

A multi-level approach to biodiversity conservation in ASEAN

One of the most biodiverse areas in the world, the ASEAN region is facing complex challenges to protecting its ecosystems. The Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN (BCAMP) project has been launched to address these challenges in an effort to curb biodiversity loss.



Among the many species native to the region are the endangered Asian elephant, and substantial cross-border and regional cooperation is required to support their dwindling populations.



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The ten member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) occupy only 3% of the world's surface but are home to 18% of all living species on Earth. Three ASEAN member states (Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines) are classified as "mega-diverse". However, the ecosystems in the ASEAN regions are all under pressure due to ever-intensifying threats such as habitat loss, unsustainable use and over-exploitation of resources, climate change, invasive alien species, pollution, and poverty.

These issues are all interrelated and need to be addressed simultaneously to reach a leverage point in which biodiversity resources can be secured. To support the ACB in reaching this point, the European Union has launched the EUR-10-million Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN project (BCAMP), which runs from 2017 until 2022. NIRAS is contracted to handle the technical assistance from November 2017 to October 2020.

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ASEAN Heritage Parks in the 10 ASEAN member states

BCAMP aims to enhance conservation of biodiversity and halt or significantly reduce biodiversity loss by approaching the problem from three levels, each with its own objectives:

On-site, BCAMP focuses especially on training in the use of new methods and technologies and works closely with the heritage parks and other protected areas to improve overall effectiveness through better management, business plans, and improved means of funding.

34,000

the number of records in the ASEAN species database

Donor/Client

Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines

Location

Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam

Overall project value

€10 million

TA contract value

€1.584.490

Duration

November 2017–June 2023

Recognising the importance of their ecosystems, the ASEAN member states have made concerted efforts at both regional and national levels to address biodiversity loss. In addition to this, ASEAN itself has engaged in activities to support member countries in their interventions. These include protecting areas of importance to biodiversity by establishing ASEAN Heritage Parks and launching the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) to strengthen the capacity of the ASEAN member states in formulating and coordinating biodiversity-related policies, strategies, and actions; fulfilling relevant treaty obligations; and promoting common positions.

Attacking a complex problem from multiple fronts

Despite notable efforts to conserve ASEAN's biodiversity, a variety of factors limit these interventions' efficacy. The main challenges to conservation efforts are the lack of good management in many protected areas, including ASEAN Heritage Parks; limited knowledge of biodiversity conservation; threats from development sectors such as infrastructure construction, farming, mining, and energy; and weak institutions.



Royal Belum State Park in Perak, Malaysia is one of the proposed protected areas in the transboundary collaboration between Malaysia and Thailand.



Nationally, the project focuses on building knowledge and the scientific basis for biodiversity conservation by helping the ACB identify potential research institutions that can be supported and by providing training to staff from these institutions on the subjects of biodiversity and ecosystem assessments, valuation, and implications of climate change. It also assists the ACB in conducting studies, for example on climate change's impact on biodiversity and socio-economic systems, and will support the ACB in its efforts to mainstream biodiversity in education, development plans, and tourism. Finally, BCAMP will support the ASEAN Member States in drafting and implementing policy and regulations around the conservation of biodiversity.

member states in biodiversity conservation and protected area management. This will be done through training and on-the-job learning as BCAMP works in several pilot areas selected across the region.

One success thus far in implementation has been the proposed creation of a 260,000-hectare protected area on the boundary between Malaysia and Thailand. The programme has facilitated high-level meetings resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding between the respective governments on moving forward with the conservation area. Additionally, the project has supported the use of technologies including anti-poacher camera traps to help rangers protect rare and endangered species.

Regionally, the aim is to increase the ACB's capacity to support the ASEAN regional agenda and ASEAN

As part of BCAMP, the EU also supports [ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes](#), a programme designed to recognise outstanding individuals who have contributed significantly to biodiversity conservation and advocacy efforts in their respective countries.



Rangers and staff were trained in how to use camera traps and other technologies to help in their mission of protecting wildlife and biodiversity.