

Summary of Ex-post Evaluation Study

Evaluation conducted by: JICA Thailand Office

I. OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT							
Country: Kingdom of Thailand	Project title: The Reforestation and Extension Project in the Northeast of Thailand (Phase II) (REX II)						
Issue/Sector: Forestry/ Forest Preservation	Cooperation scheme: Technical Cooperation						
Division in charge: Global Environment Dept., Group 1, Forest Conservation Team 1	Total cost : Appr. 500 million yen						
Period of Cooperation 13 December 1999 - 12 December 2004	Partner Country's Implementing Organization: Royal Forest Department (RFD), Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment						
Supporting Organization in Japan: Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries	Related Cooperation: The Reforestation and Extension Project in the Northeast of Thailand (Phase I) (1 Apr. 1994 – 31 Mar. 1997) (Follow-up cooperation: 1 Apr. 1997 – 30 Sep. 1998)						
<p>1-1. Background of the Project</p> <p>The Reforestation and Extension Project in the Northeast of Thailand (Phase I) was implemented for 5 years from April 1992 to March 1997 with the purpose to promote reforestation activities of local people through social forestry approach. The Follow-up cooperation was carried out for 1.5 years after the completion of the Phase I Project. With the achievement of the Phase I Project and Follow-up cooperation, RFD recognized the necessity to take a new approach to ensure the 'sustainable forest management', which leads to restoring environmental conditions and to upgrading the living standards of the local people. There, however, remained some problems, such as the lack of farmers' knowledge in tending, harvesting, and replanting trees. Therefore, RFD requested the Phase II Project in order to achieve the goal of sustainable forest management.</p>							
<p>1-2. Project Overview</p> <p>(1) Overall Goal Sustainable forest management techniques in small-scale plantation are adopted in the project area</p> <p>(2) Project Purpose Systems for the extension/improvement of the sustainable forest management techniques in small-scale plantation are established in the project area</p> <p>(3) Outputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest management information is accumulated at RFD 2. Sustainable forest management techniques in small-scale plantation are improved 3. Information and techniques on the forest management are introduced to the residents through the RFD and its network activities 4. Monitoring results are well utilized for the improvement of project activities <p>(4) Inputs</p> <p>Japanese side (Total Cost Appr. 500 million yen) :</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Long-term Expert: 8 persons</td> <td>Equipment: 97 million Yen</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Short-term Expert: 18 persons</td> <td>Local cost: 68 million Yen</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trainees received: 15 persons</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Long-term Expert: 8 persons	Equipment: 97 million Yen	Short-term Expert: 18 persons	Local cost: 68 million Yen	Trainees received: 15 persons	
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Thai side:			
Counterpart: 48 persons		Local Cost: 25,295,890 THB (68 million Yen)	
Land and Facilities: Land, building, and facilities of REX Centres and experimental plot			
2. EVALUATION TEAM			
Evaluation Team	Evaluation Analysis: Takehiro Iwaki (Mr.) (IC Net Asia Co., Ltd.)		
	Assistant Researcher: Dusita Krawanchid (Ms.) (IC Net Asia Co., Ltd.)		
Period of Evaluation	24 October 2007 – 29 February 2008	Type of Evaluation	Ex-post Evaluation
3.PROJECT PERFORMANCE			
3-1. Performance of Project Purpose			
<p>Ex-REX Centers^{*1} have been maintaining reforestation and extension activities in the target area with knowledge, skill, and tools gained through the project within the budget constraints. Although the promotion packages have not been developed by each center, concerned materials for the expansion of reforestation and sustainable forest management activities have been utilized at each center. As the REX Information Center (REX IC) has not been functioning after the completion of the project due to the organizational restructuring, the databases developed during the project have been maintained and utilized only partially.</p> <p>*1: REX Centers have been restructured as Reforestation Promotion Centers (RPC) along with major nursery centers.</p>			
3-2 . Achievement related to Overall Goal			
<p>It is difficult to say clearly whether the overall goal has been achieved without the presetting of measurable indicators in the project design. However, judging from the collected information regarding the indicators of the overall goal, such as the number of community forest and expansion of reforestation group members, it is fair to say that the practice of sustainable forest management techniques has been spread in the target area.</p>			
3-3 . Follow-up of the Recommendations by Terminal Evaluation Study			
<p>Following recommendations were made during the Terminal Evaluation Study.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consolidation of existing prototypes developed to produce a promotion package for future activities by the end of the project 2. Clarification of strategies for promoting the project effects to other areas in the Northeast of Thailand by the end of the project. 3. Implementation of activities based on the clarified strategies, including coordination with other institutions. 4. Implementation of training program not only at regional and national level but also for participants from the Greater Mekhong Sub-region (GMS) by utilising data and information accumulated at each center. 5. Continuation of research activities and creation of new research of various species. 6. Utilization of REX IC as a useful tool for formulating reforestation policies and programs. 7. Retaining of the name and functions of REX Center. <p>Recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 6 have not been practiced due to various reasons, such as impacts of organizational restructuring and budget constraints. Regarding the Recommendation 4, RFD conducted an international training course for concerned personnel from GMS countries in 2007. Ex-REX centers have been maintaining their function as centers for reforestation, sustainable forest management, and research activities within the budget constraint (recommendation 3, 5, 7).</p>			

4. RESULTS OF EVALUATION

4-1. Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Impact

Although it is difficult to say clearly whether the overall goal has been achieved without the presetting of measurable indicators, it is fair to say that the project is in the right track to achieve the overall goal. The summary of the finding is presented below. No negative impact of the project was identified.

<Achievement of the Overall Goal>

- It is fair to say from the collected information and case studies that the number of farmers involved in the reforestation and sustainable forest management has been increasing in the target area.
- It is considered that the awareness of farmers on reforestation and sustainable forest management has been increasing by various factors. The result of the follow-up study conducted by ex-REX Center 1 shows the high level of application of knowledge and skills by farmers after the training.
- The number of the community forest in the northeast of Thailand increased from 1,643 at the time of the Terminal Evaluation Study in August 2004 to 2,737 as of October 2007.

<Other impacts >

- RFD uses the experience of the project in a direction for the promotion of reforestation and sustainable forest management. In 2005, major nursery centers in the country were restructured to RPC to clarify their responsibility not only for the production of seedlings but also for extension activities.
- Forest area in the northeast of Thailand increased by 6% during 2000 – 2004 while forest areas in other regions were decreased or maintained at same level during the same period. The contribution of the project is considered as one of factors for the increase.
- Technical handbooks and other materials developed by the project have been shared with concerned offices by ex-REX Centers.
- It is considered that farmers having relatively large land, who can afford to plant more plant varieties as well as agricultural products and wait for return, are likely to have more benefit from reforestation and forest management activities compared with small farmers. Farmers with relatively smaller land, who have severer constraints in terms of income and farm area compared with large farmers, seem more vulnerable to change their plantation in short-term to follow price increases in specific farm commodities.
- It can be said that the project contributed to the strengthening of communities through the reforestation and sustainable forest management activities in harmony with the government policy to strengthen the community.
- RFD conducted an international training course for concerned personnel from GMS countries in 2007. Course evaluation by the participants indicates the effectiveness of the training.

(2) Sustainability

Although the sustainability of the project effect has been constrained by the organizational restructuring, it can be said that each ex-REX Center has been sustaining reforestation and extension activities by utilizing knowledge, skill, and experience gained during the project. The summary of the finding is presented below.

<Policy Aspects>

- In the 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-11), the Thai government emphasizes on the importance of sustainable natural resource management in harmony with the 'Sufficiency Economy Philosophy' advocated by the King Bhumibol. The development mission in the plan includes balanced socio-economic development with natural resource and environment as well as the promotion of environment friendly production

and consumption system. It is expected that this direction of the government policy favors the promotion of reforestation and extension of sustainable forest management activities and, thus, enhance the sustainability of the project effect.

<Organizational, Financial, and Human Resource Aspects>

- At the time of the Terminal Evaluation, 2 of 4 ex-REX Centers were under the National Park, Wildlife, and Plant Conservation Department of the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment as a result of the organizational restructuring. These ex-REX Centers returned under the command of RFD in 2005 to be in the same organizational position with other 2 centers.
- RFD restructured major nursery centers in the country to 12 RPC. As a result of this restructure, 4 ex-REX Centers were integrated in RPC along with other major nursery centers. Although the mission and role of ex-REX Centers basically remained same and project activities have been conducted after the integration to RPC, insufficient budget has been causing difficulties to ex-REX Centers to maintain the scale of activities.
- Ex-REX Centers will become under the command of regional Forest Resource Management Offices (FRMO), which were newly established under RFD in March 2007 to strengthen forest resource management in the region, when the transfer of the command line is enacted. Mission and role of ex-REX Centers may not be changed after the possible change of the command line.
- The numbers of personnel at ex-REX Centers remain same level with the numbers during project period. 12 of 22 ex-counterparts at the end of the project remain in 4 ex-REX Centers.

<Technical Aspects>

- Ex-counterparts and farmers in the target area consider the technical knowledge on reforestation and forest management provided by ex-REX Centers is relevant. Project equipments are generically maintained appropriately except greenhouses established at each center. All greenhouses were not in use with particular reasons, such as high repairing cost and unavailability of spare parts during the field visit.

4-2. Factors that have promoted project

(1) Impact

- An important positive factor for the impact and sustainability of the project is the visualization of successful cases after three years of the project termination. It is assumed that awareness of farmers on reforestation and sustainable forest management has been increased as they see the tangible results.
- 'Sufficiency Economy Philosophy' advocated by the King Bhumibol and increased concern on the global warming have strengthened the government policy on appropriate natural resource management. This has been a tail wind for the promotion of reforestation and sustainable forest management.
- Paper manufacturing companies have increased their business at the target area. The companies sell quality seedlings of fast growing varieties, particularly the eucalyptus tree, and buy the products from growers. The companies have contributed to the extension of plantation and, eventually, provided chances to farmers to increase their income. Recently, the price of the eucalyptus tree has sharply increased. This price increase has been attracting farmers to grow the eucalyptus tree.
- Improvement in communication environment, i.e., rapid expansion of mobile phone network and improved access to the internet, has provided a positive impact on the dissemination of information from ex-REX Centers.

(2) Sustainability

- Factors that have promoted project impact are also considered as factors that has enhanced the sustainability of the project effect.

4-3. Factors that have inhibited project

(1) Impact

- It can be said that allocation of budget to ex-REX Centers has not been consistent with the government policy which favors reforestation and sustainable forest management. Decrease in the budget after the termination of the project has forced ex-REX Centers to scale down activities below their capacities.

(2) Sustainability

- Above mentioned budget constraints are also considered as a factor that has inhibited the sustainability of the project effect.
- During the organizational restructuring in 2003-4, the operation of ex-REX Centers was hindered by the decrease and delay in the distribution of budget, frequent transfer of personnel, and change in the line of command. REX Information Center lost its organizational position after the project and it has affected the sustainability of project effect on forest management information.

4-4. Conclusions

The project has been contributing to the increase in the application of sustainable forest management techniques and awareness of farmers on reforestation in the target area. The experience of successful farmers has encouraged other farmers to follow their practice of reforestation and sustainable forest management. Once farmers recognize the importance and value of tree plantation, they spread reforestation and sustainable forest management work of their own accounts. Therefore, it is fair to say that the project laid the groundwork for reforestation and extension of sustainable forest management activities at the target area. Each ex-REX Center has been trying to sustain reforestation and extension activities within the budget constraints by utilizing knowledge, skill, and experience gained during the project.

4-5. Recommendations

There are following recommendations to RFD.

- Among 4 forest management information databases developed during the project, only 1 database has been maintained. It is recommended to re-activate other databases under the responsibility of Reforestation Promotion Office of RFD. As network environment at ex-REX Centers has been improved, appropriate updating and utilization of the databases are expected once the databases are re-activated.
- It is suggested to share the experience of ex-REX Centers with 8 non-REX RPC through the set-up of database systems, sharing of material, observation trip, and other activities, to expand the impact of the project.
- There are positive external environments for reforestation and extension of sustainable forest management activities, such as increasing concern on the global warming, national interest on natural resource management through 'Sufficiency Economy Philosophy', and increasing budget for local administration offices. Therefore, it is considered appropriate for ex-REX Centers to strengthen coordination with concerned organizations to conduct activities. Development of website will be an effective tool to attract the cooperation.
- Farmers who started reforestation and sustainable forest management activities during the project have been emerged as successful models which other farmers can see the tangible result. The effort of ex-REX Centers to strengthen the network with these farmers should be continued.
- In order to expand and sustain the outcome of the Project, it is recommended to enhance the capacity in the field of wood utilization, which includes the utilization of equipment provided by the project, cutting trees and

maintenance for plantation of native species.

- With its institutional capacity, technical expertise, and experience in practice, it is fair to say that RFD is capable of conducting international training programs for concerned personnel from the countries in the region on reforestation and sustainable forest management effectively in collaboration with ex-REX Centers. It is expected that the implementation of the international training programs will also enhance the motivation of RFD/ex-REX Center staff to develop RFD/ex-REX Centers.

4-6. Lessons Learned

- The project effect has been spread spontaneously among the farmers after the recognition of the benefit from project activities. From this experience, the importance in the project design to consider the understanding of project activities by the beneficiary and tangible benefits for the beneficiary is highlighted.
- Some project activities have been shrunken after the termination of the project. Although organizational restructuring during and after the project and decrease in the budget are considered as major reasons, lack of post-project strategy is considered as another factor for the scale-down of the activities. Although the Terminal Evaluation proposed to clarify the strategies for promoting the project effects, it could have been discussed at the earlier stage of the project. From this experience, development of post-project strategy, such as prioritization on activities, cost-effective implementation method, and budget acquisition to continue activities, is recognized as an important factor to maintain the project effect.
- Measurable indicators for the project overall goal should be clarified in the project design. Without the clear indicators, evaluation result may have to rely on the subjective judgment of the evaluator. Set-up of clear indicators is also important to encourage project counterparts to achieve the overall goal of the project.
- From the experience of the insufficient utilization and maintenance of the greenhouses at each ex-REX Center, importance of careful study for the maintenance and operation cost of project equipments/facilities is also drawn as a lesson learned.

4-7. Follow-up Situation

No follow-up programs have been carried out by the Japanese side since the project termination in 2004.