

Preparatory Studies to Install a Continuous Monitoring System for the Sustainable Management of Thailand's Forest Resources

Final Report

PD 2/99 Rev. 2 (F)

I. Introduction

The project was approved by the Twenty-sixth ITTC Session in May 1999 and funds were made available for immediate implementation during the same Session.

II. Project Objective

The development objective of the project was to contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of Thailand's forest resources and the environment which would be achieved through the development of an effective and efficient continuous national forest resources monitoring system (THAIFORM), to provide feedback on Thailand's progress toward the sustainable management of its forest resources and environment.

III. Project Strategy and Activities

The strategy adopted by the project involved the following steps:

- Organization of initial regional and national workshops to confirm the monitoring objectives with stakeholders;
- Development of the THAIFORM component;
- Pilot-testing of the THAIFORM in a relatively small area;
- Preparation of a national plan for the proposed THAIFORM system; and
- Organization of a Final Workshop to obtain feedback on the THAIFORM system, and review proposed plans for the implementation of the system countrywide.

IV. Project Achievements and Outputs

The main outputs achieved by the project include: (a) the forest resources monitoring objectives were confirmed by stakeholders, (b) the THAIFORM forest resources monitoring system consisting of field procedures, a data processing system and GIS and database applications was developed and successfully pilot-tested, and (c) an installation plan, including resource requirements and a schedule of activities, to implement THAIFORM countrywide was prepared.

V. Target Beneficiaries Involvement

The target beneficiaries of the THAIFORM system are policy makers, the Royal Forestry Department, and environmental NGOs who participated in the initial and final workshops. The recommendations of the initial workshop influenced the design of the proposed monitoring system, and the recommendations of the final workshop formed the basis for the proposed plan for implementation of THAIFORM country wide.

VI. Lessons Learnt

The main lessons learnt from the implementation of the project are:

- The project was not well formulated; the project strategy in particular was not clear. Significant changes had to be made to the project budget that required approval of ITTO;
- The team approach adopted by the project contributed to the smooth implementation of the project;
- A national data analyst contracted to design the computer data processing software was not available to complete revisions to the software and did not provide the computer program source code. Thus the computer program is not fully operational;
- More field crew and vehicles had to be used due to the shortened field season as a result of the long rainy season; and
- Many unknown plants were encountered during the plot establishment that could not be identified properly by the field crew.

VII. Dissemination of Results

The project results were disseminated to participants of the final workshop organized in year 2000. The Project Completion Report, the Final Technical Report, and the following Technical Manuals and Reports have been submitted to ITTO and are available from the Secretariat upon request:

1. Technical Report No.2: Review of Current Forest Resources Inventory and Monitoring Practices;
2. Technical Report No.3: Pilot Project-Ground Sampling Design;
3. Technical Report No.4: Pilot Project-General Field Procedures Manual;
4. Technical Report No.5: Pilot Project-Training Manual;
5. Technical Report No.7: Preliminary Pilot Project Results: Statistical Tables & Maps;
6. THAIFORM Technical Manual: General Field Procedures for Monitoring of Forest Resources in Thailand; and
7. Design and Methodology for Thailand's Forest Resources Monitoring System (THAIFORM)

VIII. Recommendations related to future work

These recommendations are based on the lessons learnt from project implementation:

- Careful project planning and design is required to ensure a smooth project implementation;
- External factors such as weather have to be accounted for in the project planning;

- Use permanent staff of the user institution for database maintenance and programming rather than contracting staff to ensure the continued maintenance of the database and updating of computer software;
- There should be a counter-part to any international inventory specialist to ensure technical sustainability of the project after the specialist departs; and
- All PSC members and government policy makers should be encouraged to visit the project field site.

IX. Concluding Remarks

As the ITTO Secretariat has received the Project Completion Report, Final Technical Report, and THAIFORM Technical Manual, project PD 2/99 Rev.2 (F) can be considered as completed pending the Final Financial Audit Report.