



## POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE (PEI) IN THAILAND

### What is the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI)

The Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) is a joint programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) working in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Europe. The programme works with government to integrate pro-poor environmental considerations into national and sub-national planning and budgeting processes. In Asia and the Pacific, PEI programmes are underway in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao PDR, Nepal, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

### Poverty Environment Initiative for Thailand

In the last decades, Thailand has achieved remarkable economic growth, but this has brought undesirable social and environmental impacts. Rising per capita consumption, industrialization and the intensification of agriculture has placed enormous strain on the natural resource base. The impact of this environmental degradation has particularly affected poor women and men, who rely more on the natural environment for sustenance, livelihood and general well-being.

The Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI) for Thailand focuses on how to change public and private investment to reduce these negative social and environmental impacts. It aims to strengthen inclusive planning and budgeting at national and provincial level for natural resource and ecosystem management to achieve pro-poor growth. The initiative provides technical and financial support to:

- Increase coherence of national development plans and policies
- Integrate pro-poor environmental priorities into development decision-making and budgeting processes at sub-national levels
- Strengthen community capacity to advocate for pro-poor natural resources management in provincial planning
- Share lessons learned among member states of the ASEAN.

The Ministry of Interior will lead implementation of the PEI by building on recent reforms to integrated provincial planning. These reforms provide new opportunities for local communities to participate and influence public and private investments that affect natural resources use. Ecosystem assessments (see box) will demonstrate the value of ecosystems that sustain local livelihoods and recommend policy options.

Samut Songkram, Nan and Khon Kaen Provinces have been identified to demonstrate ecosystem assessment with provincial and local administrations and communities. At the central government level, the Ministry of Interior will learn from this experience and identify ways to replicate it through key performance indicators and other policy tools. The results will also inform the development of the 11th National Socio-Economic Development Plan, which direct provincial investment priorities. Given the key role of the private sector in shaping national and local development, representatives of the private sector will be actively involved.

### Box 1. Ecosystem Assessment

Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems, e.g. provisioning services such as food, water and timber; regulating services that affect climate, floods, disease, wastes, and water quality; cultural services; and supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis, and nutrient cycling. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) examines how changes in ecosystem services influence human well-being. As an integral part of PEI Thailand, a Sub Global Assessment (SGA) will be conducted in the target provinces, i.e. Nan, Khon Kaen, Samut Sakorn/Samut Songkram following the MA methodology. This will help policy makers, communities, private sector and scientists identify policy options for the local planning processes that can manage ecosystems while enhancing local livelihoods.

## PEI Thailand Pilot Provinces

### Samut Songkhram



**Population:** 194,054  
**Ecosystem:** freshwater, estuarine, marine  
**Outstanding issue:** Mass tourism, unsuitable irrigation system, and industrialization

With its rich coastline and the Mae Klong River's unique canal network, Samut Songkhram is home to a very particular ecosystem known locally as "three waters". However rapid growth of mass tourism and conversion of agricultural land to industry are destroying this ecosystem. Local residents are organising to better manage the ecosystem, working with the Chamber of Commerce, Regional Environment Office and Provincial government. PEI will support local efforts to better manage existing development and resist further pressures for mass tourism and industrialisation.

### Nan



**Population:** 475,984  
**Ecosystem type:** Watershed  
**Outstanding issue:** Industrial agriculture, e.g. Maize farming

The pristine forest of Nan has been a source of pride and food for the Nan people for generations. In the last decade, widespread contract maize farming has taken over the mountainous landscape, replacing the dense forest. Fertilizers and pesticide used for this intensive cash-crop are rapidly deteriorating environmental quality. The province that was once self-sufficient in food production has now to import large amounts of food. PEI will provide support to the PAO, local communities, Provincial government and private stakeholders to identify alternative livelihood options that minimize the environmental damage caused by corn farming.

### Khon Kaen



**Population:** 1,756,100  
**Ecosystem type:** River basin  
**Outstanding issue:** Non-coherent policy of agro-industry promotion

Nam Pong River is the lifeblood of Khon Kaen serving agriculture, industry and households. But expanding cash crops like maize and sugar, and factories for pulp and paper, sugar and fertilizer have caused extensive land use change and polluted the river. In addition, recent policies to promote crop based ethanol without assessing the carrying capacity of the river will likely strain the ecosystem, to the limit. PEI will assist local people, the Regional Environmental Office, Khon Kaen Provincial Government and private stakeholders to assess the river's carrying capacity and different land use options to improve physical and economic planning.

## Institutional setup of the project

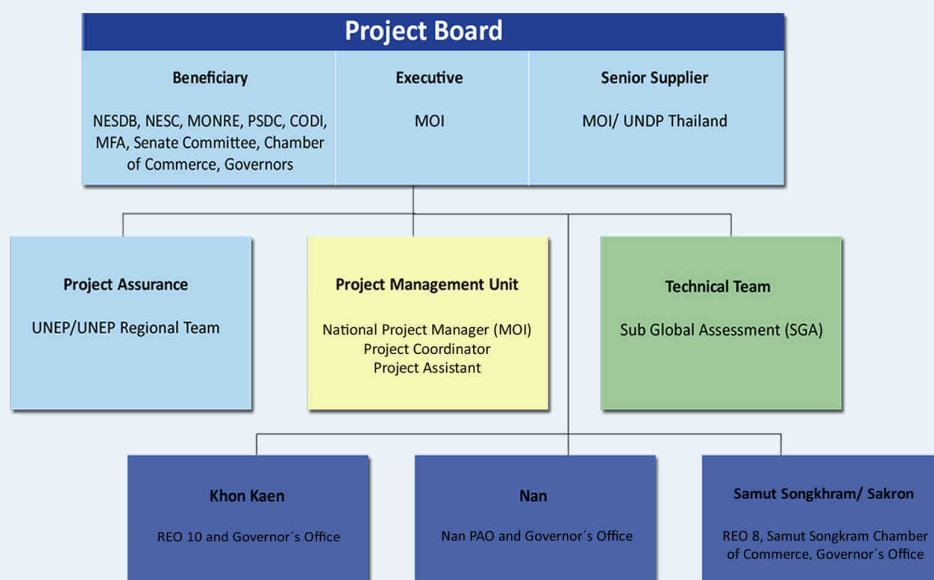
**Budget: USD 661,550**

Poverty Environment Facility (UNDP/UNEP): USD 400,000

SGA (UNEP) : USD 178,550

UNDP Thailand: USD 83,000

**Project timeframe: 2009 - 2011**



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