

Participatory Approach for Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Coastal Conservation

Atjima Meepring

Thailand Environment Institute
16/151 Muang Thong Thani, Pakkred
Nonthaburi 11120, Thailand
E-mail Address: atjima@tei.or.th

The past decades coastal and marine ecosystems in Thailand have been extensively degraded by human activities, causing rapid depletion of natural resources, particularly the rich diversity of marine organisms. The project '80 million lives to enrich Thai seas in tribute to his majesty the king's 80th birthday' was jointly implemented by Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) and the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) in 2007 to . The main objective of the project was to improve and strengthen the understanding and awareness in the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of biodiversity and coastal natural resources among local communities and local-level authorities and governmental officials. Based on participatory approach between communities and governmental officials at the local level coordinated by TEI and DMCR, sustainable management plans for natural resources were implemented. In addition network linkage between target sites was included in main objective of project as well. Five target locations were selected, representing the Andaman Sea; 1) Ao Chalong, Muang District, Phuket province, 2) Ban Thung Nang Dum, Kuraburi District, Phang-nga province, 3) Ban Tha Maprao, Klong Thom District, Krabi, and the Gulf of Thailand; 4) Ao Thung Ka Sawee, Muang Sawee District, Chumporn, and 5) Ban Khok Kham, Muang District, Samut Sakorn province.

To achieve the goal, capacity building activities were carried out in each target site. These included i) training and workshop to improve the understanding of coastal and marine ecosystems and biodiversity for the management plans of coastal and marine natural resources, based on participatory approach of local communities and governmental officials, ii) training and workshop based on participatory learning by doing approach to document and chart a community map as a tool to study and analyse local environmental status and as a stepping stone to provide natural resource management plans at the local level, iii) field excursions for the local community leaders to learn and share experiences from other communities to succeed in natural resource management, iv) brainstorming session between work groups and local communities, following excursions and using community maps, to provide management plans and activities for the protection and conservation of local natural resources and v) Networking



between five target site for sharing and learning forum to exchange lessons learned and knowledge gained between local communities and governmental officials.

The activities resulted in organisation of local community groups and networks for environmental conservation and protection with clear management plans and approaches of natural resources. The project also resulted in increased participation among local community members and school children in coastal and marine environmental activities as well as increased sharing of lessons learned between community leaders of the five target sites. The network for the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources for the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman has also been successfully set up for the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems.