

**Asia-Pacific Environmental Innovation Strategies (APEIS)
Research on Innovative and Strategic Policy Options (RISPO)
Good Practices Inventory**

**Community Based Tourism in Doi Inthanon National Park:
Case Study of Ban Mae Klang Luang Tourism Alliance, Chiangmai,
Thailand**

Summary of the Practice

Keywords: Doi Inthanon National Park, Ban Mae Klang Luang tourism alliance

Strategy: Facilitating community-based tourism in protected areas

Environmental areas: Ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, Forest conservation

Critical instruments: Organisational arrangements, Self regulation

Country: Thailand

Location: Ban Mae Klang Luang and Ban Ang Ka Noi (Mu 17), Ban Pha Moan (Mu 8), Ban Nong Lum (Mu 22) Ban Luang Sub-district, Jomthong District, Chiangmai Province

Participants: Villagers from four villages, national park officials, tour operators, Thailand Research Fund (TRF)

Duration: Since 1999

Funding: Villagers' fund, selling shares to outsiders, donations, Thailand Research Fund (TRF)

Background:

The Thai villages of Ban Mae Klang Luang, Ang Ka Noi, Pha Moan and Nong Lum are all members of the Karen ethnic group, and have a total of 1099 people in 202 households. Their occupation is mainly agriculture, producing rice for their own consumption, as well as temperate fruits, flowers, and vegetables as their source of income. Surrounded by hilly evergreen forests at altitude of 1000-1800 meters, the villages have been located inside Doi Inthanon National Park for more than a century. Although the Karen people have been known to practice good forest conservation, with an increasing population and poverty, the villagers found it increasingly difficult to avoid the heavy use of forest resources, which by law is prohibited in national parks. In the 1990s, conflicts increased between national park officials and villagers as a result of illegal hunting for wild animals and forest encroachment. In order to relieve the pressure from consumptive forest use and introduce supplementary incomes for the villagers, in 1999 the national park supported the forming of the Ban Mae Klang Luang Tourism Alliance, comprising about 89 members from the four villages. Since then the Alliance has operated tourism services and provided supplementary income to members. The tourism service center is located at Ban Mae Klang Luang.

Objectives:

- 1) To provide supplementary income to the villagers
- 2) To reduce illegal use of forest resources, especially land encroachment and hunting for wild animals
- 3) To provide genuine knowledge about the Karen people and rectify any misunderstandings among outsiders about the Karen people
- 4) To build environmental awareness of the local Karen people and visitors

Description of the activity:

Local villagers from 4 villages in the Doi Inthanon National Park formed a local organization called "Ban Mae Klang Luang Tourism Alliance" in 1999 in order to operate a community-based tourism business. Their primary goals are to earn supplementary income, provide genuine knowledge about the Karen people, and rectify any misunderstanding among outsiders about the Karen people. Administrative support came from the Doi Inthanon National Park, particularly the consent for the

villagers to operate sustainable tourism in the park. Capacity building, such as guide training, exchange experience and study tours supported by the Thailand Research Institute (TRF), the Royal Project of Agricultural Extension as well as the Doi Inthanon National Park helped to make tourism at Ban Mae Klang Luang a relative success. Local rules and regulation for tourism management and resource conservation also established. The tourism activities include accommodation, local guides to waterfalls and for forest treks, and agro-tourism in the local farmland. In addition, the villagers practice conservation activities such as forest fire control, tree planting, maintenance of tourism facilities, and litter collection along the trekking routes.

Critical Instruments

Overview

The critical instruments of this case include a mix of institutional arrangements (in terms of the government agency support), with self-regulatory instruments by the villagers. These two instruments help make community-based tourism in the Doi Inthanon National Park a success, in terms of creating opportunities for supplementary income and benefits to the local people, building environmental awareness among the local people, and reducing conflicts or tension between the park administration and the local people.

Organisational arrangements

The co-operation and clear policy direction from the Doi Inthanon National Park allows villagers inside the park to share benefits from tourism in the park.

- The innovation in the use of this instrument is that it allows local villagers to share benefits from tourism in the park. It also leads to mutual understanding and cooperation between the park administration and local villagers.
- This instrument contributes to success because local villagers can earn benefits from tourism, thus reducing conflicts with the park officials regarding illegal forest-resource use, such as wildlife hunting. It also raises awareness and cooperation from local villagers for the park's natural resources protection.

Self-regulation

Ban Mae Klang Luang Tourism Alliance has set up local rules and regulations for tourism management and natural resource conservation, in order to ensure that tourism is sustainable and viable.

- The innovation in the use of this instrument is that it is required to meet community-based tourism objectives in order to ensure that tourism is sustainable and viable.
- This instrument contributes to success because the rules and regulations can control or prevent unacceptable negative environmental and socio-economical impacts from tourism, and at the same time enhance local economic development.

Impacts

Positive and tangible impacts				Negative impacts			
	1*	2	3		1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental 1. Increasing environmental awareness of the villagers 2. Changing occupation from wild animal hunting to nature guiding 3. Reducing land expansion pressure for agriculture 4. Villagers help the park in forest fire protection and forest patrolling 	• • • •	• • • •	• 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental 10. Waste and garbage management issues 			•
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economical 5. Earning supplementary income from tourism 6. Having more channels and chances for selling agricultural products to tourists 	• •	• 	• 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economical 11. Income distribution from tourism is not completely equitable since the queuing system for villagers to receive tourists is not well defined 			•
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social 7. Reducing conflict between the national park officials and the villagers 8. More “working together” and more “understanding” between government agencies (such as Royal Project of Highland Agricultural Extension, the national park) and the villagers towards sustainable development 9. Villagers gain direct learning experience regarding group work, participation, and problem-solving skills 	• •	• 	• • •	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social 12. Visitor awareness and appreciation of the natural environment is not very evident 13. Changing Karen way of life from self-sufficiency to wealth-seeking economy 14. Unequal distribution of benefits from tourism (from 11) may later cause conflicts among the villagers 15. Less active participation from villages other than Ban Mae Klang Luang 	•	• •	• •

* Points of view reflected here: column 1—villagers, column 2—park officials, column 3—case reviewers

Lessons Learned

Issue 1:

Support from the national park administration, in terms of giving permission for the villagers to conduct tourism in the park and other help, is a big step forward that is helping make tourism in this protected area a success. The park also helps them benefit from tourism in the park by establishing a park rule that any visitor group taking the Kew Mae Pan Trail must be accompanied by a local guide. As a result, villagers can earn money from being local guides and are more willing to take care of touristic resources. In Thailand this type of situation is rare, since there are no clear guidelines on this matter. In most cases, local people living inside or near a park cannot succeed at community-based tourism, because they are not allowed to play a substantial role in tourism management and benefit sharing.

Issue 2:

In the past, outsiders (business partners) monopolized the tourism operations and financial management, and the villagers took part only in rendering the actual tourism services. No checking and monitoring of the operations were done until a business failure occurred. Since then local villagers

learnt to handle their tourism enterprise on their own, with technical support from the national park. Capacity building in terms of related management skills is a must for them. In addition, the local organization (Ban Mae Klang Luang Tourism Alliance) set up rules and regulations to ensure a sustainable and viable tourism business. These lessons were expensive but gave villagers a chance to look back and learn to solve problems together.

Potential for Application

Several national and international organizations visited the Ban Mae Klang Luang Tourism Alliance to learn from and share experiences with the local people, but no formal application from this specific case has been reported elsewhere. In 2002 a workshop was held with the objective of documenting lessons learnt from community-based tourism cases in northern Thailand, including the experiences of the Alliance. It is hoped that the workshop documents will be used for future community-based tourism improvements in Thailand. The Doi Inthanon National Park's cooperation and clear policy of allowing the villagers inside the park have enabled benefit sharing from tourism in the park, so good potential exists to apply this approach to other protected areas in Thailand.

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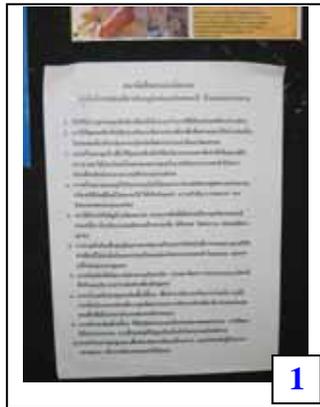
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Information date: First inventory: 10-12 December 2002,

Second inventory (focus group interview): 31 January-2 February, 2003

Third inventory (questionnaires) 1-6 December, 2003

Photos:



1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 Photo by Dr. Dachanee Emphandhu
5 Photo by Ms. Usawadee Polpipat