoring System

The establishment of a system to predict peatland fires helps monitor forest degradation and reduce occurrence of fire.

d) Development of Guidelines

For example, Integrated Planning Guidelines for Sustainable Peatland Management and Climate Change Funding Mechanisms to Reduce Peatland Deforestation and Degradation.

SEApeat Project

SEApeat is a project funded by the European Union and implemented by Global Environment Centre (GEC) to reduce deforestation and degradation of peatland forests in Southeast Asia. The approaches of this project are strengthening governance, promoting best practices and developing incentives.

This project involves: Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

Implementation period: 2011-2014

European Union (EU)

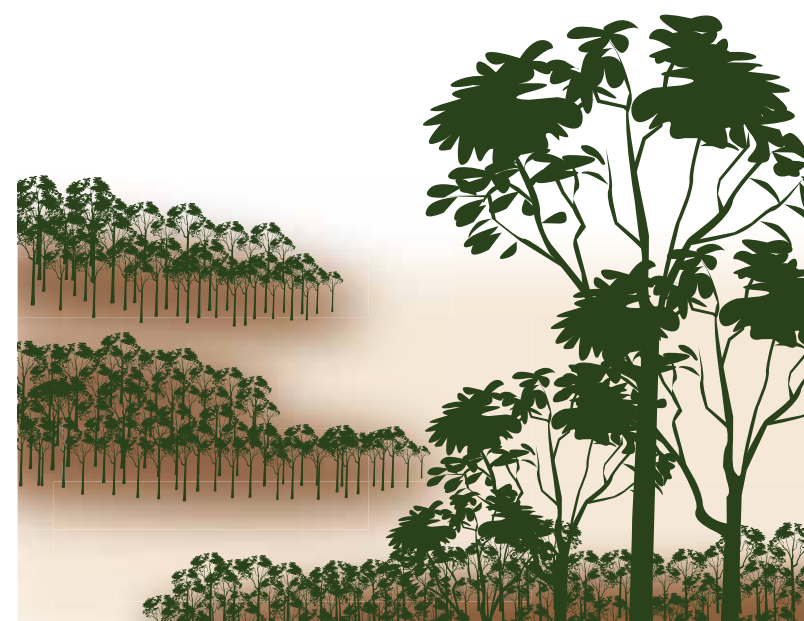
The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 27 European countries. It actively promotes human rights and democracy and has the most ambitious emission reduction targets for fighting climate change in the world.

Global Environment Centre (GEC)

GEC is a non-profit NGO, established in 1998 to address key environmental issues. GEC is based in Malaysia and supports activities worldwide. We are focused on bringing together all parties - individuals, communities, corporations and other like-minded organisations - to help foster lasting change for the benefit of the environment.

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SEApeat

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This project is funded by:



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Global Environment Centre

Peatland forests in Southeast Asia

Peatlands are one of the most critical ecosystems in Southeast Asia. They are important for biodiversity conservation, climate regulation and a source of livelihood for local communities.

**They are the
largest carbon stores
on land.**



What are peatlands?

Peatlands are found in most parts of the world. They are wet areas that are filled with organic matter called peat. The black and spongy peat is really dead and decaying plant material submerged in water. Peat soil is acidic, water-logged and lack nutrients. The water, which is loaded with tannins, looks black if seen from the top, earning tropical peatlands its other name, blackwater peat swamp.

Threats to peatlands

The problem ...

Lack of knowledge about peatland forests and awareness of their importance.

Leads to ...

Draining for agriculture, forestry and development;
Unsustainable land preparation practices;
Demand for land development; and
Faster degradation due to climate change

The effects ...

Increased forest fires;
Climate change due to increased CO₂ emissions; and
Loss of ecosystem services

Why should we care about peatlands?

- Millions in Southeast Asia depend on peatland resources for food, medicine, forest products, transportation and water. Disappearing peatlands affect their culture and livelihood;
- Peatlands are home to many rare and endangered plants and animals. Losing peatlands would mean losing our rich biodiversity too;
- Peatlands regulate water supply by absorbing excess water and releasing stored water when there is a drought;
- Drying peatlands release CO₂; leading to rising temperatures and extreme weather patterns;
- These are prone to burning in hot, dry weather; causing widespread haze that affect the region's health and economy.



Photo credit: UNDP/ NRE, GEC