

Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0166-5162(16)30306-8
DOI: doi: [10.1016/j.coal.2016.06.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.coal.2016.06.013)
Reference: COGEL 2661

To appear in: *International Journal of Coal Geology*

Received date: 31 January 2016
Revised date: 17 June 2016
Accepted date: 18 June 2016



Please cite this article as: Friederich, Mike C., Moore, Tim A., Flores, Romeo M., A regional review and new insights into SE Asia Cenozoic coal-bearing sediments: Why does Indonesia have such extensive coal deposits?, *International Journal of Coal Geology* (2016), doi: [10.1016/j.coal.2016.06.013](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.coal.2016.06.013)

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A regional review and new insights into SE Asia Cenozoic coal-bearing sediments: Why does Indonesia have such extensive coal deposits?

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Abstract

Southeast Asia is replete with Cenozoic sedimentary coal-bearing basins. These basins can be grouped into five regions: northern Sundaland, southern Sundaland, the Philippine archipelago, western Myanmar and eastern Indonesia. Only the first three are discussed in this paper. Each of the three areas has unique coal basin properties as a result of differing tectonic, palaeogeographic, palaeoclimatic and depositional histories. The most significant coal deposits of SE Asia formed in large sedimentary basins within the Neogene in southern Sundaland (the islands of Borneo and Sumatra) over extensive coastal plains, in a regressive setting, and multiple seams of more than 5 metres thickness are widespread. Locally much thicker seams have developed. Typically, the coal deposits have low ash yield and sulphur contents. In contrast the interior coal deposits of northern Sundaland formed within small disconnected grabens and half grabens, with continental fill, and were not influenced by marine base level changes. The coal deposits are areally restricted. Coal thickness is variable, with one or two main seams, up to 6 to 20 metres when well developed, but there are locally much thicker coal-dominated stratigraphic intervals. The ash yields are usually moderate to high and sulphur contents are variable, often high. Coal within the basins of the Philippine archipelago typically has similar coal quality

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