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EU, ACB launch 5-year biodiversity-conservation project for Asean

By [BusinessMirror](#)

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In Photo: The European Union and Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) sign the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean Project grant agreement recently. Signing the agreement are Mattias Lentz (seated, from left), chargé d'affaires of the EU Delegation to the Philippines, and lawyer Roberto V. Oliva, ACB executive director. Witnessing the signing are members of the ACB governing board Win Naing Thaw (from left), director, Nature and Wildlife Conservation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Myanmar; Vann Monyneath, chairman, Asean Senior Officials on Environment (ASOEN)-Cambodia; Wendy Yap, director, International Relations, National Biodiversity Centre, Singapore; Philippine Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu; Lonkham Atsanavong, chairman, ACB-Governing Board and chairman, ASOEN-Lao PDR; Clarissa C. Arida, director, Programme Development and Implementation Unit, ACB; Philippine Ambassador to Asean Elizabeth Buensuceso;

Nguyen Thi Thanh Tram, deputy head-ASOEN Office, Vietnam; and Vongthep Arthakaivalvatee, deputy secretary-general of Asean Socio-Cultural Community. The Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean Project (BCAMP) grant agreement was recently signed by the European Union (EU) and the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB). It was one of the highlights of activities during the inauguration of the new ACB building at the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Mattias Lentz, chargé d'affaires of the European Union Delegation to the Philippines, and lawyer Roberto V. Oliva, ACB executive director, signed the grant agreement.

The five-year biodiversity conservation project for Asean embraces a comprehensive and holistic approach in biodiversity conservation that cuts across site level, national and regional level of project-implementation framework.

It aims to contribute to global sustainability by ensuring that the Asean's rich biological diversity is conserved and sustainably managed toward enhancing social, economic and environmental well-being invoking the attainment of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets—the framework that ACB aligned itself toward achieving biodiversity conservation in the Asean region.

The BCAMP Project is a manifestation of EU's support to biodiversity and development in the region. According to Lentz, "The European Union is a firm believer in the promotion of biodiversity worldwide, in the Asean region, and in the Philippines in particular.

"As you may know, an important chapter of the EU cooperation with other countries focuses on biodiversity. Biodiversity and development are closely linked as biodiversity sustains development, and development impacts biodiversity."

Working on previous gains and laid-down systems in the Asean biodiversity conservation initiatives, BCAMP aims to enhance conservation of biodiversity and effective management of protected areas in Southeast Asia to halt or significantly reduce biodiversity loss.

The project has three main components to achieve its goals and objectives. These components include: site level interventions in selected and future Asean Heritage Parks (AHPs), enabling support at the national level and regional level intervention.

For component one, BCAMP aims to improve biodiversity conservation and protected area management through the AHP Programme. AHPs are protected areas of high conservation importance, preserving in total a complete spectrum of representative ecosystems of the Asean region.

These areas are established to generate greater awareness, pride, appreciation, enjoyment and conservation of Asean's rich natural heritage, through a regional network of representative protected areas, and to generate greater collaboration among Asean member states in preserving their shared natural heritage. AHP is a flagship ACB program.

Component two emphasizes the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and protected area management in development plans and educational system in Asean by way of utilizing developed scientific knowledge as basis for biodiversity conservation.

Component three, on the other hand, capitalizes on the institutional strengthening of ACB as a regional mechanism that supports the Asean regional agenda on biodiversity conservation and protected area management for the 10 Asean member-states.

“ACB has steadfastly committed itself to biodiversity conservation by being a pivotal mechanism for coordination and collaboration of joint programs and projects for the 10 Asean member-states. We sincerely acknowledge the help and support of the European Union for us to achieve more and serve better toward the fulfillment of our goal, which is to conserve and sustain Asean's rich but threatened biological resources.” Oliva said.

BCAMP is expected to run from 2017 to 2022, with the ACB as project implementing agency. The ceremonial signing was witnessed by EU delegates, members of the ACB governing board, Philippine government delegates and other dignitaries.

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