



Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Mekong Countries Myanmar



Floating peat mats used for vegetable production, Inle Lake (photo by Le Phat Quoi)

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 and around Inle Lake, Myanmar's largest known peatland ecosystem.

Peatlands in Myanmar

Global peatland estimates suggest that Myanmar may contain around 122,800 ha of peatlands (Page et al. 2011), however the actual area of peatlands is unknown. Previous studies undertaken in 2008 and 2013-2015 by the Global Environment Centre confirmed significant areas of peatlands, including more than 10,000 ha in Shan State (9,100 ha in Inle Lake and 1,600 ha in Heho Valley) and roughly 500 ha around Htu Lake in Myan Aung Township, Ayerwaddy. In addition, peatlands have been found in Hopong Valley, southern Shan State; Pyin Oo Lwin Township, Mandalay; Bokpin and Palaw Townships, Tanintharyi; Indawgyi Lake, Kachin State; and Kyaukme Township, northern Shan State. However, these peatlands are yet to be surveyed and described.



Photo by Le Phat Quoi

Project implementation

The project is being implemented in partnership between IUCN, as GEF Implementing Agency, and the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) as the Lead Executing Agency under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC). ECD is supported by

IUCN Myanmar, the Global Environment Centre and the Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association.

At the community level where on-ground activities are undertaken, the Shan State Regional Government and departmental offices of the ECD and Forestry will be closely involved in project execution. Other government agencies, research institutes, NGOs and civil society will also play a role through consultations, training and/or livelihood support, or as partners in project execution. A national 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 Myanmar 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 increased awareness/capacity.

The project has a target of **at least two policy/legal frameworks** per country to be improved/strengthened with 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

Page SE, Rieley JO and Banks CJ. 2011. Global and regional importance of the tropical peatland carbon pool. *Global Change Biology* 17:798-818

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GEF Implementing Agency

International Union for Conservation of Nature

Project Executing Agency

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Myanmar

Project Executing Partners

Global Environment Centre, and Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association

