

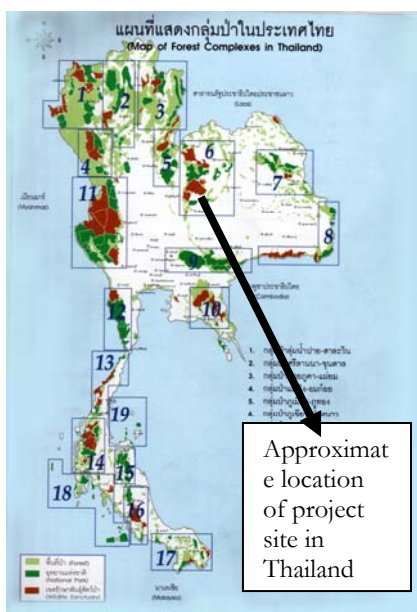
Briefing Document

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF PHU KHIEO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

1. Background

Since 1960 forest cover in Thailand has declined by 50 percent which, at 3.3 percent per annum, is the fastest rate of deforestation in South East Asia. During the same period more than 100 protected areas have been established in an effort to preserve remaining forest areas which provide crucial habitats for Thailand's wide biodiversity. The sustainability of many National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries is threatened by encroachment and illegal removal of natural resources by human settlements around and sometimes within the protected areas. There is consensus that sustainable management of protected areas in Thailand will be contingent upon the full cooperation of local communities through community participation in natural resource management. Community participation will be the only way to minimize conflict and encourage a sense of ownership of, and responsibility toward, sustainable use and management of natural resources. This concept is also emphasized in the National Forestry Policy (1985) and Thai Forestry Master Plan (1993).

'Sustainable Management of Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary through Community Participation' is a 7-year project, co-funded between the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the European Union. The project idea was originally conceived and formulated by the local forestry authorities based on their long years of experience and familiarity with the site. The EC Commission sent a project identification mission team to Thailand in 1996 to examine the options for a collaborative project. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 1997. It was at the time that the Financing Agreement was signed in the year 2000, that RTG began its support to the project by providing office space, staff, vehicles and funds to procure satellite imagery and other information. The official project start was in April 2002.



PhuKhieo Wildlife Sanctuary (PKWS)'s geographical focus is on a 4,594 km² complex of eight contiguous protected areas including PKWS in the western part of Northeast Thailand. On satellite images this Western Isan *Forest Complex* stands out as the only sizeable expanse of closed forest remaining in the region. As such, it is the only place in Thailand's Northeast that is able to sustain viable populations of wildlife species requiring large home ranges, e.g. elephant and tiger. It also has considerable value for its beneficial effect on stream-flow, reservoir intake, and the local climate in an otherwise hot and dry environment.

Phu Khieo Sanctuary is situated some 140 km west of Khonkaen and is located entirely within Chayaphum province. Project activities are centred on the 1,560 km² Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary and a buffer zone

along its eastern and southern boundary inhabited by approximately 114,500 people in 159 villages of the 14 sub-districts adjacent to the Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary contributes over one third to the total area of the forest complex as well as the bulk of its prime hill evergreen forest. Phu Khieo's contribution to biodiversity conservation seems at least as significant as its contribution in area size. Nineteen of Phu Khieo's mammal species, and 14 of its bird species are classified in the IUCN Red Data Book as vulnerable, near threatened, endangered, or critically endangered.

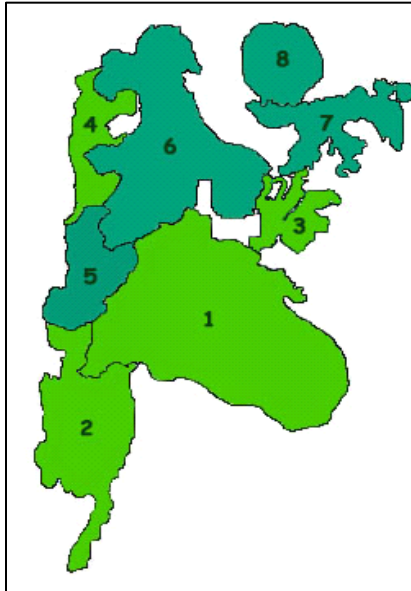


Fig.1: Protected areas within the Western Isan Forest Complex

Wildlife Sanctuaries (light shading)

- 1 Phu Khieo
- 2 Tapo-Huay Yai
- 3 Pha Phueng
- 4 Phu Pha Daeng

National Parks

(dark shading)

- 5 Tad Mok
- 6 Nam Nao
- 7 Phu Pha Man
- 8 Phu Kadueng

Phu Khieo was subject to logging in the late sixties and accompanied by the settlement of migrants in its heartland at Thung Kamang. The sanctuary was declared in 1972. Sanctuary establishment was associated with the resettlement of several hundred families causing serious conflict and resentment that lingers on to this day. While Phu Khieo has been spared the large-scale encroachment experienced elsewhere it is still subject to illegal logging, hunting, non-timber forest product collection, and deliberate lighting of fire.

2. The overall project objective is to conserve wildlife and its habitats in Phu Khieo WS and in the Western Isan Forest Complex by way of improving management capacity, reducing pressure on protected area resources, and raising awareness of environmental values.

The Tambon Administrative Organization Act of 1994, the Constitution of 1997, and - last but not least - the Draft Strategy of the new Ministry, all of them call for community participation as a major strategy for effective resource protection. Motivating people for collaborative management is consequently a major aim of the project. On the protected area side, management planning, monitoring, and information management constitute the project focus.

Sustainable management and conservation of the biodiversity within Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary is threatened by:

- Encroachment, illegal logging, poaching, fire and other environmental degradation resulting from the techniques used to remove bamboo, mushrooms, leaves and other minor products.
- Human activity within the wildlife sanctuary occurs for the following reasons:
- The buffer zone around the East and South of the WLS is degraded and villagers need to supplement their income and livelihoods.
- The WLS is easy access, patrolling is inadequate and the risk of being caught is slim. There is insufficient knowledge regarding the ecology, species composition and dynamics of the WLS to allow effective management.

The overall objective is to **Contribute to the sustainable management of Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary.**

Specific objective are:

- To develop and implement a management plan for Phu Khieo Wildlife Sanctuary and propose management guideline for the whole integrated protected area complex.
- To reduce human pressure on natural resources within the WLS
- To raise environmental education and public awareness of the environmental value of the wildlife sanctuary and buffer zone.

1. Project location

The project headquarters will be established at the existing office/residential complex in Phu Khieo WLS (see map). The project anticipates that refurbishment of existing office facilities will be necessary and additional structures, for example an information/research center will be constructed. Additional residential accommodation for consultants will be provided.

Buffer zone activities will be coordinated from the existing Phu Khieo protection center^{#4} in Tambon Kudjik near Kasetsombun, which was upgraded as required.

2. Project Duration and Activities

The project duration is 7 years from 1 April 2002 through 31 March 2009, split into 2 phases:

Phase I Preparation phase (2 years): Definition of a Management Plan establishing the basis for the management of the sanctuary and the capacity to monitor ecological processes, define surveillance and control mechanisms; integrating buffer zone development through targeted community-led plans in selected villages; as well as establish a comprehensive environmental education programme.

The above was based on an extensive analysis of relevant information, and in relation with policies described in National Forestry Policy and Thai Forestry Master Plan, as well as experiences/knowledge of other related projects. Emphasis was given in:

- Reviewing wildlife sanctuary policy and management
- Identifying components of integrated protected area management plan.
- Preparing village land use planning
- Establishing village based institution/village development funds
- Selecting field sites target villages
- Designing income generating microprojects
- Promoting community forestry initiatives
- Conducting training needs assessment and preparation of environmental education materials, for target villages and other groups; develop environmental education curricula for schools and other groups
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken periodically

Phases II Implementation phase (5 years)

The following activities will be carried out:

- Implement protected area management plan
- Implement income generating pilot projects, microprojects and other activities in the buffer zone

- Conduct training activities on environmental education and public awareness raising. Activities will target school children, village leaders, women's groups, men's groups, monks, existing training institutions they would also include upgrading of environmental education unit;

3. Expected outputs

Expected project outputs will be:

- A Management Plan is prepared and implemented in Phu Khieo WLS, including a regional dimension which results in sustainable conservation of the WLS, improved management, better motivated & qualified staff, and enhanced/more effective protection.
- Existing Education/Training Centers are upgraded.
- Public relation programmes are conducted and environmental awareness is raised.
- Alternative sources of income are introduced into villages within the buffer zone; access to credit to be provided.
- Appropriate village level institutions are established and sustained
- Environmental awareness is raised
- The buffer zone environment is restored and improved
- Recommendation for management plans for other protected areas are produced.
- Key ecological processes are understood, natural resources are assessed and protected.

4. Project inputs

The total project costs for the 7-year project period are estimated at **12.2 mil Euro**. The EC contribution which covers costs of Technical Assistance in different fields, project equipment and funding for project activities is estimated at total 6.0 mil Euro, while contribution from the RTG, in both cash and kind is estimated at 6.2 mil Euro.

5. Implementation arrangements

The Department of **National park, Wildlife and plant conservation/Ministry of natural resources and environment** will be the responsible Executing Agency for the project

The project will work with existing institutions and structures to enhance sustainability, and will strengthen them where justified by project objectives. NGOs will be used where appropriate to facilitate field level operations within the buffer zone.

The scientific and research work of the wildlife Sanctuary will be promoted to the wider scientific community so as to promote the national and international importance of the site.

Cooperation and exchange of knowledge with other on-going EU-funded projects in the same subject areas (participatory community development and forests conservation) will be sought.
