



QUARTERLY UPDATE GEC BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND ADVISORY COUNCIL (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2024)

Introduction

This report provides updates on the progress of GEC's activities for the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2024: October to December 2024.

Forest and Coastal Programme

Under FCP's partnership initiatives, GEC planted over 26,350 trees with 1,472 volunteers. These included 18,600 trees in five mangrove sites with 1,024 volunteers across Johor, Selangor, Perak, and 7,750 trees in four peatland and inland sites in Johor, Selangor and Malacca.

Environmental Education and Programmes

Two key programmes were conducted:

- Monash University's inaugural Global Immersion Guarantee (GIG) visit to RMFR, GEC-Community Sustainable Peat Centre (COSPeC) and Temuan Culture Information Centre (TCIC) (Nov 19-20) to introduce students the 5R conservation approach in NSPSF and provide hands-on experience in baseline studies, emphasising sustainable ecosystem-based adaptation, valuable insights into ecosystem restoration, indigenous community development, and sustainable practices, and GEC's initiatives to address environmental and socioeconomic challenges.
- Yayasan Sime Darby (YSD) Mangrove Education and Awareness Carnival 2024 (Oct 28) at SK Sri Siakap, Perak for 115 participants, including students and teachers from 11 schools, with representatives from Perak State Forestry Department (PSFD), District Education Office, GEC, and SHBKG



Community-based Initiatives

GEC also carried out the following initiatives:

- Nov 4-5: A two-day Tour Guide Workshop at TCIC to train 22 Sahabat Gambut Asli Temuan (SGAT) members in areas of career development, interpersonal communication, customer service, and storytelling through interactive modules, practical field exercises, and post-training assessments. This workshop is aimed at empowering the SGAT to confidently showcase Temuan culture to visitors through Indigenous Village Tourism Packages (IVTPs).
- Dec 10-12: A workshop on 'Art of Selling and Closing Techniques' for five community-based organisations (CBOs) aimed to empower participants on advanced sales techniques, effective closing strategies, and use of digital marketing tools, to enhance the marketability, visibility and profitability of their mangrove-based products.
- Ten programmes including IVTP visits, training, monthly-tree planting sales, interactive activities, interviews, and Hari Moyang celebrations were facilitated by SGAT at TCIC, Kampung Orang Asli

Pulau Kempas and KLNFR. For this quarter, the IVTP generated total sales valued at RM30,020 from monthly allowances, services provided, community products, handicrafts, vegetables and trees. Under the IVTP enhancement initiative, GEC supported SGAT with the purchase of 10 units of heavy-duty mountain bikes and two heavy-duty storage containers for SGAT assets and inventory.

Conservation Efforts and Partnership

- Sept 17-21: GEC and TH Plantations supported Johor State Forestry Department (JSFD)'s Forest Biodiversity Scientific Expedition at GAFR, involving 137 researchers from educational institutions, NGOs, and government agencies across Malaysia aimed to document biodiversity, verify the five forest strata and confirm the presence of a quartz ridge within GAFR. GEC contributed by confirming the peatland, freshwater swamp, and mangrove strata through field surveys, water quality analysis, peat soil sampling, and drone assessments, while also documenting biodiversity, including the rarest *Betta tomi*.



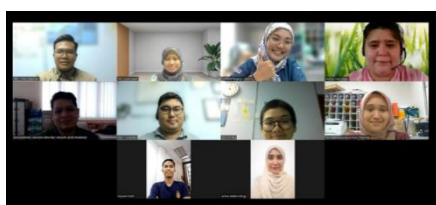
Policies and guidelines

- GEC collaborated with Perak State Forestry Department (PSFD) to conduct a census to collect samples and baseline data to develop the Kuala Gula Forest Reserve Management and Conservation Action Plan, which was submitted to PSFD and will serve as a key reference for future management plan for development at Kuala Gula Forest Reserve.
- GEC, joined SSFD and Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystems in Malaysia (SMPEM)-Selangor to develop first drafts of the Integrated Management Plans (IMPs) for both North Selangor and South Selangor Peat Swamp Forests. The draft IMPs were presented at a coordination meeting (Dec 13) to gather initial feedback from SSFD and SMPEM-Selangor.



Peatland Programme

GEC is working with stakeholders to develop the Guidelines for the Preparation of the State Action Plan on Peatlands (SAPP Guideline). The virtual and face-to-face meetings in Pahang and Sabah focussed on agency profiling, testing of questionnaire and collection of baseline information. This included an inception presentation with Peninsular Malaysia Forestry Department (JPSM), National Project Management Office (NPMO) and State Project Management Offices (SPMO) involved in the Sustainable Management of Peatland Ecosystem in Malaysia (SMPEM).



(L-R) Meeting with Pahang and Sabah Stakeholders, and the Inception Presentation with JPSM, NPMO and SPMO.

The design mission for *Sustainable Agriculture and Plantation/Forests in Peatland Landscape in Malaysia (SAPPLIM/SAFPLIM)* with IFAD and the Government of Malaysia is ongoing: the second mission (November) to discussion further on proposed landscapes and preparation for third mission (January 2025) to visit Kinabatangan Landscape, Sabah.



GEC implemented awareness programmes involving communities and school students to create a positive impact and enable strengthen GEC's network for future partnerships include ***i-Komuniti Lestari (November)*** officiated by YB Datuk Seri Panglima Dr. Joachim Gunsalam, Sabah's Deputy Chief Minister II / Local Government and Housing Minister, and ***Hero Alam Sekitar (December)***.

GEC was also involved in the installation of eight cameras under the Malaysian Palm Oil Green Conservation Foundation (MPOGCF)-funded (December 2024 to November 2025).

In October, GEC conducted the stakeholder discussions in Kelabit Highland, Sarawak in Bario to gather feedback from agencies and local community on the possibility of establishing the Community Conservation Area (CCA) concept, which was well received by most of the villagers. GEC hosted online discussions with Sarawak Forestry Department and Sarawak Forestry Corporation to gather information and obtain guidance for the preparation of the full proposal. With the installation of three camera traps in Ramudu community area in November, GEC continues to monitor the biodiversity here in rotation after the Pa Derung area. The information captured will be useful for awareness campaigns and as a reference for relevant agencies.

GEC actively engaged with key stakeholders in Pahang to strengthen peatland management and fire prevention strategies. Focussing on the development of an action plan for the Southeast Pahang Peatland Landscape (SEPPL) in dry season, defining stakeholder roles (government, private companies, and NGOs), infrastructure inventory, regular maintenance, budget estimates for peat fire prevention and suppression, community empowerment, and quarterly updates on ground conditions.



In collaboration with Ladang Sungai Bebar Selatan of the YP Plantation Holdings and communities from Meranti, Selingkong, and Sungai Kalong villages, GEC successfully planted 4,200 trees in the buffer zone between the oil palm estate and the Nenasi (Extension) Forest Reserve.

GEC also partnered with the Department of Environment (DOE) and the SMPPEM project to host a Peat Fire Prevention Awareness Programme at SK Simpai for 122 students and community members from Simpai village. In preparation for the monsoon season, GEC distributed 80 food baskets to Orang Asli villages in the SEPPL.



ASEAN Fire Alert Phone App Tools revamp is now completed and once approved by ASEAN will be available on Google Playstore, Apple Store, and Huawei App Gallery. It also includes a web portal and dedicated website, with two introductory and tutorial videos, as well as a poster produced to support the app's launch.

GEC took lead in developing the Guiding Document for Information and Data Collection and Result Management for Forest/Land Fire and Haze in ASEAN which completed, published and made available to be downloaded from the ASEAN Haze Portal in this quarter. GEC through the Measurable Action for Haze Free Sustainable Land Management in Southeast Asia (MAHFSA) Programme working closely with the ASEAN Secretariat to organise the First Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Task Force on ASEAN Investment Framework for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management (AIF-HFSLM) in November which saw ASEAN Member States discussed the way forward to efficiently implement the AIF-HFSLM.

Yayasan Gambut

The sister organisation of GEC, Yayasan Gambut was actively involved in the following :

- Conducted a training on Liberica coffee seedling propagation in Temiang Village, Riau for 22 participants from Makmur Jaya Women's Farming Group (KTWMJ), the village government, and the PKK (on 28 October 2024). GEC and YG is now collaborating with villagers of Tanjung Kuras and Temiang Villages to conduct coffee agroforestry initiatives to demonstrate sustainable peatland management by integrating Liberica coffee with existing rubber and oil palm plantations, including women's groups, similar to ongoing efforts at Buruk Bakul. To date, 2,000 seedlings have been planted.
- In December 2024, installed Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) board to enhance peatland fire prevention efforts by providing real-time fire risk assessments based on peat water table levels. It was a collaborative initiative with LINMAS Desa, Yayasan Bahtera Melayu, which garnered significant media attention.
- In collaboration with GEC and Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), hosted a hybrid workshop in the Riau Province, to train local stakeholders - government representatives and smallholders on the translated RSPO Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual for Existing Oil Palm Cultivation on Peat for Independent Smallholders by representatives from the RSPO Secretariat and local universities.



In terms of planting activities in this quarter, Yayasan Gambut together with several interest groups (including students, conservation groups and community leaders) partnered to mobilise 385 volunteers to plant 1,850 mangrove seedlings in Kelapa Pati Village. This was testimony to the strong collaborative effort to preserve the environment.

The Sekat Bakau Community Group incorporated layers of locally sourced and biodegradable *senduduk* grass stems between wave breaker structures to accelerate sedimentation. Additionally, surviving *Avicennia* mangroves were reinforced with bamboo

guards by the group to ensure their growth and protection, strengthening the area's resilience against coastal erosion. Wave breaker maintenance was completed in November, 2024, with 50 palm trunks (nibung) inserted by 8 members of the sekot bakau group.



River Care Programme

GEC organised a series of forums, trainings and capacity buildings in the last quarter of 2024. Under the "Enhancing Local Action and Community Participation in Disaster Preparedness and Response" project with Yayasan PETRONAS, GEC organised two state-based, flood preparedness Training of Trainers for Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The two-day trainings conducted in October and December respectively included presentations on the theory of flood preparation, hands-on town watching activity and a discussion and presentation session on the findings of the town watching activity with the support of various state agencies.



GEC also hosted two webinars: "Peranan Pihak Berkepentingan dalam Menangani Isu Banjir" (November) and "Senario tanah runtuh di Malaysia" (December) with almost 253 participants from government agencies, education institutions, corporates, NGOs, CBOs, and general public at each session. The panellists include representatives from NGOs, government, and think tanks.

Under the W.A.T.E.R Project, in October, GEC organised the Bukit Kiara River Walk for 15 SPARK Foundation staff and their family members, a river cleanup activity and river care event at Sg Way Desa Mentari for 45 local community members with student volunteers from Sunway University and the Leo Club BAC, and the quarterly river monitoring session at the Selangor River basin with four community groups from Kampung Sungai Darah, Taman Suria, Kampung Bukit Badong, and Kampung Bestari Jaya.



GEC organised three activities at Cyberjaya Lake Garden. The wetland planting activity in October with 15 staff from Microsoft Data Centre, participated in a wetland planting activity, while 33 staff from Sepang Municipal Council volunteered for the Enviro-heroes activity in November. In December, 13 staff of Microsoft Data centre participated in the Bioblitz activity to identify identifying various flora and fauna observed



around the lake garden through the iNaturalist application. SER project focuses mainly on volunteer participations for the follow-up monitoring and site enhancement activities too.

Under the Hasanah Special Grant 2023, GEC conducted several key activities in Perak and four in Selangor within this quarter of 2024 as follows:



In Perak, GEC hosted two visits at Kayuh D'Tonggang (KDT); a stakeholders' visit in October under WWF's "Nature-based Solutions: From Knowledge to Action" programme and a ministerial visit by YB Tuan Ahmad Fahmi Mohamed Fadzil, Minister of Communications, during the launch of the Advocacy Programme. GEC also established a new outdoor recreation and ecotourism site at Kg Kenang set to be open in Q2 2025.

In Selangor, GEC engaged in a series of stakeholder engagement sessions including meetings with Peninsular Malaysia Forestry Department, a joint site visit with Selangor State Forestry Department in December to Bukit Lagong Kampung Orang Asli to see the progress at site and to identify the support and nature of partnerships with the Orang Asli community through the relevant departments.

Two significant nursery-related activities organised by GEC in Selangor during this quarter: one is the harvesting of 20kg of brinjals in December at the traditional landed community-based nursery established at Kampung Orang Asli Bukit Lagong. About 300 brinjal seedlings were planted in the community vegetable garden equipped with drip irrigation system. Additionally, the community-based forest tree nursery here which was planted with 7,166 common and rare forest species seedlings was progressing well within this quarter.



A new project on rehabilitation of Taman Aman Lake was launched by YAB Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Prime Minister of Malaysia during Google Data Centre ground breaking ceremony on 1 October 2024.



Outreach & Partnership Programme

In the last quarter of 2024, GEC showcased some of their best practices and shared valuable insights at two key global platforms of United Nations (UN) Conference of Parties (COP): 2024 UN COP to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16) in Cali Colombia (October), and 2024 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan (November). GEC director, Mr Faizal Parish, who is also Chair for Global Environment Facility Civil Society Organisation (GEF-CSO) Network represented GEC as well as the Network at these events.



At COP16, he weighed in on the discussions about “Partnership for Biodiversity: Supporting Forest Restoration and Conservation Projects” and “Peatland Power: Cultivating Biodiversity, Climate Resilience and Livelihoods.



At COP29, GEC co-organised side events with esteemed partner organisations at three pavilions:

- Malaysia: Global Solutions for Regional Challenges: The ASEAN Investment Framework for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management.
- Thailand: Financing & Sustainable Practices for Climate-Resilient Agrifood Systems and the Bio-Circular-Green Economy
- GEF/Climate Fund): CSO Action to Address Climate Change.

GEC also co-hosted an Official Side Event entitled Revealing Global Peatland Hotspots for Climate Action: Bridging Science and Policy. Aside from these, GEC also hosted a day-long exhibition at COP29 and Mr Faizal was an invited speaker at Regional Climate Foundation Pavilion’s dialogue

session on Making Southeast Asia NDC Ambitious, co-organised by Institute of Essential Services Reform and Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities.

In Dec, Mr Faizal led the GEF-CSO Network in statements highlighting the Network’s concerns and deliberations on various matters discussed at the week-long 68th GEF Council Meeting. The Network’s inputs were well received and noted by GEF.

At the home front, GEC seized the opportunity of an invitation from Ministry of Energy Transition and Water (PETRA) to set up an exhibition at the Symposium and official launch of AIR2040 at Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kuala Lumpur. Deputy Prime Minister who is also PETRA Minister, YAB Dato’ Sri Fadillah Yusof, dropped in at GEC booth during the exhibition and affirmed GEC on their ongoing community-driven efforts.



Visibility

There were 76 media coverages mentioning GEC between October and December 2024 (RCP: 46; FCP: 6; General: 24). These coverages had a total PR value of more than RM 2,655,231 and cumulative potential reach of more than 4,994,658 people.

Story and photos by SHEILA DA SILVA sheilas@priya@bestar.com.my

Improving livelihoods, one village at a time

Initiative to help locals leverage on tradition, culture benefiting numerous communities, including Orang Asli

CONCEIVED during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Royal 21 Troop's recreational and eco-tourism village in the Kinabalu, Sepik, the Pech, is a community project spearheaded by Global Environment Centre (GEC).

Since its inception, the project at Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Tumpang has been drawing visitors to the village. Located along the scenic Sungai Senorid, the eco-tourism initiative is managed by villagers with help from the non-profit organisation, said GEC director Fahal Faisal.

GEC, he said, has over 25 years of experience working with communities in river care, forest and coastal areas as well as peatland management.

Lending a helping hand
Established in 1998 to look into environmental issues of global importance, GEC promotes nature-based solutions with conservation in mind.

It also looks into holistic and integrated management of forests, peatland, rivers and coastal ecosystems to reduce vulnerability to climate change and disasters.

To do this, GEC advocates for stakeholder participation in the sustainable management of natural resources involving environmental stewardship.

Besides working with local communities including Orang Asli, the organisation also partners with other like-minded companies for the success of its projects.

"The six-year Kayah 17 managing ecosystems and river preservation project, covering 6,000ha, is funded by Khazanah Foundation," said Fahal.

"GEC sees the Orang Asli as guardians of the forest. They were keen to derive an income from their village during the Covid-19 pandemic and sought our help."

Eco-tourism activities now take place on Sungai Senorid. He said the aim was for villagers to leverage on their natural edge and maintain an eco-tourism village, culture and heritage while preserving the river which they depend on for food, he said, adding that GEC worked hard to build trust with villagers before implementing the project.

"They often question our motives for 'bothering' them and if we are there to steal their land," said Fahal.

"When we go there for surveys on the bank, they become wary. We had to build trust with the community before they were convinced we wanted to help."

Empowering villagers

Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Tumpang Tak Bala village head Che Wan Abang is glad to have GEC on board to help the Temiar community earn a living.

"We got to know GEC in 2018. Our youths were involved in bamboo planting with them."

"In 2021, we set up the Royal 21 Troop's eco-tourism initiative and identified mountain bike cycling routes



Abdul Razak Perish, a resident of Kampung Melayu Selatan in Perak, extracting sugarcane juice using a machine contributed by GEC.



Nonozian says KRT Kuninggan sustain soil cover to 100,000 bottles of keepack in the last three years.

stretching 6.86km. "The main aim is to uplift views of mountains, the city, waterfall and also the river," he said.

"Other activities for visitors include mud-sungai (river) baths, hiking and walking on the hanging bridge as well as looking out for periahi fern (giant fern) and hunting techniques."

"Our youths are involved in managing activities here and are our spokespersons."

"They earn a living from these activities and do not have to leave the village," Che Wan said.

Villager Kamariah Iri Ajiang, 41, is a cook who prepares food for guests looking eco-tourism packages.

"50 per cent of ingredients used for food comes from our village while the remainder is sourced from town."

"Through the eco-tourism initiative, we are able to introduce the forest wet eat, like masak ulah, paku pedas and freshwater fish to guests," said Kamariah, once a full-time housewife who is now contributing to her family's income.

Kamariah said earning money from eco-tourism made her feel confident and empowered.

"Most of the wisdom in the village have never earned an income before," she said.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to earn and feel confident while working from our village."

"Even young women are helping us source for items and they are able to earn some extra money thanks to eco-tourism."

Other activities taking place at the village include cultural performances and craft workshops.

The village has been visited by people from 13 communities, two groups from Indonesia since the eco-tourism project kicked off.

The communities are part of the GEC Community Network (GEC-C).

Kampung Orang Asli Sungai Tumpang is also part of the network.

Fahal said an exchange of best practices among different groups of people was good for community development and progress.

With this in mind, a networking session called GEC Forum Discussion and Networking of Communities (GEC-FORUM) was held in August.

Comprising mainly Orang Asli communities, the groups got together to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

"We always take the bottom up approach by asking the community what it needs."

"Then we help them create programmes that they are interested in," said Fahal.

"For an activity to be successful, it has to be long-term."

"We help them build a project and they eventually take over and teach other villagers to continue the programme."

Google launches more initiatives for Malaysia



Google has taken the opportunity to announce several new initiatives during the groundbreaking ceremony today. One of them is the plan to restore the Taman Aman Lake in Seksyen 22 Petaling Jaya as part of its water stewardship program.

The Taman Aman Lake restoration project will be implemented in collaboration with the Global Environment Centre and Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ). Once again, the company did not reveal much details about the project but the general aim is to improve water quality and biodiversity of the lake while promoting sustainable waste management.

Planned events for Q1 2025

The following are the planned GEC events and activities from January to March 2025:

Date	Location	Event
January		
7-8	RMFR & TCIC, Kg OA Pulau Kempas	Second Monash University Global Immersion Guarantee (GIG) visit to RMFR, GEC-CoSPeC, and TCIC
13-20	Kinabatangan Sabah	SAPPLIM 3 rd Mission
15-18	Sungai Petani	YSD project video shooting
16	Klias Field Centre	Tree Planting with Kementerian Kerajaan Tempatan dan Perumahan (KKTP)- Landskap & Kelestarian & SFD
19	RMFR & GEC-CoSPeC	GEC-APN Local community FGD - Policy & Governance Approaches To Cooperative Mitigation Of Peatland Carbon Emissions And Transboundary Haze In Southeast Asia
21-22	KSL Esplanade, Klang	Joint Stakeholder Workshop for NAPP and SAPP Guidelines
25-26	Kuala Pilah, Negeri Sembilan	Flood TOT for communities in Negeri Sembilan
27-30	Empangan Jus	Meeting and Site visit (TBC)
February		
04	Putrajaya	Marketing training under MDEC
7-10	Kampung Makmur	2 nd Promotional Trip Mount Korbu
08	Lenang, Pahang	Forest Nursery Management training
8-9	Kuala Pilah	Flood ToT for communities in Negeri Sembilan
10-11	Bangkok, Thailand	2 nd ATA Meeting and partners dialogue on ASEAN Investment Framework for Haze-Free Sustainable Land Management
14	Kampung Makmur	1 st promotional trip Denai Alam Sungai
15-16	Ipoh	Flood TOT for communities in Perak

Date	Location	Event
18	Kota Tinggi	Meeting with Kota Tinggi DEO and site visit
19	Sabak Bernam	Proposed Tree Planting with HSBC
22	RMFR	Monthly Tree Planting Programme (TBC)
22	Lembah Subang	RIVER Ranger training for Sg Kayu Ara communities
24-26	Kota Tinggi	ToT MFR programme
25	Kampung Makmur	2 nd promotional trip Denai Alam Sungai
25	Bangkok, Thailand	Partners Dialogue on Regional Multi-Stakeholder Alliance For Haze-Free ASEAN (Haze-Free Alliance)
26	Bangkok, Thailand	Ad-Hoc Taskforce
25 – 26	KPPL, Sabah	1 st Field Visit by to Sabah Klias Peninsular Peatland Landscape MPOGCF Officer
TBC	Putrajaya/KL	Preparation meeting for National River Forum under W.A.T.E.R. project
March		
TBC	Bario, Sarawak	Mission - Updating progress to the Agency & Project Planning for SAGU
TBC	TBC	Closing MAHFSA Programme and Final PSC Meeting
TBU	Pahang	Mission to meet JPSM and Enggang (Pekan)
TBU	Pahang	Fire patrolling course