



Assessing Forest Biodiversity and Utilization of Non-Timber Forest Products in Community Forest for Rural Livelihood and Conservation in Thailand

COUNTRY

Thailand

PROPONENT

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BACKGROUND

Thailand is one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in Southeast Asia. It has approximately 15,000 species of plants, accounting for 8% of plant species found globally. However, there is a serious biodiversity loss as reported in the 2004 IUCN Red List. At least 1,424 plant species, including 757 endemic species, are classified as threatened or endangered. The underlying causes of biodiversity loss are associated with human disturbances, including over-exploitation of forests.

In Thailand, approximately 23 million people live in national forest reserve areas obtaining Non-timber Forest Products (NTFP) such as wood for fuel, mushrooms, rattan, bamboo and bamboo shoots, wild vegetables, flowers, fruits and nuts, and medicinal plants, among others. According to the Thailand Environment Monitor Series (2004), the average annual income from selling NTFPs in local markets is over USD25,000 per village. Considering the 73,467 villages in the country, the value of NTFPs trade in local markets would be more than USD2 billion.

However, there are conflicts between forest utilization and biodiversity conservation. Community forest management (CFM) in Thailand abides by the principle of sustainable forest management. Nonetheless, many environmental experts are raising the serious biodiversity loss caused by utilization of forest resources.

OBJECTIVES

The goal of this research study is to:

1. Evaluate the potential of forest biodiversity and utilization of NTFPs in community forest in Thailand; and

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2. Provide recommendations for harvesting level of NTFPs and how these can be achieved through CFM for rural livelihood improvement and biodiversity conservation.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

This study will analyze forest biodiversity in order to calculate NTFPs' extraction. Current community forest practices will be assessed to understand the economic contribution of NTFPs to rural livelihoods, the factors affecting household decisions about NTFPs collection, and the progress of CFM. Moreover, the implementation of the CFM will also be investigated in light of biodiversity status and practice, and recommendations made to improve community economic benefits from NTFPs collection and forest biodiversity protection.

The outcome of this study will reflect current CFM implementation in Thailand and generate policy recommendations.

METHODOLOGY

Several techniques for data collection will be employed including field surveys to assess the potential of community forest for biodiversity conservation in the 3,840 hectares' study site. Using the line transect sampling method, 0.25% of the total forest inventory will be sampled and surveyed. Ninety-six sample plots will be set-up in the community forest site. In addition, 265 households in the community will be interviewed to determine the economic value of NTFPs in community forest to local markets and the major factors affecting household income.

PROJECT AREA

Ban Mae Chiang Rai

CONTACT INFORMATION

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DURATION

One year (March 2018 – February 2019)

APPROVED BUDGET

12,500 US Dollars