



Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Mekong Countries Lao PDR



Nong mak ek, Champasak Province, Lao PDR (photo IUCN)

Mekong Peatlands Project

Project objectives and overview

The Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Mekong Countries Project (the Mekong Peatlands Project) is a GEF-6 funded project implemented in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar. The objective of the project is to sustainably manage peatland ecosystems in targeted countries and to conserve biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, by:

- assessing and documenting peatland ecosystems in the three countries,
- strengthening institutional capacity and enabling policy and legal frameworks for sustainable peatland management at local, national and sub-regional levels, and
- demonstrating sustainable peatland management practices that conserve biodiversity, reduce GHG emissions and strengthen sustainable livelihoods for local communities.

At a regional level, the project aims to bring together key government officials and decision

makers at ASEAN level forums to enhance regional cooperation, share knowledge and experience, and encourage the development of common guidelines and approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of peatland resources. The project will contribute directly to the ASEAN Programme on Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems 2014-2020, as well as the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (2003), and the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy 2020-2030.

At a country and local level, the project aims to raise awareness and build capacity of government at national, provincial and district levels, to improve their understanding of the functions and importance of peatland ecosystems, and mainstream peatlands into policies and plans to encourage conservation and sustainable use. At a community level, the project will support the demonstration of best practice approaches for sustainable peatland management and strengthen the sustainability of livelihoods. The project will pilot activities in the villages of Ban Thongsay, Na'ang and Kala, Champasak Province.

Peatlands in Lao PDR

Peatlands in Lao PDR have not yet been fully inventoried or described in detail. Initial surveys undertaken by the SEAPeat project (2013-15) identified the presence of peatlands scattered throughout various locations in Lao PDR, from north to south. In the northern Province of Vientiane, peatlands were found as floating peat mats and as peat swamps. In the country's southern province of Champasak, a total area of 570 ha of peatlands have been identified, including the largest recorded peatland in Lao PDR – the Beung Kiat Ngong wetland. More than 20 other “potential peatlands” were identified across Champasak Province requiring detailed surveying and assessment to confirm the presence of peat.



Peat soils (photo IUCN)

Project implementation

The project is being implemented in partnership between IUCN, as GEF Implementing Agency, and

the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as the Lead Executing Agency under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE). DWR is supported by IUCN and the Global Environment Centre through technical assistance and regional coordination.

At the community level where on-ground activities are undertaken, the Champasak Provincial Government and departmental offices of MONRE will work closely with the communities during project implementation. A national project steering committee comprised of various government agencies will provide guidance and ensure that cross-sectoral coordination and implementation is achieved, and that project activities are in line with national policies and strategic plans.

Key outcomes

The project aims to continue efforts to inventory and assess peatlands across Lao PDR and map peatland distributions, targeting **28,000 ha** peatlands to be identified and assessed across the three countries. The project aims to raise awareness and build institutional capacity in sustainable management of peatlands, with a target of at least **225 people** across the three countries having increase awareness/ capacity.

The project has a target of at least **two policy/legal frameworks** per country to be improved/strengthened to include peatland management provisions, and a target of **14,600 ha** of peatlands under improved management.

Additional targets include **500 community members** adopting sustainable livelihood practices, and **at least four** regional meetings and knowledge exchanges events held.

Reference

SEAPeat project (2013-15). *Sustainable Management of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia*. Implemented by the Global Environment Centre

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GEF Implementing Agency

International Union for
Conservation of Nature

Project Executing Agency

Ministry of Environment,
Cambodia

Project Executing Partners

Global Environment Centre

