

VIII. Community Management of Seagrass Conservation Area of Phra Thong Island

1. Introduction

Project No: THA/MFFSGF/12/08

Project Title: Community Management of Seagrass Conservation Area of Phra Thong Island

Grantee: Koh Phra Thong Lions Homestay

Address: 120/2, Moo 1, Tambon Kura, Kuraburi District, Phang Nga Province, 82150

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1.1 Implementing NGO/CBO: Koh Phra Thong Lions Homestay: Lions village is the Tsunami village on Phra Thong Island, surrounded by mangroves and seagrass fields. Previously, several families opened up their homes to Naucrates' volunteers. These families have now come together to form an official homestay group to manage their activities and improve their services.

1.2 Location of project: Lion village and Tha Pae Yoi village in Tambon Phra Thong, Kuraburi District, Phangnga Province, a coastal community along the Andaman Sea, whose community members and was seriously affected by the Tsunami. Seagrass in the location was also adversely affected. Unregulated exploitation of natural resources, such as from seagrass, is noticeable for lack of appropriate community management. Two notable species in the location are *Strombus canarium* and *Holothuria scabra*. Current threats include destructive fishing by big entrepreneurs, population growth and prevalent tourism.

1.3 Target Population: 34 households in Lion Village who earn living through providing general services, small business and fishery-a group of Sea Gypsy, Moklan and marginalized groups included. The per capita income is THB 54,000. The implementation of this project would be launched through the existing organizational structure of the Home-Stay tourist Group, whose 80 % of members is women.

1.4 Long-term objectives to support national coastal resources policy:

- 1) Improving the knowledge base for coastal planning, policy, and management (POW1)
- 2) Building the capacity of professional coastal managers for integrated coastal management (POW 7)
- 3) Supporting environmentally sustainable livelihoods among coastal communities (POW 8)
- 4) Improving community resilience to natural disasters (POW 9)

1.5 Specific Objectives:

- 1) To compile data & information required in establishment of community conserved area, integration of local knowledge and modern knowledge for further use
- 2) To build technical capacity and conservation awareness in communities on conservation of the two important species, including conservation awareness for students, tourists and volunteers through community e-co tourism
- 3) To build institutional capacity and skill for community through participatory process to ensure community ownership of local natural resources

1.6 Major stakeholders

- 1) Phra Thong Tambon Administrative Organization
- 2) The sea turtle conservation organization (Naucrates)
- 3) Andaman Discoveries
- 4) IUCN Thailand

2. Project Completion

2.1 Period of Participatory Evaluation: September 2013

2.2 Number of Beneficiaries/ Participating personnel: 32 households

Women:	30	persons
Men:	30	persons
Children:	12	persons

2.3 Income and Expense

Detail		Amount (THB)
Budget Allocation		289,650
Total expenditure		179,144
% expenditure against allocation		62%
Co-financing Sources		In-kind (THB)
	In-cash (THB)	In-kind (THB)
Rufford Small Grant Foundation	280,000	30,600
Lion village and Tha Pae Yoi village	-	6,000
Kuraburi Tambon Administrative Organisation	-	6,000
Phuket Marine Biological Centre, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources	-	5,000
Phuket Coastal Fisheries Research and Development Centre, Department of Fisheries	-	5,000
Fisheries Technology Transfer and Development Bureau, Department of Fisheries	-	2,000
Total		54,600

2.4 Activities and results/outcomes

Main Activities Implemented	Results/Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launching capacity building for communities through meeting, study tour, and workshops 2. Conducting resources inventories RE: quantity consumed, value, knowledge on seagrass ecology and species therein 3. Demarcating community conserved area followed by launching surveillance 4. Monitoring and collecting data & information on status changes of community conserved area as well as areas outside the CCA 5. Producing training and dissemination materials on protection of ecosystems and CCA, and biological diversity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased capacity and conservation awareness of 17 community members witnessed by capacity to plan sustainable use of marine species for main users and by collaborating with other communities in Phuket province and relevant units of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources 2. Increased capacity of local tourist guides witnessed through capacity to share knowledge on marine ecosystems, marine resources management with students, volunteers and tourists visiting the location 3. Compilation of resources and knowledge inventory to refer to in further planning (users and seagrass) 4. Established community conservation area of about 22.5 ha with management plan endorsed collectively by communities and concerned agencies 5. The project being incorporated in a district plan for eco-tourism

2.5 Plans and Activities for Sustainability:

- 1) The conservation zone would be under continuous care of the 2 communities.
- 2) Monitor of changes on marine species would be continuously conducted, by using financial resource from other stakeholders.

3) As communities paid special attention in raising sea cucumbers, so, there might be a possibility to launch a project on conservation of the species in conjunction with raising, to generate some income.

2.6 Challenges and constraints

Along the project duration, Baan Lions community members were moving in and out the village all the time because of unsteady livelihood and occupation. The fluctuation of target population resulted in unsteady participation thus planned activity.

2.7 Lessons Learned

1) A would-be conservation zone should be demarcated with clear boundary to ensure effective oversight.

2) Different locations of conservation were not of the same nature, thus different results of conservation effort.

3) It would take a long time for the conservation zone to produce optimum results.

4) The project referred to community participation as the most important factor leading to success. However, the project regarded that the area for mollusk conservation should be expanded. Another clear factor was proclamation of regulations, i.e. demarcation of zones and conservation signboards.

3. Story of change

3.1 Change in people or human knowledge, attitude, and practice (behavior)

1) The community was advocated on marine animals' lifecycle, especially conch and sea cucumber, seagrass ecosystem, knowledge sharing through networking area.

2) The community well cooperated with the project and respected to the demarcation zone for conservation.

3.2 Change in socio-economic status or livelihood

Since the effective demarcation zone had produced some evinced result, there would be substantial changes regarding quantity marine resources, i.e. seagrass in demarcation zone for conservation and sustainable use, which community benefited from, i.e. local fishing, conch catching.

3.3 Change in participation and social interaction

1) A conflict amongst the community was resolved by the project intervening as the middleman. To achieve the united goal on natural resources conservation, the community was more cooperative on project activities.

2) The youth was more supportive and played an important role for proposing their idea and suggestion on the conservation plan with the adults.

3) Networks were initiated amongst other communities on Phra Thong Island and other islands including government and private sector.

3.4 Change in coastal governance frameworks

The project coordinated and opened the platform for proclamation of regulations for the management of the conservation zone with all communities in the location including local administrative organization; T.A.O.

3.5 Change in natural environment or ecosystems, and practices in ecosystem/coastal conservation

1) Enforcement of the regulations for management of the conservation zone was effective because of laying buoys and conservation signboards made demarcation clearly to community members and outsiders. The marine animals and seagrass range were rising in numbers, consequently.

2) The change in marine species was examined by number, size, and density, within and out of the seagrass conservation zone. This was definitely proven that the seagrass conservation zone was successful in terms of raising the quantity of marine species inner and outer of the zone (once they are mature, they will be moving outside).

4. Monitoring visit by the National Coordinator, NSC and NCB members

4.1 Findings and observation

The visiting team met and discussed with one project leader at Baan (village) Parkjoke (Lion), the main participating village in Phra Thong Island. Background, problems and issues of the village, as well as results of project activities were briefed. The village and its surrounding remained, more or less, the same. Of the 165 houses constructed, only 42 fully occupied. This was attributed to limited natural resources to live on, low-productive fishery and fresh water for consumption and daily use. The effects of Tsunami was said to be a cause (heavy sedimentation on seagrass/mangrove, water current change), whilst natural recovery had taken too long to guarantee initiation of well-beings of communities. However, eco-tourism was witnessed as one of the activities to generate income.

As to undertaken activities, the team was led to witness protected area of mangrove and seagrass which covered approximately 20 ha in front of the village. In addition to surveillance of the community protected area, records had been kept to reflect changes. It was confirmed that various marine species had been increased, especially a few species of edible mollusk, and sea cucumbers. Women group in the village was especially the main harvester of crams.

During the visit, the Chief of Kuraburi District Officer was having a meeting and discussion about promotion of tourism with community members in five villages of Koh Phra Thong (Phra Thong Island), including this village. The chief officer let the visiting team know briefly that such a move has been carried out in a participatory manner.

One stakeholder witnessed active in the village was a sea turtle conservation organization based in Italy, NAUCRATES, which had been conducting a research on the species in project location.

4.2 Photos



Since project location is fairly rich in seagrass and native crams (conch), the project has marked the conservation area as the floats demarcating seagrass conservation zone just in front of the village. After a few months of demarcation and monitor, edible crams and sea cucumbers appeared plentiful.



An in order to properly demarcate the conservation zone, community had procured these floats to make the line more visible.



From seagrass conservation zone upto the village, 7-ha of mangrove is also demarcated as a conservation zone. Similarly, edible mollusk appeared plentiful.



One conservation effort of the project is this established learning centre. Community members, tourists and students would learn about local and marine ecosystems in this centre.



While awaiting full recovery of ecosystem in project location, eco-tourism like home stay is being adopted by several community members.