

3<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE ARCBC SCIENTIFIC EXPERTS COMMITTEE / 2<sup>nd</sup> RESEARCH CONFERENCE

# Scientific Experts recommend 37 biodiversity projects

► By **REXIE JANE PARREÑO**

The panel of scientific experts of the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC) recommended 14 more biodiversity projects for implementation in the ASEAN region during the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Scientific Experts Committee and 2<sup>nd</sup> Research Conference held from 7 to 10 February 2001 in Tagaytay City, Philippines.

This brings to 37 the number of projects under ARCBC's Research Grant Programme, which has a total budget of about 2.5 million Euro. These will be implemented in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia,



**Members of the Scientific Experts' Committee discuss the Research Grant Programme during their 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting last 7-10 February in Tagaytay, Philippines.**

## ***ARCBC Launches Research Grant Programme***

The ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC) launched its Research Grant Programme, with the signing of contracts between the Centre and three government agencies and one non-government organization for the implementation of biodiversity research projects in the Philippines. The signing ceremony was held on 12 July 2001 at the Conference Room of the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Quezon City, Philippines; DENR is the executing agency of ARCBC.

The Philippines-based projects have a total worth of 271,525 Euros or over 12 million Philippine pesos and form part of the 2.5-million-Euro Research Grant Programme provided by the European Commission. Co-Directors Mr. Gregorio I. Texon (ASEAN) and Dr. John R. MacKinnon (EU) signed on behalf of ARCBC while project leaders Director Celso P. Diaz, DENR-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB); Dr. Wilfredo Licuanan, Marine Science Institute-University of the Philippines (MSI-UP); Dr. Ely Alcala, Silliman University Angelo King Center for Research

and Environmental Management (SUAKREM) and Dr. Samuel Koffa, Bioresource Conservation Trust for the Philippines, Inc. (BCTPI) signed for their agencies.

DENR Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez and Mr. Gildo Pivetta, Charge d' Affaires a.i. of the European Commission Delegation in the Philippines (who represented Ambassador Yves H. Gazzo), Dr. Aida B. Lapis, Chief of ARCBC Research Branch and Mr. Patrick Hanmer, ARCBC Programme Administrator witnessed the signing.

The projects were submitted to and pre-evaluated by the National Biodiversity Reference Units, one established in each country. The ARCBC Scientific Experts Committee then reviewed and endorsed them to the project Steering Committee for approval. The European Commission approved the projects last June 2001.

Signing of contracts of the other approved biodiversity research projects in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam has been scheduled before the year ends.

– **Rexie Jane Parreño**

Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. (See Box on page 38 for related story).

The Scientific Experts Committee comprises well-known scientists that include Hashim Bin Hj Tuah (Brunei Darussalam), Prof. Roehajat Emon Soeriaatmadja (Indonesia), Dr. Saw Leng Guan (Malaysia), Dr. Angel C. Alcala (Philippines), A/P Benito C. Tan (Singapore), Dr. Chaweevan Hutacharern (Thailand) and Dr. Le Xuan Canh (Vietnam).

There was some delay in the approval of the project proposals under the first tranche as the Development Cooperation Office of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium was then being reorganized. But the EC Delegation in the Philippines expressed optimism that the project proposals will be approved.

The projects focus on the following priority themes: Valuing Biodiversity; Restoring Biodiversity; Tax-

**Project proposals were graded based on the following criteria: track record of applicants and research workers, 10 points; quality of project design, 30 pts; justification and creativity of project, 20 pts; social dimension and expected benefits, 20 pts; collaboration, 20 pts. Minimum qualifying rating was 70 pts.**

onomy and Systematics. These were reviewed, evaluated and selected by the Scientific Experts Committee, the National Biodiversity Reference Unit

(NBRU) Country Coordinators, and an independent panel of scientific experts from the ASEAN and the European Union.

The NBRU country coordinators initially screened the 89 project proposals submitted for the second tranche. From the 89, the Scientific Experts Committee and the independent panel shortlisted 32 for another screening, and then selected the 14 that were eventually endorsed to the Steering Committee of ARCBC and the European Union for approval.

Project proposals were graded based on the following criteria: track record of applicants and research workers, 10 points; quality of project design, 30 pts; justification and creativity of project, 20 pts; social dimension and expected benefits, 20 pts; collaboration, 20 pts. Minimum qualifying rating was 70 pts.

Below are the titles of the projects under each theme and country. ■

COUNTRY	BIOLOGICAL USES AND VALUES	TAXONOMY AND SYSTEMATICS	ECOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION	OTHERS
Brunei Darussalam		Regreening of Burned Over Areas Using Native Species	None	None
Indonesia	Marine Biodiversity Loss in Spermonde Islands, Southern Sulawesi, Indonesia: Assessing Capacity and Impacts of Destructive Fishing Practices	None	None	None
Malaysia	Community-Based Plant and Habitat Conservation, Ulu Padas, Sabah	None	None	None
Philippines	Endemism on Limestone Formations: Herpetofauna of Selected Small Limestone Islands Belonging to Different Pleistocene Ice-Age Islands of the Philippines	None	Ecological Assessment, Restoration and Protection of the Northwest Panay Low-Elevation Forest Ecosystem: Developing Community-Based Agroforestry Solutions for Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation	
Singapore	Population and Conservation Biology of Selected Threatened Malesian Ornamental Species with Special Emphasis on <i>Johannesteijsmannia</i> H.E. Moore (Palmae)	None	None	None
Thailand	Strategies for Sustainable Management of Fisheries Resources in Pasak Jonlasid Reservoir, Thailand Through Ecological and Socio-Economic Assessment	The Genus <i>Argostemma</i> Wall. ( <i>Rubiaceae</i> ) in Malay Peninsula and Peninsular Thailand	Community Forest Management and Rehabilitation as Means of Biodiversity Conservation: Case Study at Thung Soong Community Forest in Krabi, Thailand  Maintenance of Biodiversity: Conservation and Cultural Practices	None
Vietnam	Conservation of Unique and Valuable Fish Diversity in Phong Nha-Ke Bang Limestone Mountains	None	Introduction of Rare and Endangered Medicinal Plants into Forest Garden of Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam for Biodiversity Conservation	The Study and Conservation of Bryophyte Diversity of Vu Quang Protected Area in Ha Tinh Province of Vietnam
ASEAN-wide		Research on Systematics for ASEAN Scientists (1 <sup>st</sup> Tranche Budget)  Needs Assessments in Taxonomy and Biosystematics for Arthropods and Microorganisms for ASEAN (1 <sup>st</sup> Tranche Budget)	Biodiversity Impacts of Climatic Change, Fire and Forest Restoration Techniques and the Watershed Roles of Conservation Areas in Southeast Asia	None