

STANDARD TEMPLATE QUARTERLY UPDATES

Name of the Programme : Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, including Energy
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Contract reference no.: DCI-ENV/2010/221-659
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Project Title: Sustainable Management of Peatland Forests in South East Asia
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Name of Beneficiary: Global Environment Centre (GEC)
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Period covered by this Quarterly Update: 1 January 2012- 31 March 2012
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Due date of this Quarterly Update: 30 April 2012
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<i>Project Budget</i>	
<i>Funds Disbursed by Commission to date</i>	Euro 446,877.19
<i>Expenditure Incurred by Project to date</i>	Euro 322,730.09

I. Summary

Coordination with countries especially Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand are continuing and activities are carried out as planned and adjusted accordingly to individual country's progress.

In Malaysia, rehabilitation activities within the pilot site at Raja Musa Forest Reserve (RMFR) continue to gain momentum thorough multi-stakeholder collaboration including the Corporate Social Responsibility Programme. The celebration of World Wetlands Day 2012 was a success and the importance of peatlands has gained tremendous support from the media. A Community conservation effort through local action groups "Friends of Peatland Forests" and "Peatland Forest Rangers" was launched officially. Various activities including road shows, public talks, and a "Peatland Forest Rangers" camp were carried out for awareness raising and to promote best management practices on peatlands. Recovery of degraded sites is observed near Compartment 117&127 of RMFR after a series of stakeholder consultations.

In Indonesia, Harapan Jaya Village in Indragilir Hilir District and Teluk Binjai Village in Pelalawan District of Riau province were selected as the pilot sites for the Project. A comprehensive mapping including a study on (1) community initiatives for fire prevention; (2) support from other parties and (3) consideration of ecological and ecosystem regions, were discussed through social preparation sessions.

A Training of Trainers (TOT) and peat assessment was conducted on 25th January 2012 and 14-20 Feb 2012 respectively in Lao PDR. Peat assessments were carried out in Vientiane Province and Champasak Province and some peatland areas were identified and soil samples are being analysed.

The translations of the "ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy" and "Training Module on Peatland Assessment and Management" in Burmese were completed. APMS was printed and disseminated to the key stakeholders and a discussion on the formation of a Core Working Group for the SEApeat

Project was initiated. A preliminary assessment of potential peatland areas in Ayeyarwady Region was carried out in Jan 2012 .

At the regional level, a Regional Technical Workshop on The development of ASEAN Peatland Fire Prediction and Monitoring System was held to strengthen regional collaboration on the refinement of the Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS). Regional and local efforts on peatland conservation were highlighted in the International Conference on Wetland Forests in Brunei through oral and poster presentations. The Best Management Practices (BMP) Guidelines in Oil Palm Plantations, with links to the RSPO initiative, have been finalised. A final draft of the Financial Incentive Report was distributed to the countries for comment. Progress of the SEApeat project was reported to the 8th Meeting of Technical Working Group (TWG) and Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC) for Mekong Sub-Region in Feb.

Divergence:

Activity 1.2.3: The Associate in Philippines has started some preparatory activities for the SEApeat project.: A Memorandum of Agreement was prepared with the National Museum to produce a Handbook of Philippine Peatlands Flora (Caimpugan); and a Local Ordinance which was proposed by Councillor Lerissa de Leon for the protection of peatlands was included as part of the agenda of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) on Peatlands to strengthen the governance of peatlands. It aims to establish a unified ordinance on peatlands for the Agusan Municipalities with confirmed peatlands as well as the two municipalities in the Leyte Sab-a.

Difficulties encountered:

The project was not able to conduct the account auditing of the SEApeat project as per schedule due to the late submission of supporting documents and receipts from the Associate in Cambodia as the focal point was away from the office due to personal matters. Indirectly, this has affected the fund transfer request for planned activities in 2012 and some activities may need to be delayed until sufficient funds are received.

TOT in Myanmar has been rescheduled from March to May due to lengthy approval processes.

The implementation of project activities in Thailand is still on hold as there is an outstanding issue on the fund transfer mechanism within the Department of National Parks, Wildlife & Plant Conservation, although the Department has identified the Focal Point/ Person for the Project.

II. Implementation of Activities

Output 1.1

- a) Training of Trainers (TOT) in Vientiane, Lao PDR with approximately 50 participants from key institutions on 25 January 2012 (Activity 1.1.2).
- b) Peat assessments were carried out in Vientiane Province and Champasak Province on 14-20 February 2012 and some peatland areas were identified (Activity 1.1.2).
- c) In Myanmar, rapid assessments of potential peatland areas in Ayeyarwady Region, including Meinmahla Island, Bobagone Lake and Wagone wet areas, were carried out in early Jan 2012. Soil samples were taken from those places for analysis at the Myanmar Scientific and Technological Research Department, Yangon (Activity 1.1.2). A discussion on the formation of a Core Working Group for the SEApeat Project was initiated and led by the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECA) (Activity 1.1.1).

- d) The Burmese version of the ASEAN Peat Management Strategy (APMS) was printed and disseminated. Translation of lecture notes for the Peatland Assessment Training Module in the Myanmar language was completed. However the national TOT has been rescheduled from March to May (Activity 1.1.1).
- e) Four participants from Myanmar, Laos, Malaysia and Philippines were supported to attend the International Conference on Wetland Forests in Brunei for capacity building and to promote the Southeast Asia Peat Network and encourage information exchange on current efforts on peatland forest management (Activity 1.1.2).
- f) A “Media Blitz” was organised in conjunction with the WWD celebration on 18 Feb 2012 in Raja Musa Forest Reserve, Malaysia, where 326 participants and 15 media representatives attended (Activity 1.1.2) (Annexure 1).

Output 1.2

- a. The final **draft report of Financing and Incentive Options** was circulated to the National Coordinators of the ASEAN Peatland Forest Project for comments and inputs (Activity 1.2.1). Feedback and comment from Malaysia is still pending.
- b. **Pilot demonstration activities in Selangor, Malaysia**
 - i) Monthly Tree Planting activities with community participation and CSR engagement are ongoing. To date, about 2.5 hectares of degraded peatland area within RMFR have been planted with 1410 tree saplings, involving 461 volunteers. These include the tree planting event during the WWD celebration (Activity 1.2.2).
 - ii) Launching of community action groups called “Friends of Peatland Forest” or Sahabat Hutan Gambut (SHG) and “Peatland Forest Rangers” in conjunction with the WWD 2012 celebration on 18 Feb 2011 to recognize and highlight the community efforts in peatland forest conservation (Activity 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 2.1.3).
 - iii) A joint field survey/ monitoring visit with Selangor Forestry Department (SFD) and Integrated Agriculture Development Authority (IADA) was conducted in the North Selangor Peat Swamp Forest to assess the sudden mortality of peat swamp trees in Compartment 117 & 127, Sungai Karang Forest Reserve on 16th February 2012. Survey results indicated that the site appears to be recovering well from the predicted adverse impact after the appropriate measures were taken and/or put in place (Annexure 2) (Activity 2.1.2 and 2.1.3).
 - iv) Road shows and public talks (1 Feb, 4 Feb, 11 Feb, 18 Feb), and a “Peatland Forest Rangers” camp (9-11 March), were carried out for awareness raising and to promote best management practices on peatlands around Kuala Selangor and community areas within the vicinity of the RMFR (Activity 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 2.1.3) (Annexure 3a and 3b).
- c) **Pilot demonstration activities in Riau, Indonesia: two pilot sites were identified in Riau Province**
 - i) Two pilot sites were identified, namely Harapan Jaya Village in Indragilir Hilir District and Teluk Binjai Village in Pelalawan District of Riau Indonesia (Activity 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 2.1.3).
 - ii) Social preparation and comprehensive community mapping was carried out in both identified pilot sites and is ongoing (Activity 1.2.1 and 1.2.3).
 - iii) A district level meeting in BLH Indragiri Hilir Office was held on 13 February with 24 participants from the provincial government, private sectors and villages. The meeting was fruitful and the proposed pilot testing activities in Harapan Jaya is well received by the stakeholders (Activity 1.2.3 and 2.1.3).

d) International and Regional Meetings/Conferences

A project team member attended the “2nd Asia Forum Carbon Update 2012” in Bandung, Indonesia from 15-17 Feb 2012. The project team also took part in the International Conference on Wetland Forests in Brunei from 22-23 March with an oral and poster presentation. An article entitled “Peatland Management in Southeast Asia – Issues and Challenges” was submitted to the 14th International Peat Congress (IPC) and it was accepted for oral presentation in the upcoming IPC in Sweden on 3-8 June 2012 (Activity 1.1.3).

Output 2.1

- a) A Regional Technical Workshop on the **Development of ASEAN Peatland Fire Prediction and Monitoring System and refinement of FDRS** was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 20-21 March with 39 participants from the ASEAN countries (Activity 2.1.2) (Annexure 4).
- b) Progress of the SEApeat project was reported to the 8th Meeting of TWG on Transboundary Haze Pollution in the Mekong Sub-Region (TWG Mekong) and the MSC meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam on 28 Feb 2012 (Activity 2.1.4).

Output 2.3

- a. Develop and promote **guidelines for plantations on peatlands**

GEC co-chaired the RSPO-PLWG meetings/ forum on developing the BMP guidelines for oil palm plantations on peatland (primarily to reduce GHG emission but also to improve yield). Two out of four documents are currently being finalised and are expected to be published soon. Financial support is currently being arranged for implementation of the guidelines in the plantations as best management practices supported by RSPO. GEC will continue with providing its technical input to the RSPO-PLWG meetings and deliberations.

Possible collaboration is being explored with Sime Darby to work together to protect and sustainably manage the Raja Musa Peat Swamp forest and adjacent lands, including the oil palm plantations and other developments on peat.

Publications and promotion of the project

- I. BMP poster and oral presentation in the International Conference of Wetland Forests in Brunei Darussalam on 22-23 March.
- II. An article entitled “Peatland Management in Southeast Asia – Issues and Challenges” was submitted to the 14th International Peat Congress.
- III APMS (Burmese version) printed and disseminated. Translation of Training Module of Peatland Assessment and Management completed.
 - i. Website - The SEApeat project information is located at www.aseanpeat.net. The information is updated from time to time.

To date, there was no major divergence between the planned and actual activities, except that the activity in Philippines was brought forward as the opportunity was available earlier than planned. This was made possible by the keen interest shown by the relevant institutions and corporate stakeholders on peatland conservation and their wanting to make a difference through public awareness.

There were also no changes to the logical framework.

- Describe the actual resources used compared to planned.

Actual resource use compared to that planned within the project can be considered as moderate and on track as most of the regional activities were co-funded by the ASEAN Peatland Forest Project while the site level activities such as rehabilitation of the RMFR are co-funded by corporate bodies through the CSR programme.

III. Partnership

Project associates and local activity partners continue their support to the implementation of the project. Cooperation with associated partners have enabled the establishment of a formal platform to engage stakeholders in peatland management and promote BMP principles on peatland.

Strength: Strong support from government agencies and ASEAN continues through strong linkage with the ASEAN secretariat and the ASEAN Peatland Forest Project (APFP), as well as support from corporate partners in organising awareness activities among local communities.

Weaknesses: Although some of the associates are the main focal points for international collaboration and wetland management in their respective countries, cross sectoral collaboration and integration is lacking and remains a challenge due to differing priorities under separate ministries in each respective country.

IV Methodology

No major changes to current management approach and methodology.

V Other Issues

Project associates consist of the government agencies in the ASEAN countries, thus the implementation of the SEApeat activities in each respective country have to follow the governmental procedures which are usually time consuming. In addition, project associates are usually under staffed and lack the capacity, which further hinders the implementation of the project activities. Efforts to work according to governmental procedures are continuing.

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List of Annexures

- Annexure 1 Report of WWD celebration in Raja Musa Forest Reserve
- Annexure 2 Field survey/ monitoring visit to North Selangor Peat Swamp Forest
- Annexure 3a Activities of Sahabat Hutan Gambut (Jan-March)
- Annexure 3b Peatland Forest Ranger Programme
- Annexure 4 Report of Regional Technical Workshop on the Development of ASEAN Peatland Fire Prediction and Monitoring System