

QUARTERLY UPDATE

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 July 2012 – 30 September 2012
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Due date of this Quarterly Update: 31 October 2012
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<i>Project Budget</i>	
<i>Funds Disbursed by Commission to date</i>	Euro 932,021.21
<i>Expenditure Incurred by Project to date</i>	Euro 469,871.86

I. Summary

Various workshops and meetings have been organized at the Regional and National level (Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Lao PDR) to stimulate and support stakeholder collaboration in peatland assessment and integrated management of peatlands. Lao PDR has initiated the discussion on the National Action Plan for Peatlands, while Myanmar is focusing on capacity building and identifying potential peatlands using remote sensing. A five year review of the implementation of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS) was held in Bangkok and concluded that all ASEAN Member States (AMS) have made significant progress in the implementation of the APMS, depending on the countries' progress and knowledge on the extent of their peatlands. A Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) of the SEApeat Project was conducted from 24th September to 5th October 2012 and initial feedback of the ROM was positive and encouraging.

Pilot sites activities in Indonesia and Malaysia have progressed well and showcased some of the best management practices (BMP) case studies that could be shared amongst the AMS. In Indonesia, BMP such as community Radio, Village Information System, village regulation on fire prevention were highlighted to the local government and receive positive response and support. However, hydrology assessment remains a challenge. In Malaysia, the Community-based Rehabilitation Programme activities are ongoing. Although a total of 350 ha of forest was burnt in Raja Musa Forest Reserve (RMFR), cooperation amongst the stakeholders, which includes government agencies, private sector and a local communities group have been strengthened in combating the peatland fires. Positive synergy and collaboration are being developed in fire management and control. Contribution and commitment of Friends of Peatland Forests (SHGSU) in the forest fire monitoring, fire suppression, forest rehabilitation activities is much appreciated by the government agencies. Activities in Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand are in the stage of preparation.

The manuals on Best Management Practices for cultivation of oil palm on peatlands has been published and the Manual on Best Management Practices for Management and Rehabilitation of Natural Vegetation Associated with Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat is currently in progress. GEC continues to provide its support to promote sustainable management of peatlands through RSPO-PLWG.

The importance of peatlands is continuously being highlighted and raised through publications and awareness materials. The project also actively participates and provides input to the various workshops/meetings which are relevant to peatlands management. A photography contest, "Our Precious Peatlands", has been extended from 30th September to 15th October 2012

Divergence:

No major divergence was noted, except more efforts and resources have been focused on fire suppression in Malaysia as peatland fires required urgent attention and immediate action.

Difficulties encountered:

Peatland assessment in Myanmar and Cambodia has to be halted until November 2012 or early 2013 due to the prolonged rainy season. Activities in Thailand are still pending commencement due to lengthy administrative procedures.

Awareness of the importance of peatlands in the Mekong countries is still lacking, hence the lack of support from other stakeholders in supporting the peatland related work. For example support from the Provincial Authority in Vientiane Province, Loa PDR is limited and ongoing activities such as draining and excavating of peatlands is destructive to peatlands. Also, cooperation from the Forest Department of Myanmar at the provincial/state level is limited, however, actions have been taken to foster better cooperation.

The initial water management assessment in Harapan Jaya, Indonesia identified the urgent need of a topography survey to enhance the planning and management of the community land for agricultural practices on peatlands. Nevertheless, a topography survey of 4000ha will require a big budget and skilled expertise to conduct and this is not planned for in the project. An alternative solution is being explored with the community.

II. Implementation of Activities

Output 1.1

- a. The Consultation Workshop on Guidelines to the Action Plan for Peatland Management was held on **16 -17 August 2012 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The** workshop was organized by the Department of Pollution Control (DPC), MONRE and chaired by Mdm. Keobang A KEOLA, Director General of DPC. The objectives of the workshop were to report on the results of the field survey in Vientiane and Champasak Provinces, consulting on guidelines for peatland management in Lao PDR and, developing the draft of the National Action Plan for Peatland Sustainable Management in Lao PDR (Activity 1.1.1).

A total of approximately 450.5 ha of peatlands were discovered and recorded, based on the peatland assessment in Vientiane and Champasak Provinces of Lao PDR. The identified peatland areas (Annexure 1) are:

- i) **Vientiane Province** : (i) Nong Talev, Phonhang village, Viengkham District, 170m asl, GPS reading 236131-2034663, 236563-2034663 with total area of 186ha; (ii) Nong Khouay, Phonhang Village, Viengkham District, 186m asl, GPS reading 235545-2036406, 235490-2041812 with total area of 112.5ha; and (iii) Nong Ngoup, Nonsavang Village, Viengkham District, 168m asl, GPS reading 235449-2041822, 235466-2041843 with total area of 90ha. (Activity 1.1.2 and Activity 2.1.1).
 - ii) **Champasack Province:** Kiet Ngong village, Phathumphone District, alt., 160m asl, GPS reading 613715, 1633566 with total area of 62 ha. (Activity 1.1.2 and Activity 2.1.1).
- b. A **Technical Training Programme on Assessment and Identifying Peatland Areas Using Remote Sensing and GIS** was conducted in Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam from 28th to 30th August, 2012. A total of 21 participants from 8 countries participated and learned the usage of GIS and remote sensing for assessment and identification of peatlands (Activity 1.1.2) (Annexure 2). As a result, FREDAMyanmar is working closely with the GIS Section of the Forest Department at Nay Pyi Taw to identify the potential peatlands through remote sensing for effective planning of peat assessment in Myanmar.

- c. A **training and technical workshop** in Ayeyarwady Regional Forest Department, Patheingyi, Myanmar on 17th and 18th September 2012, attended by 30 and 38 participants respectively. A list of potential peatland areas was prepared based on participants experience and local knowledge.
- d. ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS) Review Meeting in Bangkok from 24th to 25th September 2012, with 20 participants. All ASEAN Member States have made significant progress in the implementation of the APMS depending on the countries progress and knowledge on the extent of the peatlands (Annexure 3).
- e. Awareness materials and project publications were widely disseminated/distributed at regional/national meetings and workshops. News and photos were posted on the facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/PeatSEA>). Photography contest, "Our Precious Peatlands", has been extended from 30th September to 15th October 2012 (Activity 1.1.3).

Output 1.2

- a. Follow up from the stakeholder consultation meeting held in Putrajaya, Malaysia on 16th July 2012, Malaysia has provided the feedback to the **final draft report of Financing and Incentive Options** in August. The report is being finalised to incorporate Malaysia's comments and is expected to be completed by the end of 2012 (Activity 1.2.1).

b. International and Regional Meetings/Conferences

The project was invited to attend the EU-REDD Coordination meeting in Brussels from 3rd to 4th July and presented lessons learnt from the SEApeat project (Activity 1.2.2).

A project team member attended three regional-level workshops related to Malaysia's REDD+ Readiness Project: Component 1, Institutional Framework for Sabah, (31 July - 1 August 2012), Sarawak, (2 - 3 August 2012) and for Peninsular Malaysia, (7 - 8 August 2012) (Annexure 4). The project team also participated in JST-JICA International Symposium on Wild Fire and Carbon Management in Peat-Forest in Indonesia (13 - 14 September 2012) (Activity 1.2.2 & 2.2.1)

An Oral presentation titled "Peatland Management in Southeast Asia" in the Fire Danger Rating System Workshop in Shah Alam on 19th September 2012.

- c. **A Technical Meeting on Integrated Management Plan for Peatland Management in Southeast Asia** in Pahang, Malaysia from 9th to 10th July 2012. It was attended by 40 participants from Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines. Various case studies on IMP were shared amongst the peatlands stakeholders (Activity 1.2.2) (Annexure 5).

d. Pilot demonstration activities in Selangor, Malaysia

- i. **The Community-based Rehabilitation Programme activities are ongoing and are conducted** regularly on a monthly basis. From July to September, approximately 3 hectares of the degraded peatland area in Raja Musa Forest Reserve (RMFR) was planted with a total of 1,700 seedlings through the support of 479 volunteers (Annexure 6).
- ii. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support was solicited for the community-based peatland rehabilitation programme at RMFR and was successful in attracting three companies this quarter, namely FedEx Malaysia Sdn. Bhd (8th September 2012), Sunway University (10th September 2012) and Timberland Lifestyle Brand (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (25th September 2012). In total, about 475 trees were planted in a 1 hectare area by these CSR groups (Annexure 7).
- iii. Friends of Peatland Forests which is also known as "Sahabat Hutan Gambut Selangor Utara" (SHGSU) was actively involved in the monitoring of fire occurrence and its related suppression activity e.g. canal blockings. They have been working closely with GEC and Forestry Department personnel in the fire monitoring during the dry season. The group conducted the daily patrolling

along the forest buffers for open fires (a team of two persons), water table measurements and updating of the FDRS reading on site.

- iv. Awareness and understanding of the local community on the importance of water management in peatlands has been raised significantly through the SHGSU activities. The farmers have agreed to construct canal blocks in their agriculture land after realising that uncontrolled drainage of peat water can cause wildfire in their agriculture land and good water management will improve the yields of their agriculture crops.
- v. The SHGSU received a seed grant and support from the project to implement their village-level Peatland Action Plan for the year 2012/2013. This is mainly to support the implementation of the Best Management Practices (BMP for peatland management) which was identified by the local communities at RMFR (Activity 1.2.3 & 2.1.3) (Annexure 8).
- vi. Four of the SHGSU members from RMFR participated in the recent “Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) Workshop” at Shah Alam, from 19th to 21st September 2012 organized by Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia (FDPM). Prior to this, the project also supported basic firefighting equipment for the use of SHGSU during the firefighting episodes at RMFR.

e) Pilot demonstration activities in Riau, Indonesia

- i. Water Management Assessment (Harapan Jaya Village)

A rapid field assessment on water management was conducted from 7th to 10th July 2012 by Mr. Chai Ah Sung. The map from the community mapping (Annexure 9) was the key reference. Initial assessment reported that the local community lacked knowledge and understanding on managing crops and oil palm plantations on peatlands. A Master plan for Harapan Jaya (land use planning) and a topography/contour map (for the water management in Harapan Jaya) are needed to guide the community (Annexure 10). Unfortunately, this exercise is unplanned and will be very costly to implement and beyond the budget allocation. Further consultation was carried out to identify community commitment in resolving this issue.

- ii) Community Radio,

The local social media, a community radio service known as “Selasih FM, 107.7 MHZ”, for Harapan Jaya Village has proven to be an effective means of communication for the villagers and the surrounding villages (Annexure 11). Four women have played an active role as radio broadcasters and integration of awareness raising in fire and water management on peatlands is ongoing (Activity 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 2.1.3).

- iii) Village Information System and Village Regulation

The ongoing activities in Harapan Jaya has stimulated the establishment of the Village Information System (VIS), which is much appreciated by the community. The initial information from the community mapping exercise has formed the basis of the VIS and further compilation and data collection is ongoing. The system has been widely promoted to the local governments by the village headman and received positive response. Also, a village regulation on fire prevention in Harapan Jaya is one of the leading initiatives by the community and has proven effective in fire prevention (Annexure 12). The project is assisting the community to legalize the regulation and it has been submitted to the local government in Indragilir Hilir District. Currently, it is under review by the legal department to ensure it conforms to the national regulations.

- iv. A demonstration plot (1 ha) has been designated by a group of communities (Kelompok Bina Usaha Tani) in Teluk Binjai to test out the land preparation of paddy fields without burning. (Activity 1.2.3 and 2.1.3).

- f) Activities in Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand are in the stage of preparation. Philippines has initiated some ecotourism activities through the ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP), while activities in Vietnam and Thailand are still pending due to administrative issues.

Output 2.1

- a. Progress of the development of FDRS, APFP and SEApeat project was reported to the 8th Meeting of the Committee under the Conference of Parties (COP) to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (COM-8) on 24th September 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand (Annexure 13).
- b. **Integrated Peatland Fire prevention in RMFR**
- i) The Prototype of a Water Table Monitoring System, which was installed at Raja Musa Forest Reserve on 25th May 2012, has faced some technical problem in data transmission. Currently the technical problem is being rectified and system improvement is ongoing. (Activity 2.1.2. and 2.1.3).
- ii) Efforts to monitor the **Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS)** results on a daily basis was intensified (which coincides with the dry period) and communicated to all levels of stakeholders to prevent/avoid fire risks. Unfortunately, about 350 hectares of forested areas were burnt due to wildfires. Four wildfires have been reported at RMFR which were believed to have originated from land clearing and agricultural activities outside of the RMFR boundary. The 1st fire incident was detected on 5th July 2012 at Forest Compartment (FC) 82 & 96, the 2nd fire on 31st July 2012 at FC 101, the 3rd fire on 3rd August 2012 at FC 99 & 100, and the 4th fire on 24th August 2012 at FC 73,90,89,75 & 76. The forest fires were finally suppressed/ subdued through collective efforts of the Selangor Forestry Department, the Fire and Rescue Department and, members of the local community represented by SHG (Annexure 14). (Activity 2.1.2)
- I) Several coordination meetings were held at both the State and District levels (through the established Working Committees on Selangor Peatlands) to discuss and coordinate efforts on fire prevention, suppression and fire control measures on the ground. Seven such meetings were held throughout the period, namely on the 14th, 16th, 17th and 29th August 2012 and on 4th, 7th and 20th September 2012.
- II) GEC and Perbadanan Kemajuan Pertanian Selangor (PKPS) had several discussions on the possibility of working together to protect and sustainably manage the RMFR buffer area where their development activities are based. The latter include their clay mining operation, oil palm plantations and other agriculture developments on peat. A number of issues of mutual interest were identified including fire prevention and rehabilitation of degraded forest areas – as a result the establishment of a clay bund at the buffer zone area was proposed and implemented. (Activity 2.1.3)
- III) On 11th September 2012 a rapid hydrological assessment was conducted at a recently burned area at RMFR (FC 73, 75, 76, 89 & 90). The assessment findings were used to propose the establishment of canal blocks to control the excess water flow from the area. (Activity 2.1.3) (Annexure 15).

Output 2.2

Compilation of information for the Southeast Asia Peat Network (SPN) is ongoing. Demo sites have been promoted through various workshops, awareness materials and website (Activity 2.2.2).

Output 2.3

- a. RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices for Existing Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat has been finalized and published in August 2012. Another RSPO Manual on Best Management Practices for Management and Rehabilitation of Natural Vegetation Associated with Oil Palm

Cultivation on Peat is currently in progress and is expected to be published in November 2012 (Activity 2.3.1)

Explain any divergences between planned and actual activities.

No major divergence except more efforts and resources have been focused on fire suppression in Malaysia due to unforeseen forest fire. Activities in Thailand and Vietnam have not been initiated due to administrative issues.

Describe the actual resources used compared to planned.

Due to the delay in the submission of the audit report, the second year funding was only received on 5 September 2012. Hence, the actual resources used will be less than planned due to co-funding of the regional activities from the ASEAN Peatland Forest Project in the early part of the year.

III. Partnership

Strength: Strong support from government agencies and ASEAN continues through strong linkage between 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 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 and vary depending on countries' procedures. 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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- Annexure 2: Report of Training Workshop on RS and GIS for peatland assessment and identification
- Annexure 3: ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (APMS) Review Meeting Presentation
- Annexure 4: Malaysia's REDD+ Readiness Project Workshop Report
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