

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: 31/July/2011-31/9/2011

Due date of this Quarterly Update: 31/10/2011

<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 127,385.33

I. Introduction

The Project has been progressing well from July to Sept where much effort was put into the coordination with several countries, especially Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia. A working discussion with the Ministry of Forestry, Myanmar was successful, followed by a preliminary recce to identify the potential TOT and assessment site in Myanmar. However, due to a new government ruling, we were advised by the MOF that most of the planned project activities will need to be carried forward to next year due to the lengthy additional procedures within the department and obtaining cabinet approval.

In Malaysia, rehabilitation activities which has been initiated and carried out within the State of Selangor and the pilot site at Raja Musa Forest Reserve (RMFR) has continuously gained momentum thorough multi-stakeholder collaboration. About three hectares of degraded peatland have been planted with public support. A local action group known as the “Friends of Peat Swamp Forests” was initiated to involve the local communities in sustainable peatland management. An article to promote the protection of RMFR, focusing on fire issues was published in the Malaysian Naturalist, targeting the general public, to educate them about the risk of fire in peatlands.

A Training of Trainers (TOT) session was conducted in Cambodia to strengthen the capacity of the key agencies in identifying peatlands which are yet to be documented. It was an eye-opening experience for the participants and many questions on peatlands were clarified during this training (Annex 1). While in Indonesia, discussions have been initiated with the local government in Riau to select viable locations for our pilot sites. A series of needs assessments in five different districts have been conducted and are still ongoing.

The Southeast Asia Peat Network (SPN) database has been established, targeting at peat sites and peat experts who work in the region. This database aims to raise the profile of selected peat sites and create an information resource for those who want to know more about peat in SEA. Countries

especially Malaysia, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Philippines have been asked to submit the information online via www.aseanpeat.net.

Two project team members attended the EU funded project coordination meeting in Brussels. Our understandings on the EU focus and expectations from the project have been enhanced. The project team took the opportunities to learn about peatland management in temperate countries by visiting the Hautes Fagnes Plateau and the Peatlands in Deurne. Also, the project team took part in the GCF task force meeting and "Wild Fire and Carbon Management" workshop in Kalimantan to explore collaboration opportunities with different parties while promoting the project and SPN (Annex 2).

An "Integrated Tropical Peatland Management in Southeast Asia" poster (Annex 3) was presented in an International workshop and project related publications were distributed to the participants to promote the project and SEA Peat Network. Articles on TOT training to highlight the regional efforts in promoting sustainable management of peatland forests in Southeast Asia was published in the Peatlands International Newsletter. The translated ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy in Khmer and Laotian languages has been finalised.

The development of the Fire Prediction and Monitoring System (FDRS) in peatlands has been progressing well through a multi-stakeholder joint effort in Selangor, Malaysia. The verification process in Malaysia is at the second phase and the use of the FDRS has been promoted widely among Forestry staff. The progress of the FDRS development was presented in the ASEAN TWG meeting in Bangkok. An FDRS workshop was also held in Riau, Indonesia to identify the gaps in the existing FDRS to further enhance peatland fire prevention. It was acknowledged that regional collaboration is important.

The 12th Meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) and 12th meeting of the Sub-regional Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC) on Transboundary Haze Pollution Transboundary Haze Pollution held in Bangkok, Thailand 22 & 23 SEPTEMBER respectively was briefed on the project and its achievements. The meetings took note of project implementation.

The Best Management Practices Guidelines in Oil Palm Plantations, with links to the RSPO initiative, is still on-going. It has been reviewed in several meetings and is waiting for final adoption in the RT9 which will be held in Sabah in November 2011.

Divergence:

Activity Item 1.2.3, Rehabilitation activities such as tree planting in RMFR, was brought forward six (6) months earlier. This was made possible by the keen interest shown by the Selangor State Government and corporate stakeholders on peatland deforestation and degradation issues as well as the drive to make a difference through public awareness and CSR activities.

Difficulties encountered:

The implementations of activities, especially peatland assessment, were delayed in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar due to unforeseen procedural issues. Due to the new government ruling, we have been advised by the MOF of Myanmar that most of the planned project activities will need to be carried forward to next year due to the lengthy additional procedures within the department. No activities can be implemented in Myanmar until the MOF has obtained clearance from their cabinet. A possible solution is being explored by working with FREDAs, a local partner based in Yangon.

The implementation of activities such as peatland assessment was delayed in Cambodia and Laos due to the lack of resource persons and unsuitable weather conditions. As it is the raining season in both countries, the peatland assessment was put on hold until the weather condition improves.

II. Implementation of Activities

a) Training of Trainers (TOT) in Kompong Thom Province, Cambodia with 46 participants from 1-3 August 2011 (3 days).

The Training of Trainers session support **Activity 1.1.1 and 1.1.2** of the logical framework.

b) The Southeast Asia Peat Network database has been established, targeting peatland sites and peat experts working in the ASEAN region.

This database supports activity 1.2.2 by promoting the principles of BMP through information exchange, awareness and capacity building.

c) Pilot demonstration activities in Selangor, Malaysia: rehabilitation of peatland forests through on-going tree planting project in Raja Musa Forest Reserve.

This project supports **Activity 1.2.3** of the framework. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support was solicited for a community-based peatland rehabilitation programme at RMFR. Timberland Lifestyle Brand Malaysia Sdn. Bhd is a new addition to the supporters of the Raja Musa Forest Reserve Rehabilitation Programme. They contributed by planting 100 trees (*Euodia sp.* and *Macaranga sp.*) and made 2 canal blocks. GEC coordinated the event for their employees and dealers who took part in the exercise.

- i) Monthly Tree Planting activities that have been planned for community participation were conducted regularly without fail from July – September 2011. To date, about 3 hectares of degraded peatland area within RMFR have been planted with 920 tree saplings, involving 140 members of the public.
- ii) Establishment of community action group called Friends of Peat Swamp Forest or Sahabat Hutan Gambut (SHG) and SHG Workshop
- iii) A joint aerial survey with the Selangor Forestry Department (SFD) to the North Selangor Swamp Forest was conducted to identify fire prone areas within the NSPSF (Annex 4).
- iv) A series of activities were planned by the SFD under the APFP to support a campaign on Sustainable Use and Conservation of Peatland in the Selangor State. GEC participated as an invited speaker/ facilitator in a road show, which was organized at two places; i.e. Kg. Bestari Jaya, Kuala Selangor (22 Sept.) and Kg. Sg. Kelambu, Kuala Langat (27 Sept). The participants consisted mainly of local villagers and government agency staff from the district and numbered around 500 people.

d) Pilot demonstration activities in Riau, Indonesia: needs assessments were initiated in five districts in Riau

To identify pilot sites for the project in Riau, a series of needs assessments were conducted in Rokan Hilir, Indragiri, Siak, Teluk Meranti and Bengkalis provinces. Based on the results, two sites will be selected for the demonstration site.

e) Development and Pilot Testing of FDRS in Selangor, Malaysia and Riau, Indonesia from June to September 2011.

The development of FDRS is ongoing to achieve Expected Result 2.1, Activity 2.1.2. and Activity 2.1.4. A stakeholder's consultation has been initiated in Indonesia by drawing some experience learnt from Malaysia.

f) Support pilot sites to secure climate change related funding for REDD, carbon funds etc. (Activity 2.2.1)

A consultant has been appointed for a desk review of financing and incentive options in sustainable management of peatland forests in Southeast Asia. Site level incentive options will be explored with the country representative during the Incentive options working group discussion on 2 Nov 2011 in Viet Nam.

g) Develop and promote guidelines for plantations on peatlands (Activity 2.3.2)

GEC co-chaired the RSPO-PLWG meetings/ forum on developing the BMP guidelines for palm oil plantations on peatland (primarily to reduce GHG emission but also to improve yield). This quarter saw deliberations taking place twice; on 22-24 Aug (5th PLWG) and 26-27 Sept (6th PLWG), both at Melia Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. Work on the document is still being finalised .

A 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.

g) Publications and project promotion

- I. An article on the TOT training workshop in Peatlands International (1/2011)
- II. Article titled Fighting Fires in Raja Musa Forest Reserve in Malaysian Naturalist (Vol.65-1, Sept 2011) – Annex 5
- III. BMP poster presentation on the “Integrated Tropical Peatland Management in Southeast Asia in the “Fire and Carbon Management” workshop from 19-23 September 2011, in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan.
- IV. Oral presentation on “Peatland Management in Southeast Asia- The Way Forward” in the Fire and Carbon Management workshop from 19-23 September 2011, in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan.
- V. Translation of the APMS from English to Khmer and Lao languages were finalized for printing in Cambodia and Laos to create awareness among non-English speaking locals. This is in line with **Activity 1.1.1 and 1.1.3** of the framework.

Vi. Website

The SEApeat project information is located at www.aseanpeat.net. The site focuses on peatlands and peatland management in the Southeast Asian region; it also provides web space for the ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP) which is funded through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). By sharing information on regional peatlands, news, project updates and peatland resources, we are supporting **Objective 2**, which is to strengthen regional cooperation in implementing the APMS.

To date, there was no major divergence between the planned and actual activities, except that the rehabilitation activity in RMFR (Activity 1.2.3) was brought forward as the opportunity and manpower became available earlier than planned. This was made possible by the keen interest shown by the State Government and corporate stakeholders on peatland deforestation and degradation issues and the will to make a difference through public awareness and CSR activities.

There were also no changes to the logical framework.

- Describe the actual resources used compared to planned.

The actual resource used compared to that planned within the project can be considered as moderate and on track. This is because the project managed to forge partnership agreements quite early in the project timeframe, as well as, managed to bring in additional source of funding to support planned activities especially for the rehabilitation of the RMFR.

III. Partnership

Partners have shown strong commitment in supporting the implementation of the SEApeat project. Associated partners have supported the project by coordinating activities and providing local logistical support. National priorities have been identified through the participation of the associated partners and stakeholders consultation.

The above initiative also allows for co-management between peatland stakeholders, while at the same time, establishes a formal platform to promote BMP principles and guidelines to reduce peatland deforestation and degradation within the State.

Strength: The activities have been initiated with strong government support through the engagement of associated partners in various ASEAN countries and strong linkage with the ASEAN secretariat and the ASEAN Peatland Forest Project (APFP).

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 can be difficult due to differing priorities under separate ministries.

IV Methodology

No major changes to current management approach and methodology..

V Other Issues

No other issues were faced in this quarter.

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Signature:	

List of Annexes

- Annex 1 Report of Training of Trainer session in Cambodia
- Annex 2 Presentation on “Sustainable Management of Peatland in Southeast Asia – The Way Forward.”
- Annex 3 Poster of Integrated Tropical Peatland Management in Southeast Asia
- Annex 4 Aerial surveys to North Selangor Peat swamp forest
- Annex 5 ”Fighting Fires in Raja Musa Forest Reserve” in Malaysian Naturalist (Vol.65-1, Sept 2011)