

Small Grants Programme by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity at Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park (Myanmar)

Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park

Named after Buddha's saintly disciple, Maha Kathapa, the 140,280-hectare Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park (AKNP) was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1981, opened as a national park in 1984, and declared an ASEAN Heritage Park (AHP) in 2003.

The park's hilly accented valley provides refuge to a wealth of wildlife including the endangered banteng (*Bos javanicus*) and tiger (*Panthera tigris*). AKNP is also home to the largest tracts of Myanmar's remaining teak forest (*Tectona grandis*).

The park plays a crucial role in providing livelihood and other ecological services to an estimated 65 local communities.

However, AKNP is threatened by illegal logging and hunting, encroachment for farming, weak law enforcement, and lack of awareness of the benefits and value of wildlife, among many other issues. AKNP's significant biological resources and the challenges it faces make it a suitable pilot site for SGP I. The park received a total of **EUR 274,998** in grants.

Meaningful partnerships fostered

The following agencies and organisations worked together to achieve wins through the SGP:

- Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (NWCD-MONREC) (*the implementing agency*)
- Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park management
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) (*the service provider that managed the implementation of SGP I in AKNP*)
- Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association
- Conservation on Hill Ecosystem Association (CHEA)
- SPECTRUM
- Norwegian Environment Agency
- Village conservation groups, community-based organisations, and civil society organisations (*grantees*)
- ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
- GITEC Consulting Group

Launched in 2014, the **Small Grants Programme** by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (SGP) is an initiative aimed at sustaining biodiversity in the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHPs) in line with the interests of local communities who directly depend on the selected parks, providing alternative livelihood opportunities to the locals, and strengthening the role of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) in promoting biodiversity conservation in the ASEAN region.

SGP I was implemented in four AHPs in Myanmar and two AHPs in Indonesia.



Lessons Learned

- Collaborative management approach for AHPs is one of the best practices to promote community participation in park management
- Initiation of protected area constituency through the Township Protected Area Management Committee ensures the coordination among stakeholders
- Capacity building for both local communities and park staff is important for effective implementation of management plans
- An all-inclusive approach for management plan development including conceptual model development is important. Refining the interventions ensures understanding of park staff of management plan and holding multiple public hearings enhances the participation of communities.

Naw May Lay Thant

National Landscape Coordinator, WCS

Sustaining biodiversity, changing lives with small grants

SGP I supports a range of conservation and livelihood activities that fall under several thematic areas.



General Park Management

SGP I increased local communities' sense of ownership of park management as they participated in the co-management of AKNP.

- Supported the development and updating of a Collaborative Management Plan (CMP) that is centred on co-management by awarding a **EUR 100,000** grant. The CMP was approved and adopted by MONREC in 2018 and served as the basis for succeeding interventions in AKNP
 - Established Township Protected Area Management Committees (TPAMC) in three townships (Kani, Pale, and Yinmabin)
 - Established the Township Protected Area Management Supporting Unit (PAMSU)
- Supported the implementation of the "Strengthening SMART Law Enforcement System in Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park for Reduction of Main Threats" intervention amounting to **EUR 149,998**
 - Strengthened existing law enforcement through the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) system by recruiting and training **seven** community guardians, conducting **four** basic wildlife and SMART refresher training for rangers, holding **36** patrol review meetings, and procuring necessary field equipment
 - Improved park management planning by increasing species and threats distribution reports to **37** each and including them in the SMART patrolling report
 - Reached **10,826** households



Community Outreach and Conservation Awareness

The SGP enhanced community awareness among local communities about their crucial role in biodiversity conservation.

- Supported the implementation of the "Conservation Awareness and Community Outreach in Alaungdaw Kathapa National Park" initiative with a **EUR 25,000** grant
 - Developed park staff's capacity to conduct awareness programmes by crafting a community outreach strategy and plan and developing training modules
 - Conducted awareness campaigns in **seven** villages and **eight** schools, as well as distributed **500** children's booklets
 - Strengthened awareness programme for pilgrims in the religious zone by refurbishing the education centre and conducting a campaign that reached an estimated **one million** pilgrims
 - Distributed **300** fuel-efficient stoves to the villages to reduce fuel wood consumption
- Supported the implementation of the awareness component of the park's CMP by conducting Knowledge, Attitude and Practice surveys to know public perception of the protected area and its values and increasing community engagement during the development of the CMP



Livelihood Enhancement

Under the CMP, AKNP stakeholders will reduce the pressures on the wildlife sanctuary by offering livelihood-related capacity development activities and introducing alternative sources of income.

- Identified priority villages for livelihood development and community capacity building

Next Steps

- Establish conservation agreements and benefit sharing mechanism between the park and the communities
- Develop community-based natural resources management
- Improve existing agriculture and livestock raising systems
- Promote ecotourism



Habitat and Species Management

The CMP's habitat restoration sub-programme seeks to recreate a functioning ecosystem to ensure that it can sustain species populations.

Next Steps

- Establish active community and civil society organisation conservation networks around AKNP
- Promote participatory biodiversity monitoring as part of co-management
- Set up a community conservation volunteer system
- Strengthen habitat preservation, natural regeneration, gap planting, and forest fire protection

Scan this QR code to know more about the various grants and interventions implemented in AKNP.



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