

Assessment of Training Needs and Development of a Training Program for Practitioners in Coastal Forest Ecosystem Rehabilitation

Activity 1.2.2 in the project “Contribution to Forest rehabilitation
in Thailand’s Areas Affected by the Tsunami Disaster”
[PD372/05 Rev.1(F)]

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1. Introduction

The tsunami which struck the coast of southern Thailand on 26 December 2004 claimed the lives and property of many local people and tourists. Its effects are still being felt across a wide area covering both coastal and marine ecosystems.

In response to this disaster, Thailand's Royal Forest Department (RFD) launched the project "*Contribution to Forest Rehabilitation in Thailand's Areas Affected by the Tsunami Disaster*", with funding from the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). Implemented in partnership with the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), this project is restoring coastal forests and improving the quality of life of local communities hit by the tsunami in target areas in Ranong and Phang Nga provinces.

The project's scope covers rehabilitating forests, raising awareness, strengthening the capacity of stakeholders, and formulating plans for integrated and sustainable coastal resource management. Its expected outcome is the provision of ***ecosystem and livelihood security through community participation in coastal resource management.***

The training needs assessment and training program for officials and other practitioners outlined in this report are important activities for the project. This is because the task of coastal forest rehabilitation is a complex one, demanding knowledge and collaboration from many different sectors.

Though there have been emergency efforts to rehabilitate ecosystems in the tsunami-affected zone, most have sought to reclaim damaged habitats in areas under government control, particularly in the coastal periphery. They have used commonly available tree species, and have usually not involved local communities. Now, rehabilitation efforts need to adopt participatory restoration approaches, which seek to return ecosystems to their original diversity and productivity while still allowing communities to manage and benefit from the resource. Such approaches take a broader approach to restoration covering public lands, lands used by communities, and other areas.



2. Principles and methods

The training needs assessment (TNA) and training program were based on four key considerations:

- 1) the purpose of training
- 2) the target groups for training
- 3) an assessment of the target groups' training needs
- 4) an appropriate training program.

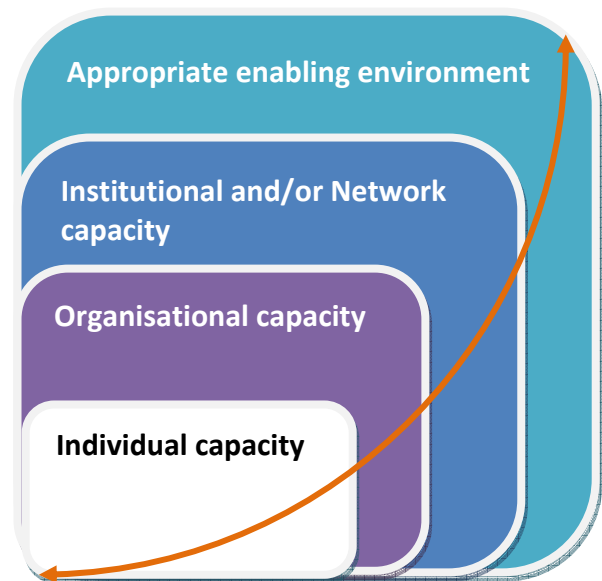
Training for what?

Training is an important mechanism in capacity building. Its aim is to enable people to carry out their duties or responsibilities, so its primary emphasis is on building individual capacity.

Yet individual capacity is only one element of success. Other factors and levels of capacity are also important, including organisational capacity, institutional and/or network capacity, and an appropriate enabling environment. Individual capacity has an impact on these other levels and, conversely, organisational and institutional capacity can impact individual capacity. It must always be borne in mind; therefore, that building individual capacity without considering these other levels may lead only to short-term success, since the

organisations responsible for carrying on the work will lack the necessary preparation.

These concerns notwithstanding, individual capacity is an important and relatively straightforward issue which can be addressed first in any training initiative. Because such capacity is needed either to carry out a task, or to perform it more efficiently, capacity building should be carried out both when work begins and while it progresses. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of capacity building are also vital.



Individual capacity building generally follows the KAS model:

K-knowledge: Provide relevant and necessary knowledge

A-attitude: Create a positive attitude towards the work

S-skill: Provide the skills and expertise needed to carry out the work

These three elements are equally important and depend on the type of work and the scope of responsibilities of the worker. Hence a clear analysis is needed of whose capacity is to be strengthened and for what purpose. For example, local administrative organisations must formulate annual development plans, and to do this local officials need a broad local knowledge and a positive attitude towards participatory approaches. They may not need the skills to draft a plan, however, since they have the power to assign this function to others. Those who take on this role must have the necessary knowledge and skills, and if they have a suitable attitude that will increase the likelihood of success. Many people, however, agree that attitude is the most important element of the KAS model.

“If you see the importance of the work, you will seek out more knowledge, because now you can appreciate the sources of information more readily than before and build your own proficiency”

The project wants to develop the capacity of government officials and other stakeholders in its target areas for sustained rehabilitation of coastal forests to provide ***ecosystem security through community participation in coastal resource management***. To this end, the various aspects of the KAS framework were analysed according to ITTO's guidelines for the restoration, management and rehabilitation of degraded and secondary tropical forests:

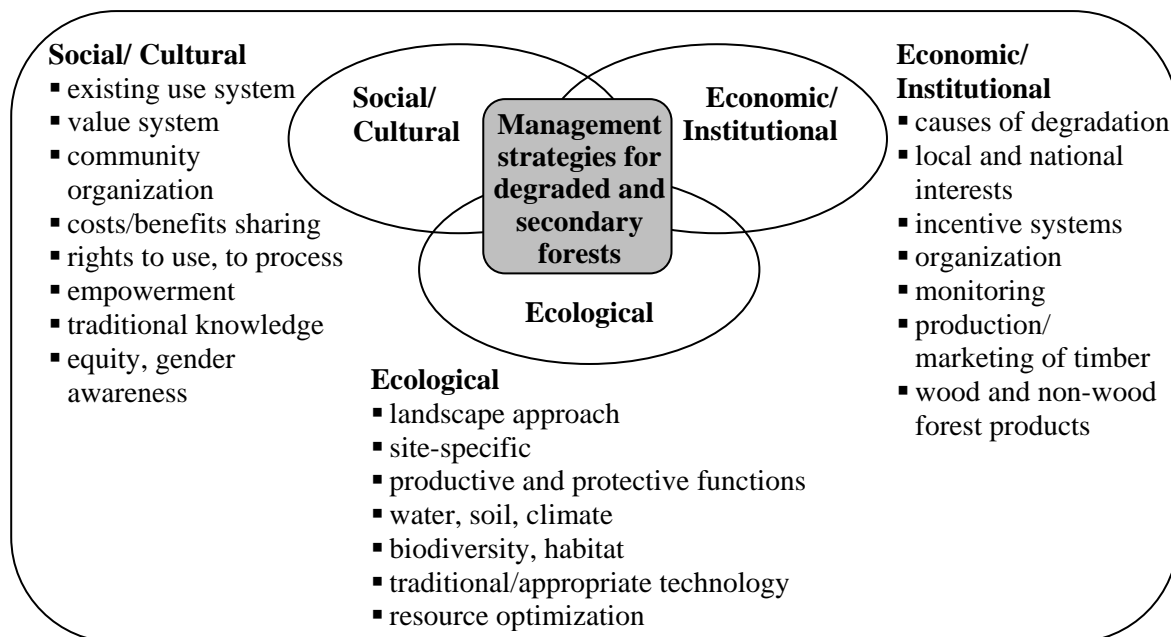


Figure for Context for determining management strategies for degraded and secondary forests (ITTO, 2002.)

Training framework for building individual capacity

“To provide ecosystem security by rehabilitating coastal forests through community participation”

K – Status and threats to coastal forests

Links to well-being of coastal communities

A – Importance of coastal ecosystems and their sustainable use

Participatory management of resources

S – Appropriate methods for rehabilitating damaged and degraded coastal forests, communication and participatory implementation

Who are the target groups?

Clear analysis and definition of target groups facilitate the development of an appropriate training program. They also help to improve the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation. Two broad target groups can be identified for the training organised under the current project: government units and other stakeholders involved in rehabilitating coastal forests. Most of the government units come under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, with an Office of Natural Resources and Environment in each province and various other units below it. The following table gives details of the main stakeholders:

Agencies and partners	Relevant responsibilities
Provincial office of Natural Resources and Environment, Permanent Secretary Office, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Coordinate collaboration between units; formulate provincial environmental action plan; oversee licensing of timber harvesting; coordinate actions against forest encroachment and examine information on encroachment in state lands.
Provincial Forest Coordination Office, Royal Forest Department	Promote planting of economic tree crops; promote community forest management; prevent forest fires and encroachment in national forest reserves.
Mangrove Development Office, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources	Prevent encroachment in mangrove forests; rehabilitate and conserve mangrove forests in area under jurisdiction; and promote public volunteering to protect mangrove forests.
Department of national parks, Wildlife and plant Conservation	Protect and rehabilitate forests in conservation zones; provide tourism services appropriate to local capacity.
Local Government Organization (LGOs)	Rehabilitate and protect against encroachment of forests on public lands; manage natural resources linked to the quality of life of local communities.
Communities	Play a part in the management and use of land; and the protection, rehabilitation, preservation, maintenance and use of forest resources.
Academic Institutes	Promote knowledge and understanding; foster awareness among young people; and play a part in forest rehabilitation activities
Non Government Organizations (NGOs)	Build the capacity of communities for forest rehabilitation and management
Entrepreneurship and private sector	Support and take part in forest rehabilitation activities

The assessment gave importance to government units and stakeholders with a close relation to the project's target areas, namely, mangrove forest resources development stations, provincial forest coordination centres, local administrative organisations and the communities who are the foundation of participatory resource management. Apart from these groups, it also focused on the role of provincial-level units responsible for coordinating and managing work on forests, for example the provincial natural resources and environment offices.

Target groups in the training needs assessment

- 1) Government officers
 - Phang-Nga Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
 - Ranong Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
 - Phang-Nga Provincial Forest Coordination Centre, Bureau of Forest Management 11 (Krabi), Royal Forest Department
 - Ranong Provincial Forest Coordination Centre, Bureau of Forest Management 11 (Suratthani), Royal Forest Department
 - Phang-Nga Plant Seedling Station, Royal Forest Department
 - Mangrove Resources Development Station 9,16,17,18 and 19, Bureau of Mangrove Conservation, Department of Marine and Coastal Resources
- 2) LGOs officers
 - Kapoer Tambon Administrative Organization, Kapoer, Ranong
 - Bang Hin Tambon Administrative Organization, Kapoer, Ranong
 - Naka Tambon Administrative Organization, Suksamran, Ranong
 - Mae-nangkaw Tambon Administrative Organization, Kuraburi Phang -Nga
 - Bang wan Tambon Administrative Organization, Kuraburi Phang-Nga
 - Kho Kor Khao Tambon Administrative Organization, Takua Pa , Phang-Nga
 - Kuk Kak Tambon Administrative Organization, Takua Pa, Phang-Nga
- 3) Community leaders in the target area
 - Ranong Province:
 - Kapoer Sub district, Kapoer District: Ban Dan, Ban Banglamphu, Ban Chimi
 - Banghin Sub district, Kapoer District : Ban Banghin,
 - Naka Sub district, Suksamran District: Ban Bangkluaynok, Ban Laemnao
 - Phang-Nga Province:
 - Mea-Nang-Kaw Sub district, Kuraburi District: Ban Thungrak ,
 - Bangwan Sub district, Kuraburi District: Ban Bangkrang, Ban Thunglaong, Ban Bangtib, Ban Bangwan
 - Koh Kor Khao Sub district, Takua Pa District: Ban Muangmai, Ban Nokna, Ban Pakkoh, Ban Thungtuk, Ban Bangniang
 - Kukkak Sub district, Takua Pa District: Ban Pakweep, Ban Bangkhaya, Ban Naiban, Ban Kukkak

What are the target groups' needs?

Training needs assessments are carried out after clearly defining the purpose of training, a capacity-building framework, and the target groups. They are considered the first step in learning about and understanding the people who will undergo training, and also provide basic information for developing an appropriate training program. The TNA carried out by the project did not focus only on defining training activities, however:

Focus of assessment

- Opinion of the condition of forest resources in the target area
- Attitude towards participatory forest rehabilitation and management
- Capacity-building needs (content and format) for carrying out duties and responsibilities effectively

Tools and methods of assessment

- Review of basic information and outcomes of previous meetings (NCDRM, 2550)
- Focus group discussions with community leaders in project areas
- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with target groups, based on a series of main questions (see page 9)

When collecting information on the needs of the target groups, it is important to bear in mind that these needs cannot always be satisfied by capacity building. So groups must be formed and needs specified according to the elements of the KAS model to determine the content and format of the training program. Further, regular monitoring and assessment of the target groups' capacity needs are needed to improve and develop capacity building efforts.

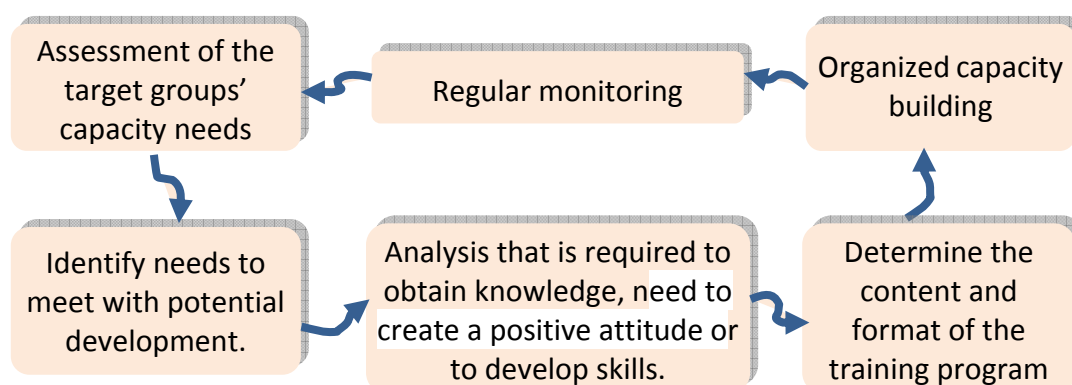


Figure for the process survey the needs and development potential

10 key questions

Opinions of the state of forest resources and forest management

1. The current state and degradation of coastal forests, including causes and threats
2. The role of government agencies and associated responsibilities in forest rehabilitation; methods and approaches of past initiatives
3. Conditions and opportunities for effective rehabilitation of forest ecosystems
4. Limitations and obstacles to forest rehabilitation
5. Links between government agencies, communities and other units involved in rehabilitation of coastal forests
6. Experience and opinions with respect to participatory forest rehabilitation and management

Capacity needs for implementation

7. Information needed for effective forest rehabilitation and meeting assigned targets
8. Skills needed for effective forest rehabilitation and meeting assigned targets
9. Frequency and impact of any previous training
10. Appropriate training formats

How will training be organised?

Training is a popular approach to building capacity. Though it can be organised in conjunction with other types of capacity-building activities, the conditions and objectives of this approach should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Many different approaches have been used in the past. In a review of capacity building approaches by various organisations in South Africa, RECOFTC (2006) divided different activities into four groups according to their popularity:

- High Training
- Medium Workshops
Consultations
Field study tour
Participatory research

- Low
 - Participation Rural Appraisal (PRA)
 - Higher Education studies
 - On-job training
 - Published case
 - Development Network
 - Financial assistance (micro-credit)
 - Monitoring and Evaluation

- Very Low
 - Demonstration plots and activities
 - Coaching/Monitoring

A training program can take many forms, including classroom-based learning, learning by doing and distance learning. Each may focus on certain issues in depth, or take a more discursive approach that blends different sources of knowledge, or use a mixture of the two. Training can vary in length from short courses of 2–5 days to longer programs of 3–6 months, with some programs issuing certificates to those who complete the training successfully. There are also training programs which aim to develop skills in specific areas, for example leadership, facilitation and so on.

Training activities can combine different formats, for example study tours to relevant areas, discussion and group work, ice-breaking activities and team building, and so on. Participants can also be helped to form networks to communicate and exchange information after the training has finished. Such networks can make use of new online technologies, an increasingly popular form of social interaction.



3. Results of needs assessment

The assessment of training needs involved the heads and officials of government agencies, the chairmen and officers of Tambol Administrative Organisations, local officials and community leaders* with responsibilities for coastal forest rehabilitation in the project’s target areas.

Results of needs assessment can be divided into three issues.

- 1) Opinions of the state of forests and forest management
- 2) Capacity building needs
- 3) Analysis of assessment results

3.1 Opinions of the state of forests and forest management

The target groups mostly agree that coastal communities have used and depended on forests for a long time, mainly as a source of food, but also as a source of wood for housing and fishing gear, and medicinal plants. Today, communities face the problem of competition for limited resources as their needs increase. Yet the tsunami of 2004 and its aftermath has taught them to value their remaining mangrove forest resources more highly.

* The assessment targeted a total of 52 people: 19 heads and officials of government agencies, 13 members of tambol administrative organisations and local officials, and 20 community leaders.

“When the tsunami struck we were caught unaware and didn’t know what to do. We accepted any help that was offered, such as for planting mangroves and collecting planting stock, because the forests had been swept away and we had to make sure the emergency measures were successful.”

The tsunami spurred many communities in affected areas into sustained efforts to rehabilitate and manage coastal forests and ecosystems, in particular planting mangroves and releasing aquatic animals. Some communities have also established tree nurseries; created nature trails and study centres; created conservation, restoration and use zones; campaigned to protect rare and endemic tree species; set up groups to protect their forests; and taken steps to demarcate and formally register areas of forest as community forests.

The target groups have broadly similar views on coastal forest management:

- **Heads of government agencies** This group sees past management efforts as lacking sustained policy support, while management planning has been weakened by pressure for quick results from central government and a lack of financing for monitoring and evaluation. Many agencies are involved in management, but their efforts have been uncoordinated and a lack of training has left officials without the skills they require. Among other views expressed were that existing individual capacity has not been used to its fullest extent, and that greater importance should be given to deterring encroachment than to rehabilitation.
- **Government officials** Most of the members of this group think that insufficient human and financial resources are available for implementation. They also feel they lack technical support and the knowledge and skills for restoring tsunami-damaged areas. Most officials see forest rehabilitation as encompassing only tree planting, and face problems in working with local communities because of their internal conflicts, poor skills and mistrust of government officials. A lack of communication and outreach with communities has caused misunderstanding and confusion about the roles and duties of different agencies. Most officials still doubt whether communities are capable of managing and protecting forests themselves, so changing this attitude

and educating communities about the role of government are vital because conserving forests without community support will be difficult.

- **Local administrative officials** Most of this group are officers of small to medium-sized Tambol Administrative Organisations (TAOs). They see their organisations as still lacking the financial resources and qualified personnel needed to address natural resource and environmental issues. As such they are unable to initiate and develop projects for rehabilitating and conserving forests. Any activities they do undertake are well-supported by local residents, though not to the full extent necessary. Other problems mentioned by almost every group member are a lack of information on the types of forests in their jurisdiction and the responsibilities of different government agencies, and a lack of clear boundaries. Most of this group see the main cause of forest degradation as encroachment to develop shrimp ponds and oil palm and rubber plantations. Like the government officials, many think that forest ecosystem rehabilitation encompasses mostly tree planting, though some see it as a process of informing communities and raising their awareness of the importance of forests. Almost none of the group members are familiar with the steps involved in rehabilitation. The current work of the TAOs is still oriented towards meeting communities' infrastructure and livelihood needs, and as such most officials see ecosystem rehabilitation as a lesser priority.

“Some TAOs assign forest conservation duties to the office of the administrator; some to the public works section. Some organizations see it as a community concern and leave it to local people depending on their administrative policy.”

- **Community leaders** This group thinks that though most communities now find it easier to access sources of finance, they still face many constraints, whether in project formulation, project management, mobilising community opinion or coordinating with outside agencies. And, though some communities have built up experience in implementing projects, their capacity is limited by a scarcity of leaders and a lack of leadership development to ensure continuity and sustainability. Most community leaders think that the attitudes of government agencies towards participatory approaches are starting to change, resulting in a greater role for communities.

With regards to the issue of community participation in forest management, many communities have greater opportunities to work with government agencies and units. Improved relations with government officials have helped to improve and increase coordination. After the 2004 tsunami in particular, greater communication between communities and officials helped to improve attitudes, though there is still mistrust in some areas. Most communities, however, still do not understand the role of government agencies, except those agencies with officials who make efforts to visit and communicate with local people.

3.2 Capacity building needs

Most of the members of the government agency and local administrative organisation target groups have responsibilities that follow clearly defined mandates, restricting their past work to regular duties rather than initiating or devising new activities. These duties include raising awareness about the importance of natural resources among communities and young people, protecting natural resources, and organising tree planting in degraded forest areas. The needs of each group with respect to capacity building content and format are listed below:

- ***Needs of heads of government agencies***

- Content

- Communication and outreach for sustained information provision
 - Community participation in work plan implementation
 - Community capacity building
 - Information collection and database development
 - Use of maps as a tool in forest rehabilitation
 - Development of networks between agencies and with communities
 - Coordination

- Format

- Local training
 - Use of relevant case studies

- ***Needs of government agency officials***

- Content

- Raising awareness of the importance of forest conservation among the local population and young people
 - Community studies and processes and techniques for working with communities
 - Coordination and network development
 - Database development
 - Formulation of natural resource and environmental management plans

- Appropriate species selection and site preparation for rehabilitation
- Rehabilitation of degraded forests and abandoned shrimp ponds

Format

- Examples in line with current practices
- Study tours to examples of successful community forest management
- Workshops with experts to gain feedback and identify strengths and weaknesses

▪ ***Needs of local officials***

Content

- Relevant legislation and agencies
- Importance of forest ecosystems and the links between forests, other ecosystems and climate change
- Community tourism management and models of sustainable forest use
- Management planning for natural resources and the environment
- Increasing people's awareness of and responsibility for forest conservation
- Participatory approaches and techniques
- Building a united front for conservation through network approaches
- Compilation and documentation of information
- Creating dissemination channels to communities

Format

- Study tours in similar areas to learn about and adapt new approaches
- Problem analysis for focus group discussions
- Avoiding giving lectures

▪ ***Community needs***

Content

- Categories of forest land and relevant agencies
- Complexity and importance of forest ecosystems
- Community tourism management
- Documentation of experience and compilation of information
- Sustainable forest use
- Good forest management models
- Development of new community leaders

Format

- Creating an open and supportive space for the equal exchange of opinions
- Building speaking and presentation skills

3.3 Analysis of assessment results

An analysis of the opinions, needs and responsibilities of the target groups was carried out to identify key constraints and common needs. This is also sought to identify issues which can be tackled through training, divided according to knowledge, attitude and skills. The results are presented in the table below in order of importance (from high to low).

Knowledge	Attitude	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coastal forest ecosystems - Links between forests and community well-being and climate change - Categories of forest land; relevant legislation and agencies - Appropriate species selection for rehabilitation - Rehabilitation of degraded forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory forest management - Sustainable forest use - Network development - Community capacity building and development of new leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedures and techniques for working with communities - Formulation of natural resource and environmental management plans - Use of maps and information systems in forest management - Project development and management - Documentation of experience and information - Presentation, communication and dissemination of information - Raising awareness among the local population and young people - Development of database systems - Community studies and analysis

For the needs and limitations which cannot be addressed through individual capacity building, a detailed analysis is needed of each issue to identify the best course of action. These issues include:

- Scarcity of financial resources and qualified government personnel
- The adverse effect of personnel turnover on work continuity
- A mismatch between financial allocations and assigned duties
- Inconsistent policy and implementation of ecosystem rehabilitation
- Duplication of responsibilities among government agencies
- Unclear and inconsistently applied rules, regulations and laws on forest land tenure
- Internal community conflicts
- Lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation

The appropriate training formats for the target groups will have the following features:

- **Activities:** Workshops, training and study tours
- **Methods:** Lectures are kept to a minimum; an open space is provided for expressing opinions and strengthening speaking and presentation skills; participants work in small groups to analyse problems and exchange views; case studies matching current practices are provided for analysis.
- **Duration:** 2–3 days (to limit impact on participants' work schedules and livelihood activities)
- **Location:** In target area or a nearby location

The first step in organising each training event should be to clearly define learning objectives and target groups. Then, the format and content of training should be considered jointly to identify appropriate activities, tools, resource people, timing and location. Attention should also be paid to ensuring that the training host has the necessary human and financial resources, and to coordinating with relevant agencies, for example RFD; the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation; the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources; the Community Development Department and the Tourism Authority of Thailand. A system of monitoring and evaluation should also be put in place to assess and improve implementation of the training program.



4. Training program

The training program is based on the analysis of capacity needs in each target group, namely, government officials, local administrative officials and community leaders. Each of these groups plays a role in the rehabilitation and management of coastal forests. The needs of the government officials centre on the capacity to implement their assigned responsibilities, in particular the knowledge and techniques needed to rehabilitate forests and work with communities. For their part, communities need to learn more about relevant legislation, and to improve their skills in coordinating and working with government agencies.

The training program is divided into 5 courses covering the main identified needs and issues. The target groups can choose among the different courses, each of which is a short training course covering different key points of knowledge, attitude and skills. Though the courses are complete in themselves, together they form a coherent program.

Course 1	Sustainable rehabilitation of coastal forests and communities
Course 2	Evaluation and rehabilitation of coastal forest ecosystems
Course 3	Professional forest management
Course 4	Appreciating and developing forest management with communities
Course 5	Describing local knowledge, identifying lessons and recording experiences

Training Program in Coastal Forest Rehabilitation for Ecosystem Security and Community Participation



1
Sustainable rehabilitation of coastal forests and communities

- Coastal forest ecosystems
- Links with community well-being and climate change
- Participatory forest management and network development
- Sustainable forest use models



2
Evaluation and rehabilitation of coastal forest ecosystems

- Forest ecosystems and indicators of ecosystem health
- Survey and evaluation of forest condition
- Rehabilitation of degraded forest
- Species selection and site preparation for rehabilitation



3
Professional forest management

- Categories of forest land; relevant legislation and administrative responsibilities
- Use of maps and information systems in forest management
- Planning and implementation of forest projects
- Development of database systems for forest management



4
Appreciating and developing forest management with communities

- Community assessments
- Procedures and techniques for working with communities
- Development of community capacity and new leaders
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation



5
Describing local knowledge, identifying lessons and recording experiences

- Compilation and documentation of information and experience
- Effective presentation and communication
- Information dissemination

Course 1 Sustainable rehabilitation of coastal forests and communities

Importance

Coastal forests, including mangroves, beach forest, peat swamp forest and terrestrial forest, are a source of goods and services for local communities, and also contribute to the overall stability of the coastal environment. The degradation of these forests results both from frequent natural disasters and from unguided or uncontrolled human activity. The effects of degradation are felt not just by forest-dependent communities, but also in surrounding sensitive ecosystems. Hence forest rehabilitation must go hand-in-hand with efforts to help communities help themselves.

Objectives

- 1) To increase understanding of the complexity and interactions of forest ecosystems, the role of forests in providing ecosystem services, and the impacts of ecosystem damage.
- 2) To develop a positive attitude towards the role of communities in sustainable forest management and use

Participants People who want to understand the overall picture of sustainable forest management and its external trends and influences; who want guidance on implementing local activities; and who want choices for forest-based economic development in communities.

Content

- Coastal forest ecosystems
- Impacts on well-being of coastal communities and climate change
- Participatory forest management and network development
- Sustainable forest use models
- Tourism management by coastal communities

Methods

- Presentation and discussion of information and case studies with resource people
- Group discussions on specific topics of interest
- Study tours
- Exchange opinions with resource people
- Post-course evaluation

Duration 3 days

Expected benefits for participants

- 1) An understanding of ecosystems and exposure to examples of successful coastal forest management which can be adapted to local settings
- 2) Options for initiating and developing forest rehabilitation and management projects, as well as for improving the quality of life of communities
- 3) Expanded networks of cooperation

Course 2 Evaluation and rehabilitation of coastal forest ecosystems

Importance

Coastal forests provide a number of important goods and services, both direct and indirect. These are closely interlinked, with damage in one area having knock-on effects on other areas that can take a long time to reverse. Further, coastal ecosystems are sensitive and often restricted in area, so any development must proceed with caution and take advantage of local knowledge where possible. For forest ecosystems in particular, an understanding is needed of indicators of health and sustainability, and of approaches to restoring degraded and damaged areas.

Objectives

- 1) To build capacity to identify the key features of coastal forests and assess their health and status
- 2) To build capacity to define appropriate, site-specific approaches to rehabilitation

Participants People who want to assess the key features, values, health or level of degradation of coastal forests in local communities or other areas; people who need skills in surveying and evaluating forest condition to prepare appropriate plans for planting and rehabilitation.

Content

- Forest ecosystems and indicators of ecosystem health
- Survey and evaluation of forest condition
- Natural disasters and other threats to coastal forests
- Approaches to rehabilitating degraded and damaged forests
- Species selection and site preparation for rehabilitation

Methods

- Presentation and discussion of information and case studies with resource people
- Site surveys and on-the-job training
- Presentation and discussion of results
- Feedback from experts
- Exchanging of knowledge with local expert practitioners
- Post-course evaluation

Duration 2 days

Expected benefits for participants

- 1) Improved knowledge and skills for analysing local forest conditions
- 2) Example approaches to rehabilitating forests that can be adapted and used in practice
- 3) A practical manual for future reference

Course 3 Professional forest management

Importance

Besides their biological diversity and complexity, coastal forests are also subject to a wide range of legislation and regulatory responsibilities. In the past these have often caused confusion and misunderstanding about which agency is in charge, what rules and regulations should be followed, and whether or not there is space for participatory approaches. A need now exists to develop local information systems and increase the use of this information in planning and decision making to enhance effectiveness. At the same time, a broader range of knowledge and perspectives will help to develop more appropriate projects and working approaches.

Objectives

- 1) To build knowledge and understanding of the laws and regulations governing different categories of forest land
- 2) To improve skills in the use of forest planning and management tools

Participants Government officials and local administrative officials responsible for planning, and community leaders wanting to strengthen their implementation capacity. To respond to changing conditions, these groups need a sound knowledge of planning, project development and implementation gained from relevant case studies and the ability to use different state-of-the-art tools.

Content

- Categories of forest land; relevant legislation and administrative responsibilities
- Use of maps and information systems in forest management
- Approaches to rehabilitating and managing forest, and indicators of success
- Planning and development of forest projects
- Database systems development for forest management
- Project management and monitoring

Methods

- Presentation and discussion of information with resource people
- Study tours
- Training in the use of tools for surveying and analysing land, as well as in the definition of management approaches and formulation of pilot projects
- Presentation of results and exchange of views with resource people
- Post-course evaluation

Duration 5 days

Expected benefits for participants

- 1) Broader skills and perspectives in planning and developing local forest management projects
- 2) Improved understanding of laws and regulations relevant to forest management

Course 4 Understanding, appreciating and developing forest management with communities

Importance

Participatory forest management approaches are gaining in popularity as their effectiveness in protecting forests and livelihood benefits become more apparent. This is leading to changes in policy aimed at promoting local participation in natural resource management, and an increasing emphasis on the role of government officials in fostering community participation. In the past, however, both communities and officials have tended to view each other with mutual distrust. Even where knowledge and understanding have been stronger, a lack of tools and skills has hindered the adoption of participatory approaches. Hence it is necessary to build the capacity of officials and others to play their role more effectively.

Objectives

- 1) To learn about principles, processes and techniques for strengthening community capacity to manage forest resources
- 2) To improve skills in using analytical tools to understand communities, develop participatory approaches, and communicate effectively

Participants Officials of government agencies and local administrative organisations, and people working to promote community forest management, who want to develop their ideas, knowledge and skills for participatory processes.

Content

- Community assessments and analysis of links between communities and forest resources
- Learning and development principles
- Development of community capacity and new leaders
- Procedures and techniques for working with communities
- Stocktaking of lessons and past experience

Methods

- Presentation of information and discussion with resource people
- Exchange of experiences on working with communities and the associated constraints
- Exchange of views with community leaders about working with government officials
- Training in different tools and techniques
- Learning by doing and receiving feedback on strengths and weaknesses
- Post-course evaluation

Duration 3 days

Expected benefits for participants

- 1) Improved confidence and attitude towards working with communities
- 2) Example approaches to developing future capacity-building projects for communities

Course 5 Describing local knowledge, identifying lessons and recording experiences

Importance

Local experimentation and changes in policy are driving the development of participatory approaches to rehabilitating and managing coastal forests. The learning and experience gathered from these approaches is mainly tacit knowledge, however – carried in people’s minds or shared collectively by a group. Most communities still lack the skills to analyse and write about their experiences. Government officials and others working in this field face the same constraint. So it is necessary to develop skills in articulating and codifying this learning as explicit knowledge, for use in planning and development, and for wider dissemination.

Objectives

- 1) To build a positive attitude towards researching information and documenting experiences of forest management in different areas
- 2) To improve skills in analysing key issues, identifying lessons, and presenting and imparting information
- 3) To strengthen knowledge of different formats for writing and documentation, as well as for disseminating practical information

Participants Officials of government agencies and local administrative organisations; people who work with communities; and community leaders with an extended experience of forest management

Content

- Research and compilation of required data
- Identifying and applying lessons
- Recording knowledge, local wisdom and experience in the form of reports, articles and stories
- Effective presentation and communication
- Models for disseminating information to target groups

Methods

- Presentation of experiences and techniques
- Training in identifying lessons with communities that have relevant experience
- Training in presenting and writing about experiences, and receiving feedback on strengths and weaknesses
- Learning and exercises in analysing different communication formats with target groups

Duration 3 days

Expected benefits for participants

- 1) A better appreciation of the importance of documenting and disseminating information on forest management at the local level
- 2) Improved skills in presenting relevant, understandable information using appropriate methods and techniques



5. Conclusions

Valuable lessons have been learned in the wake of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, including in the area of rehabilitating forests. Much of the rehabilitation that followed the tsunami was unplanned and poorly organised. Various organisations, including government agencies, businesses and NGOs, launched uncoordinated efforts to replant forests and restore damaged areas, many of which failed. Most sought to reclaim land lost to the tsunami, especially in the coastal periphery, using common tree species and without trying to involve local communities.

The project *“Contribution to Forest Rehabilitation in Thailand’s Areas Affected by the Tsunami Disaster”*, launched by RFD with support from ITTO and in partnership with TEI, carried out a training needs assessment for target groups in Ranong and Phang Nga provinces. Using the findings from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the assessment developed a training program using the KAS model (knowledge, attitude and skills). At the same time, however, the assessment recognised that the needs of the target groups cannot be satisfied through capacity building alone.

Target groups Most of the subjects of the assessment were officials of agencies under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, including provincial natural resource and environment offices, mangrove forest resources development stations, and provincial forest coordination centres. The other target groups were officials of local administrative organisations (e.g. tambol administrative organisations, TAOs) and communities in the project area. The latter are seen as the foundation of local participatory approaches.

Assessment results

- Coastal communities in the project area still use and depend on forests in a variety of ways. Though they now face conflicts over the use of limited and degraded resources, the impact of the 2004 tsunami has taught them to value their remaining mangrove forests more highly.
- The communities have organised various sustained initiatives to rehabilitate and manage their forests. Those wanting to develop community forests have formed management groups, surveyed forest boundaries and carried out consultations on forest use regulations. Most communities think that the government has adopted an increasingly positive attitude and role in participatory management, though they still face constraints in developing and managing projects, mobilising opinion and expanding participation internally, and coordinating with external agencies.
- Most of the rehabilitation and management work carried out by government agencies and local administrative organisations is restricted to routine duties rather than the development of new initiatives. These groups are constrained by an inconsistent policy environment, the duplication of responsibilities and a lack of coordination. They also lack officials with the necessary knowledge and skills, and still face problems in working with communities (caused in part by a lack of confidence in the ability of communities to protect forests). The local administrative organisations who lack staff working on natural resource issues have been unable to develop many rehabilitation projects. A lack of information on the forests in their jurisdictions and the relevant administrative responsibilities has also made them unwilling to intervene.
- Since they are responsible for implementation on the ground, the target groups' capacity needs centre on developing practical skills in participatory techniques, management planning, mapping, writing and presentation, and so on. Nevertheless, the groups recognise that they

also need a better knowledge and understanding of topics such as coastal ecosystems, the importance of community life, forest land classification and the rehabilitation of degraded forests.

- The assessment found numerous needs and constraints in other areas which cannot be tackled through training, for example policy, financing and legislation (in particular the lack of clarity in relevant rules, regulations and laws).

Training program The program developed for practitioners consists of 5 courses, each catering to a particular set of capacity needs and issues: (1) Sustainable rehabilitation of coastal forests and communities; (2) Evaluation and rehabilitation of coastal forest ecosystems; (3) Professional forest management; (4) Understanding, appreciating and developing forest management with communities; and (5) Describing local knowledge, identifying lessons and recording experiences.

The format and methods of training vary according to course objectives, covering lectures and problem-solving to increase knowledge, study tours and the exchange of views with resource people to influence attitudes; and practical training and tests to develop skills. Together with post-course evaluations, these will ensure that each course develops a blend of capacities. And, since the courses last only a few days, participants will be provided with reference manuals to help them build and consolidate their skills after they have completed their training.

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