

# THAILAND

## BASIC FACTS ABOUT PEI THAILAND

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Timescale: Phase I (March 2010–December 2013), project formulation for Phase II (2013)

Partners: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Regional Environmental Offices 8 and 10, Provincial Administration Organizations, KhonKaen, Nan, Samut Songkram Chamber of Commerce, and the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board.

Focus: Inclusive planning and budgeting at national and provincial levels. Related objectives include benefit sharing arrangements from ecosystem services, awareness raising and the engagement of the private sector to support pro-poor sustainable development.

Budget: \$701,550 (PEI: \$400,000; UNEP DEPI: \$220,000; UNDP: \$83,000).

## MAINSTREAMING CONTEXT

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Thailand has achieved remarkable economic growth in the past decade, but this has brought undesirable social and environmental impacts. Rising per capita consumption, industrialization and the intensification of agriculture have led to a deterioration of natural resources. Overall distribution of income is uneven and incidences of poverty remain high amongst rural populations.

## MAIN ACTIVITIES

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Building capacities and training provincial and local administration officials in the application of appropriate planning and budgeting tools including spatial planning, scenario planning, economic analysis, and ecosystem assessment.

Providing capacity development support for local communities to improve organizational capacities, networking and advocacy skills as well as technical and political know-how for planning and budgeting policies for poverty-environment mainstreaming.

Developing policy recommendations for improvements of mechanisms, system, and tools at national level (e.g. policy framework, regulating, and monitoring mechanism) to increase policy coherence and local interest for development planning that does not undermine the poor or the environment.

## ACHIVEMENTS

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Scientific data on the linkages between human wellbeing and the environment have laid the basis for Sustainable Development in three provinces. Three Sub Global Assessment processes, that identify the condition and trend of ecosystem services were conducted in KhonKaen, Samut Songkran and Nan provinces. Provincial and local administrations now make better use of area-based development planning tools (spatial planning, community based research, and payments for ecosystem services).

In Nan province, the Provincial Administration has been supported to better manage corn-based livestock farming through investments in watershed management and more secure land tenure. A Geographical Information System Centre, co-funded jointly by Nan province and PEI, was established to serve local communities with community land surveys and mapping to better advocate for community land entitlement issues.

Nan's provincial agriculture office actively participated in the scenario-building process associated with the Sub-Global Assessment (SGA) on Ecosystems and Human Well-Being. In 2012, the office adopted the four agricultural scenarios developed through the SGA to be used as a basis for formulating their next provincial agricultural plan 2014-2017. Nan's Provincial Administration Organisation has allocated 50,000 USD annually since 2010 to improve community land management, including advocacy on community land entitlements and a watershed fund has been established.

In KhonKaen province, the Regional Environmental Office is better managing the expansion of ethanol production in the area of the Phong River Basin. Building on improved capacity on P-E mainstreaming tools the sub-district Bua Ngeon applied the economic valuation methodology to advocate for funding from the local administration organizations to protect and conserve the forest from food and energy crop plantations. The local administration allocated 100,000USD to create a natural road between the encroached community forest and the farm land after realizing the important value provided by the forest to the local poor community's wellbeing.

In SamutSongkram province, the Regional Environment Office is working with local government officials and the private sector to better manage rapid industrialization and mass tourism.

## LESSONS LEARNED

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Poverty-environment mainstreaming requires cross-agency coordination and capacity building among various stakeholders at national and subnational level. Consensus building and agreement on programme activities has proved to be a very time-consuming and intensive process because of the different agendas of the many stakeholders.

The on-going decentralization process in Thailand allowing provinces to formulate their own development plans and secure budgets directly from the Budget Bureau is still very new to provincial and local government agencies, and efforts are needed to support the understanding of this process.

Communities usually have knowledge about the poverty-environment nexus as their livelihoods depend on the environment but they do not benefit from tools to formalize and communicate their knowledge and understanding.

## WAY FORWARD

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Continue to provide support through further integration of the P-E approach in the UNDP Country Programme for sustainability of PEI efforts.

Continue to support exchange of best practice of the PEI subglobal assessment processes with other ASEAN and A-P countries.