



The ACB and AMS stakeholders celebrate accomplishments of the BBP Project.

ACB holds final planning workshop for project on biodiversity-based products

In local markets of ASEAN Member States (AMS), biodiversity-based products (BBPs) such as natural cosmetics, pharmaceutical and health-supplement products, additives, handicraft, and other non-timber forest products are common. To help the AMS develop and promote BBPs for national, regional, and possibly international markets, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the GIZ-GFA Consulting Group began the implementation of the project, *Biodiversity-based Products as an Economic Source for the Improvement of Livelihood and Biodiversity Protection* in 2015 with support from the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany. The project was conducted in buffer zones of ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs), specifically Nam Ha National Protected Area in Lao PDR, Ba Be National Park and Hoang Lien National Park in Viet Nam, and the community protected area of Phnom Kulen National Park in Cambodia.

Set to conclude in 2019, the project held its final planning workshop on 22 January 2019. In her remarks, the ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim outlined the

accomplishments of the BBP Project. These include the preparation of a policy draft for mainstreaming biodiversity in the economic sector under Component 1; conduct of a number of capacity-building activities in biodiversity information management and the creation of videos on different products from the pilot sites under Component 2; signing of local subsidy contracts and strengthening of value chains under Component 3; and conduct of trainings for trainers and facilitators and the development of a training manual under Component 4. The final year of the project will encompass the training of key ACB staff to improve capacity in facilitating the BBP value chains.

While the final planning workshop signaled the conclusion of the BBP Project, Dr. Lim stated that it was not the end of such an important endeavour. "I would like to challenge the BBP team to continue doing their best and work beyond completing your deliverables. The crucial point is crafting a strategy that will ensure the sustainability of the benefits of the project beyond its formal conclusion. You need to maintain the strong links that you have started

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Wetlands: Nature’s provider, our defense against climate change

In her message for World Wetlands Day on 2 February, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim noted the importance of wetlands in the ASEAN Member States.

In Brunei Darussalam, Tasek Merimbun National Park, an ASEAN Heritage Park (AHP) and one of the biggest wildlife sanctuaries in the country, is home to several rare and endangered species. It is also one of Brunei Darussalam’s Important Bird Areas (IBAs) as listed by BirdLife International. IBAs are critical sites for conservation of the world’s birds.

According to the Ramsar Convention, 30 per cent of Cambodia is “covered by wetlands and the majority of them have been identified as globally important, owing to the populations of threatened species that they support”. In the north-west upstream end of Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia is the Prek Toal Ramsar Site, which was declared as Southeast Asia’s largest waterbird colony.

In Indonesia, Danau Sentarum Wildlife Reserve, a large freshwater swamp forest in Kalimantan, accommodates 185 species of fish and 200 species of birds.

In Lao PDR, Beung Kiat Ngong Wetlands is composed of swamps, lakes, and marshes that serve as tributaries of the Xe Kham Pho River, which is home to 200 to 300 fish species and freshwater tortoises.

In Malaysia, Tasek Bera Forest Reserve, a reed swamp and swamp forest surrounded by grasslands, supports richly diverse species of both flora and fauna including 328 species of algae, 19 aquatic plants, and 95 species of fish.

In Myanmar, Indawgyi Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake, protects surrounding areas from floods and serves as a key habitat to at least 20,000 migratory and resident waterbirds.

In the Philippines, the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area, an urban coastal wetland in Manila Bay inside Metro Manila, comprises two interconnected mangrove-covered islands, shallow lagoons and coastline, which serve as nesting place for at least 5,000 migratory and resident birds.

In Singapore, the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, also an AHP, boasts of a vast mangrove forest and over 500 species of tropical flora and fauna. It was recognised by Wetlands International as a significant site for migratory birds.

In Thailand, the Ao Phang Nga National Park is a 400-square-kilometre AHP that is known for its rich folklore, prehistoric rock arts, and natural beauty due to its coastal forests. It has a series of strikingly scenic karst limestone hills flooded by the sea to form some 42 sheer islands with high cliffs, rock overhangs and formations, caves, and coral gardens.

In Viet Nam, Tram Chim National Park is home to the globally threatened bird and fish species including the endangered Bengal florican and the Giant barb. During the dry season, it offers food and shelter to more than 20,000 waterbirds. The park’s landscape protects the surrounding community of around 20,000 people in the eastern and southern dykes from flood surges.

Despite their importance, wetlands are getting degraded. Human activities such as dam construction, discharge of industrial wastes and municipal sewage, polluted water runoff, habitat fragmentation, and urbanisation harm the wetlands. Reports show that inland water bodies in the ASEAN region are the most threatened habitats on Earth.

Dr. Lim called on governments and individuals to always bear in mind that wetlands play a crucial role in providing for and protecting people. Wetlands are not just lands covered in water—they are home to flora and fauna that have key functions in the web of life. Everyone has a part to play in keeping our wetlands healthy and viable. Recognising the importance of wetlands to livelihoods, and as part of natural solutions to climate change impacts and natural disasters will allow conservation organisations to advocate for better land use planning that will consider proper functioning of wetlands in development initiatives in and around these areas.

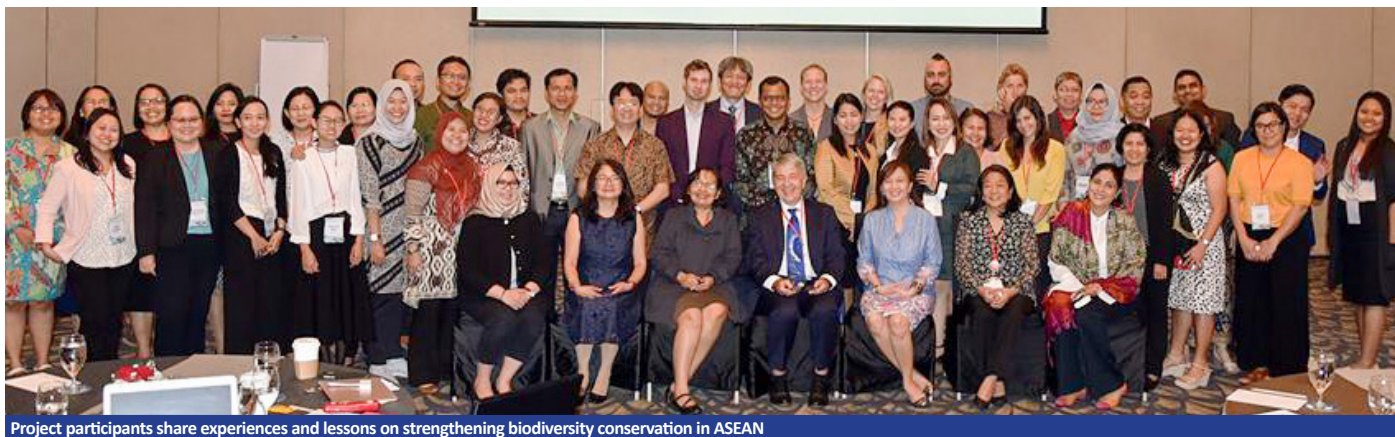


Tasek Merimbun National Park in Brunei Darussalam. Photo by the Park Management



Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in Myanmar. Photo by the Park Management

ASEAN-Germany biodiversity project concludes in Jakarta



Project participants share experiences and lessons on strengthening biodiversity conservation in ASEAN

On 19 February 2019, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) held the *Institutional Strengthening of the Biodiversity Sector in ASEAN (ISB) Project Completion Forum* in Jakarta to share success stories, lessons learned, and experiences on the implementation of the ASEAN-Germany biodiversity cooperation project. Implemented by the ACB and Germany's GIZ, the ISB Project helped improve and strengthen the management of ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP), selected protected areas of high conservation importance representing the ecosystems of the ASEAN region.

In her message during the forum, the ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim emphasised that the ASEAN region faces a challenge of conserving and protecting its rich biodiversity from threats and impacts brought about by climate change and other drivers of biodiversity

loss. "At risk is more than 20 per cent of the world's flora and fauna species; around 35 per cent of our mangrove forests; and 30 per cent of our coral reefs where over 650 million ASEAN peoples depend on these natural resources for food, health, and livelihood." Director Lim added that the ACB's partnership with Germany, through the ISB Project, has truly strengthened the ACB to be more effective in serving as a regional hub for biodiversity conservation in ASEAN.

Dr. Berthold Seibert, GIZ Programme Director, said the project conducted regional assessments in AHPs and protected areas to aid in developing regional strategies towards climate change resiliency, gender mainstreaming, economic valuation, and minimum management standards for AHPs. Pilot activities generated good practices and lessons learned, inspiring other initiatives and

contributing to the development of regional approaches on effective ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation, and valuation of ecosystem services. Ms. Clarissa Arida, Director of the ACB Programme Development and Implementation Unit, reported that through the project's Secondment Programme, senior and junior environment officials from nine ASEAN Member States (AMS) learned ways in achieving national biodiversity targets, as well as various practices transcending regional differences across countries towards developing a "regional mindset."

The ISB Project Completion Forum recommended ways forward, including potential collaboration and partnerships among the ACB, the AMS, and other organisations, within the context of the proposed ISB successor project.



Mr. Nguyen Xuan Dung, Chief of Office, Biodiversity Conservation Agency, Viet Nam



Ms. Annette Wallgren, Gender and Environment Officer, UN Environment Asia and the Pacific

ASEAN countries to improve identification of key biodiversity areas and reporting of conservation efforts



The participants were provided with hands-on exercises intended to develop familiarity on the identification of sites critical to the persistence of biodiversity and on the use of visualisation tools to aid reporting processes to multilateral environmental agreements. Demo sessions were also given to complement these exercises.

While there is much to celebrate about ASEAN's rich biodiversity, it is important to recognise that the region's natural resources are fast depleting and face a wide range of threats. Efforts to combat biodiversity loss include the identification and protection of key biodiversity areas and participation in multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, Convention on Migratory Species, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), among others. To support these efforts, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) conducted a series of orientation workshops on key biodiversity areas and biodiversity conservation reporting from 11 to 15 March 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand, in partnership with the Key Biodiversity Areas Community and NatureServe.

The workshops presented tools to promote the conservation of sites critical to the global persistence of

biodiversity in the ASEAN region, demonstrated how these tools can guide the strategic expansion of protected area networks, informed environmental safeguards, and helped report progress in the achievement of CBD targets and the SDGs. According to Dr. Sheila Vergara, Director of the ACB Biodiversity Information Management Unit, "The workshops introduced the Biodiversity Indicators Dashboard (BID), an interactive, customisable, online platform for visualising trends and geographic variation in biodiversity indicators; provided an overview of trends in biodiversity and conservation actions through the BID; and identified gaps to tailor-fit the BID and tools to identify areas critical to the persistence of biodiversity to the requirements of the ASEAN Member States."

The ACB-European Union project on *Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN* also discussed Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas,

Community Managed Areas, and other effective area-based conservation measures. The workshop benefitted managers of protected areas and ASEAN Heritage Parks, officers handling collection and analysis of biodiversity data, and conservation staff involved in the preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and reports to multilateral environmental agreements.



ACB Supports Inclusivity

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) participated in "Love Inclusively," a benefit concert featuring exceptional children, organised by the Center for Possibilities Foundation, Inc. (CFP). The concert featured differently-abled children who performed with the Manila Symphony Orchestra and Mr. Ogie Alcasid, a well-known Filipino singer-songwriter. The concert was held at the RCB Plaza in Makati City,

Philippines on 2 March 2019.

Part of the event was an exhibit called "Art Exceptional," featuring the artworks of Juno Santos, Vico Cham, and Samantha Kaspar, visual artists with special needs. The ACB has collaborated with Samantha Kaspar in promoting biodiversity conservation through art, and in spreading awareness of the benefits of biodiversity to human health.





The One District One Product programme certifies products from Nam Ha National Protected Area

Biodiversity-based products recognised by the Government of Lao PDR

Bamboo products from the villages under the *Biodiversity-based Products as an Economic Source for the Improvement of Livelihood and Biodiversity Protection*, or the BBP project, received their certification from the One District One Product (ODOP) programme of the Government of Lao PDR.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce awarded the certificate during the ODOP Certification

Awarding Ceremony on 8 February 2019 in Luang Namtha Province in Lao PDR. The BBP Bamboo products are the first commodities of Luang Namtha District to be included in the ODOP programme.

Implemented in 2015 and set to conclude this year, the BBP project is being implemented by the ACB and the GIZ-GFA Consulting Group with the support of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and

Development (BMZ) of Germany. The project aims to help ASEAN Member States develop and promote BBPs for national, regional, and possibly international markets. The project was conducted in buffer zones of ASEAN Heritage Parks, specifically Nam Ha National Protected Area in Lao PDR, Ba Be National Park and Hoang Lien National Park in Viet Nam, and the community protected area of Phnom Kulen in Cambodia.



ACBeats

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Editorial Consultants

Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim, Clarissa C. Arida, Sheila G. Vergara, Genalyn A. Bagon-Soriano

Editorial Board

Editors: Pamela Reblora, Dion Zarina Tuazon

Writers: Sahlee B. Barrer, Pamela Reblora, Dion Zarina Tuazon

Layout and Design: Reigna Belle Aguja **Photography:** Angela Metin, Pamela Reblora, Dion Zarina Tuazon, Martin A. Palis, Tasek Merimbun National Park, Indawgyi Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park





Production: Pauline Kristy Erasga

For story contributions, please contact the ACBeats editorial team at cpa@aseanbiodiversity.org.

For more information, log on to www.aseanbiodiversity.org or chm.aseanbiodiversity.org

ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity

D. M. Lantican Avenue,
University of the Philippines Los Baños,
Laguna, Philippines 4031
Tel. No.: +6349 536-2865 Fax: +632 584-4210

-  ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
-  ABiodiversity
-  ASEANBiodiversity
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Viet Nam, ACB, ink partnership on sustainable livelihood

Following the success of the project's first phase, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Vietnam Environment Association (VEA) for the Second Phase of the Small Grants Programme (SGP II), in the Office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The MoU was signed by the ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim and VEA Director Dr. Nguyen Van Tai.

“We commit our financial and human resource contribution, as well as effective coordination with relevant stakeholders in four provinces, consultant agencies, and management agencies to achieve SGP II targets of conservation and sustainable development in Viet Nam,” stated Dr. Nguyen Van Tai. Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim said that continuing the project will greatly contribute to achieving global biodiversity goals. “It is expected that the implementation of SGP II will result in best practices involving biodiversity conservation and livelihood development among communities surrounding the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) in Viet Nam. They will also contribute to the attainment of Aichi Biodiversity Targets through the effective management of ecosystems and through sustainable livelihood activities to provide multiple benefits to people and nature. Eventually, these experiences and practices from



The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim and the Vietnam Environment Association Director Dr. Nguyen Van Tai sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

conservation, community outreach, and livelihood will support the four AHP sites in Viet Nam.”

Funded by the Federal Republic of Germany through the KfW, the Small Grants Programme started in 2014 with its first phase being implemented in Gunung Leuser National Park

and Way Kambas National Park in Indonesia, and Nat Ma Taung National Park in Myanmar. The second phase will be implemented in four of Viet Nam's AHPs: Ba Be National Park, Chu Mom Ray National Park, Hoang Lien National Park, and Kon Ka Kinh National Park.

ACB holds final planning workshop...continued from page 1

– from the various participating communities in the ASEAN Heritage Parks to their respective government counterparts, not only with the park management offices, but also with the concerned Ministries.”

Dr. Lim added, “We envision sustained success and replicated best practices after the ACB and Germany have left the project sites. The lessons learned from these sites will surely benefit other ASEAN Member States. The lessons and best practices will serve as inputs in their strategies to mainstream biodiversity in the economic sector. These are the true essences of a successful intervention

project such as the BBP. These will be our indicators if the money and efforts spent for the project are worth it. This should be our standard for all other projects that the ACB and its partners will do in the future.”

The project is also expected to deliver a Sustainability Strategy study that can give AMS ideas on how to adopt a similar project and expand biodiversity-based products or the value-chain approach for long-term action on biodiversity conservation and the mainstreaming of biodiversity into key economic sectors.



Biodiversity-based products from Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam displayed during the workshop.

Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park awarded Platinum Global Ocean Refuge status



Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (TRNP) is a marine protected area and an ASEAN Heritage Park located in the Philippines, within the Coral Triangle, which is considered the global centre of marine biodiversity. The park is home to more than 1,200 marine species, including sea grasses and algae, corals, sharks, rays, fishes, sea turtles, seabirds, and marine mammals, making it a world-renowned site for scuba diving.

TRNP is an important asset for global conservation, as 181 of the species found there are threatened to some degree. The park is a breeding and rookery ground for many species of migratory and resident seabirds, including the critically endangered Christmas Island frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*). It is also a nesting site for endangered green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and critically endangered hawksbill turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*).

As an exemplary marine protected area that guards valuable ocean ecosystems, TRNP was awarded Platinum Global Ocean Refuge status by the Global Ocean Refuge System (GLORES). GLORES is a Marine Conservation Institute initiative that seeks to protect 30 per cent of the ocean by 2030. It is an innovative strategy to incentivise decision makers to establish protected areas that safeguard marine life and promote opportunities for sustainable tourism. GLORES



Photos by Tommy Schultz, and Lene and Claus Topp



Participants of the workshop in Bangpu Nature Education Center in Thailand

Youth Biodiversity Leaders Cohort Kick-off Workshop held in Thailand

From 25 to 30 March 2019, the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) conducted the Youth Biodiversity Leaders (YBL) Cohort Kick-off Workshop at the Bangpu Nature Education Center in Thailand. Twenty selected YBL Cohorts were welcomed by Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana, Director, Foundation for Environmental Education for Sustainable Development, Thailand; Ms. Benchamaporn Wattanatongchai, Environmentalist, Senior Professional Level, Office of the Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning; Mika Tan, ASEAN Youth Biodiversity Programme (AYBP) Coordinator of the ACB; and Christian Schwarzer, Youth

Ambassador for the UN Decade on Biodiversity, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN).

AYBP, which is funded by the European Union through the *Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN* (BCAMP) Project, was developed in collaboration with the GYBN of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to involve the youth in the development of biodiversity strategies and action plans at the local, national, and regional levels. The AYBP will provide ASEAN youth with capacity building, mentorship, and resources through two

signature activities: Youth Biodiversity Leaders and Youth Internships in ASEAN Heritage Parks.

The workshop provided an opportunity to learn about the youth leaders' conservation efforts, interlinkages between the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and other biodiversity policies. The participants also toured the Bangpu Wetland Nature Trail to learn more about the conservation and management of the mangrove sanctuary.



AYBP Coordinator Mika Tan and Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana, Director of the Foundation for Environmental Education for Sustainable Development welcomed the participants.



Birdwatching at the mangrove area of the Bangpu Wetland Nature Trail