



AUG-SEP'26

Team Highlights

1. FIELDWORK



WP2 Research Fellow **Dr Jay Mar Quevedo** conducted fieldwork across six municipalities in Southeast Cebu, Philippines, from 13-22 September 2026, engaging local stakeholders through interviews and focus group discussions to learn more about how seagrass ecosystems are governed, conserved and managed.

The fieldwork explored an important question: how can neighbouring municipalities work together to protect and manage seagrass ecosystems that extend beyond administrative boundaries? All six municipalities are part of the Southeast Cebu Coastal Resource Management Council (SCCRMC), an inter-municipal partnership that enables local governments to coordinate the management of their shared and interconnected coastal ecosystems.



Through conversations with stakeholders on the ground, Jay gathered insights into both the opportunities and challenges of collaborative seagrass governance. These findings will contribute to the CGSEA project's broader research on the governance of nature-based carbon sinks in Southeast Asia and deepen our understanding of how seagrass ecosystems can support climate mitigation and sustainable coastal resource management.



WP3 Research Fellow **Dr Saritha Kittie Uda** conducted field research on peatland governance in Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with the Institute for Biodiversity and Environmental Research (IBER) at Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), from 25-30 August 2026. Through interviews, a focus group discussion, stakeholder engagement and field observations, the research explored how different actors contribute to the governance and management of peatland ecosystems.

As part of the fieldwork, Saritha convened a stakeholder meeting on peatland governance at the Tropical Biodiversity Centre in Sungai Liang, bringing together representatives from government agencies, the private sector, NGOs, academia and local governance institutions. The discussions provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives and better understand the roles, priorities and challenges of different stakeholders involved in peatland governance.

Saritha also conducted field observations at the Badas Peat Swamp Forest–IBER UBD research sites and the peatland site at Tasek Merimbun Heritage Park, connecting stakeholder perspectives with conditions on the ground. The research contributes to the CGSEA project's wider work on the governance of nature-based carbon sinks in Southeast Asia and provides insights into the opportunities and challenges surrounding peatland conservation and management.



2. MEDIA & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

One

'Big hassle for everyone': Malaysia braces for worsening haze as dry season bites

WP3 Work Package Leader **A/P Helena Varkkey** provided expert commentary to **Channel NewsAsia (CNA)** on the worsening transboundary haze affecting Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia. Drawing on her expertise in environmental politics and regional haze governance, she discussed how dry conditions and El Niño can intensify fires and haze, as well as the challenges of addressing an environmental problem that crosses national borders. She also highlighted the importance of stronger ASEAN cooperation in responding to transboundary haze, including the need to strengthen existing regional mechanisms for providing timely assistance when fires and haze occur.

Published by Channel NewsAsia, 28 August 2026. Read the full article [here](#).

Two

The Haze Problem We Never Solved

WP3 Work Package Leader **A/P Helena Varkkey** was featured on BFM 89.9 – The Business Station in a discussion on Southeast Asia's recurring transboundary haze problem (12 August 2026). The conversation explored why haze continues to affect the region and the challenges involved in developing effective and lasting responses to this longstanding environmental issue.

Listen to the full discussion [here](#).

Three

AWANI Global: Breaking Southeast Asia's Haze Cycle

WP3 Work Package Leader **A/P Helena Varkkey** was featured on AWANI Global to discuss approaches to addressing Southeast Asia's recurring transboundary haze and breaking the regional haze cycle (16 August 2026).

Watch the full discussion [here](#).



3. CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS & PRESENTATIONS

CGSEA PhD Candidate Yustina Octifanny and researcher **Rodd Myers** co-organised a themed panel at the **POLLEN Conference 2026 in Barcelona, Spain**, exploring the intersections between global climate change solutions and shrinking civic spaces in Southeast Asia.

The panel brought attention to how the pursuit and implementation of climate solutions can intersect with changing spaces for civic participation across the region. Through the session, they helped create a platform for critical discussion on the governance and social dimensions of climate action in Southeast Asia, contributing to wider conversations on how global climate responses play out within diverse political and institutional contexts.



4. APPOINTMENTS

Associate Editor, Frontiers in Forests and Global Change

CGSEA Collaborator Professor Dixon Gevaña was appointed **Associate Editor of Frontiers in Forests and Global Change**, an international peer-reviewed journal covering research on forests and global environmental change.

Learn more about the journal's editorial board [here](#).

5. UPCOMING EVENTS

One

Ponds and Lakes – The Missing Wetlands in Natural Climate Solutions

Professor David Taylor

National University of Singapore



27 October 2026 (Tuesday)



12:30–1:30 pm (Singapore Time)



ASE 3D Viz Laboratory Room (N2-B1c-16c)



Hybrid seminar | ASE & EOS Seminar Series



Forests, mangroves and peatlands feature prominently in discussions of Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) – but what about ponds and lakes?

Despite occupying only a small fraction of the Earth's surface, freshwater ponds, lakes and reservoirs play an outsized role in the global carbon cycle. They can release carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere while also serving as important sites for long-term carbon burial.

Drawing on published and emerging research, CGSEA Principal Investigator **Professor David Taylor** will explore why these often-overlooked freshwater ecosystems deserve greater attention in Natural Climate Solutions, particularly in the tropics. The seminar will consider how their management and responses to environmental change could either help mitigate – or amplify – future climate warming.

Join virtually: [Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 872 7249 0908 | Passcode: 177656

CGSEA's Final Project-Wide Stakeholder Workshop



Nature-based Carbon Governance in Southeast Asia: A Collaborative Approach to Policy Brief Development

 3–4 December 2026

 Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore

This December, CGSEA will convene its **final project-wide stakeholder workshop**, bringing together researchers and invited stakeholders from across Southeast Asia to collaboratively develop three policy briefs based on findings from the project's five-year research programme.

Organised around CGSEA's three thematic work packages — **terrestrial forests; coastal and freshwater ecosystems; and peatlands and agricultural soils** — the workshop will provide a space for stakeholders to review research findings, validate evidence and recommendations, and help ensure that the policy briefs reflect the diverse policy and institutional contexts across Southeast Asia.

Invitations have now been sent out, and we would like to thank everyone who has responded and confirmed their participation. We look forward to welcoming you to Singapore and to two days of productive discussion and collaboration.

 **For invited participants:** Draft policy briefs will be circulated in **November**, ahead of the workshop, to allow time for review and preparation.

In-person participation is by invitation only.

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