

Project No.: APFNet/2012/THA/01



Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation

Project Proposal

Strengthening Urban Forestry Demonstration Site of Bang Kachao (Thailand) for
Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Learning Center

September, 2012

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*Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable
Forest Management and Rehabilitation*

Title of project: Strengthening Urban Forestry Demonstration Site of Bang Kachao (Thailand) for Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Learning Center

Project number: APFNet/2012/THA/01

Receiving date:

Outline of the project:

The small island called “Bang Kachao” covers approximately 2,000 ha and is surrounded by a 15 km length of the Chao Phraya River. The island is located in Samut Prakarn province which is approximately 10 km from Bangkok. The combination of fresh, salt and brackish water has created a unique ecosystem which is one of the largest and richest areas of biodiversity in the last lowland area of the central plain. Although more than 20,000 inhabitants have been living within the area, 80% of the area is still covered by vegetation. In 1987, the government purchased approximately 10% (200 ha) of the area from local inhabitants to maintain a green area on government-owned land. The area has gained a reputation with the public for its natural beauty and the well-preserved traditional and normal way of life of the local people. Ecotourism is a popular activity. As a result, the area was recognized by Time Magazine as the “Best Urban Oasis of Asia” in 2006. The area has also been nominated as the major site for demonstrating the urban forestry program of the Royal Forest Department (RFD) to interested groups since 2008.

Because of the island’s importance, the RFD established the Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center within 30 ha of the “Srinakhorn Khuan Kahn City Park” to be a center for managing the area. The center has performed a number of functions including conservation of biodiversity, eco-tourism promotion and maintenance of a green area. However, these activities are currently limited by the on-site facilities that do not maximize the potential of the area as an attraction or the revenue that can benefit the local inhabitants. Moreover, the learning and information centre for the visitors has not yet established due to financial constrain. The gap can be filled by developing projects and programs that provide stakeholders (especially the local community) with direct tangible benefits derived from the conservation activities. The project will therefore seek to directly engage all stakeholders in the running of the site through a series of measures focusing on ecotourism that will target naturalists and those interested in the traditional culture.

Capacity building programs and ecotourism promotion through links to education can provide skills development and jobs with biodiversity conservation. The long-term result will focus on helping the local inhabitants who depend on the conservation of biodiversity and the green area for their income and who are equipped with the knowledge, motivation and means to sustainably utilize and conserve the natural resources on which they depend. Meanwhile, the success of the project’s activities will be translated through demonstration and learning sites that can be used by local and by interested domestic and international groups as a model to apply within Thailand and elsewhere.

Project duration: 24 months

1. Background and Rationale

Since 2008, the Royal Forest Department (RFD) has promoted an urban forestry program on a small island of approximately 2,000 ha called “Bang Kachao”. The island is located in Samut Prakarn province which is approximately 10 km from the Bangkok city centre and is surrounded by a 15 km length of the Chao Phraya River, a major river of the central plain. The island’s location just 20 km away from the Gulf of Thailand supports a unique ecosystem resulting from the combination of fresh, salt and brackish water. Such an ecosystem means that the area has some of the richest biodiversity in the last lowland area of the central plain that has survived urban expansion. Although there have been more than 20,000 inhabitants within the area for more than 500 years, 80% of the area is still covered by vegetation. In 1987, the government declared this area a green conservation area and purchased nearly 600 parcels of land or approximately 10% (200 ha) of the area from local inhabitants. The largest parcel of land (approximately 25 ha) has been used to establish a city park called “Srinakhorn Khuan Kahn City Park” managed by the RFD which has established the management unit headquarters there. Up to the present, the area has gained a reputation with the public for its natural beauty and well-preserved traditional and normal way of life of the local people. Ecotourism activities such as cycling through the area and boat cruising for sight-seeing in the daytime and observing the fireflies in the nighttime, are popular. Due to its location close to Bangkok and a well-served road network, a large number of visitors flock to the area during weekends. In 2009, more than 7,000 local tourists and 3,000 international visitors from 25 countries across the world visited the area monthly. As a result, the area was recognized by Time Magazine as the “Best Urban Oasis of Asia” in 2006. Since 2008, the area has also been designated as the major site for demonstrating the urban forestry program of the RFD to interested groups.

Although the area is now under the management of RFD in terms of the urban forestry program, some relevant problems have been identified from lessons learned to date. As urban forestry is a rather new discipline that requires the integration of various disciplines and approaches, there is currently weak capacity in the managerial agencies (i.e. RFD, local administration organizations, etc.). Furthermore, the lack of sufficient and effective baseline data to use in the application of management and planning is also apparent, while insufficient interpretation signboards of relevant activities and natural processes do not provide enough information to attract, inform and educate the tourists. The learning and information centre that will also address the three goals of attracting, informing and educating the tourists has not yet been established due to the lack of exhibition skills of officials and the financial constraints.

The current overall management need is to secure long-term future conservation of Bang Kachao in the face of increasing pressure by using of other purposes rather than keeping it as a green area. This cannot be achieved by excluding the local inhabitants because the policy is not to purchase the remaining 90% of the land area that is held as private property. Securing the long-term conservation of this area can be best achieved by developing and implementing programs that generate broad local support for biodiversity and green area conservation. This can be accomplished by developing projects and programs that provide direct tangible benefits derived from conservation to the stakeholders, especially the local community. The project will therefore seek to directly engage all stakeholders (i.e. officials from responsible agencies, groups, academics, professional groups, women’s groups, youth group, tourists, interest groups, and ethnic groups) in the running of the site through a series of measures focusing on ecotourism that will target naturalists and those interested in the traditional culture. To underpin this approach, a Sri Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center is required to function as an administrative center for managing the

area under the RFD, to achieve the aims including conservation of biodiversity, eco-tourism promotion, as well as to maintain the green area through the provision of training to create awareness of the value of the area to all stakeholders. However, such activities are currently limited by the existing on-site facilities that do not maximize the potential of the area as an attraction or provide the revenue that could benefit the local inhabitants. If these problems can be addressed, stakeholders can be more fully engaged through different activities including the production and sale of local goods at the demonstration center and guiding tourists within the different attractions including the development of local volunteers to support the establishment and maintenance of new facilities and attractions. Furthermore, a campaign to raise awareness will be launched among the local community to boost their appreciation of the value of the biodiversity of the natural resources in the area and the links between continued conservation of biodiversity and improved benefits to the local people. This will ensure the conservation of green cover on the remaining 90% that is private property on the island.

In term of ecotourism promotion, success will also be depend on providing a site and attractions that visitors want to come and see. The current site as well as being an attractive landscape, is well endowed in terms of biodiversity with rare species of flora and fauna that once used to be richly available within the area. This project will seek to provide better all-year-round attractions for tourists through a number of measures. Access to attractions will be improved by providing information and maps at the Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center while interpretation signboards with bilingual (Thai and English) information will be set up along walkways and at other sites. Planting of trees that can attract bird species and small mammals will be conducted in order to provide new habitats for them. This would also be part of a strategy to attract more visiting fauna species that are particularly attractive to nature-lovers.

Capacity building programs and ecotourism promotion through links to education can provide skills development and jobs with biodiversity conservation. The long-term result will focus on helping the local inhabitants who depend on the conservation of biodiversity and the green area for their income and who are equipped with the knowledge, motivation and means to sustainably utilize and conserve the natural resources on which they depend.

2. Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of this project is to maximize biodiversity conservation and strengthen the urban forestry program through a demonstration site and learning center establishment including ecotourism promotion and benefits flowing to local communities.

In order to achieve this goal, the project will address the following specific objectives:

Objective 1. Establishing a demonstration and learning site for interested groups and visitors. The project site will become a demonstration and learning platform incorporating an array of measures for urban forestry programs that build up the support of the broad community and other stakeholders and promote conservation through the focus on biodiversity and ecotourism. Officials from responsible agencies will also contribute in terms of managerial skills via capacity building activities. A project steering committee and project team will be set up to manage and administer the project.

Objective 2. Developing and promoting biodiversity conservation through linking the number of visitors and the income flow of the local people. For long-term biodiversity and

green area conservation of the site, local communities must secure greater benefits from the management of the area. The creation of additional attractions in terms of biodiversity for the site would also help to increase visitor numbers as well as revenue to the local people. This will encourage the local inhabitants to be willingly involved in the development and maintenance of the area.

Objective 3. Maximizing the potential of the area as an ecotourism attraction by improving the habitat for dependent flora and fauna species. The principal value of the site as an ecotourism attraction is in its value as habitat for flora and fauna species and so the capacity of the site must be maximized for these purposes. It can be achieved both by better management and enhanced value of the site for ecotourism and nature lovers.

3. Expected outcomes and main activities

Outcome 1. Establishment of demonstration and learning site for interested groups and visitors.

Activity 1.1 Establishing an exhibition and interpretative center

The exhibition and interpretative center will be established at the Sri Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center to provide information about the area to the visitors, especially the programs under the King's Initiative Projects. On-site and on-farm implementation activities on agroforestry and related issues will be created for demonstration purposes.

Activity 1.2 Maintaining the character and value of the project site for ecotourism

The long-term sustainability of the project site will be linked to ecotourism in the future by improving the facilities and featuring interesting stories (i.e. culture and norms) in order to increase visitor numbers. It is therefore essential that the site continues to sustainably support the nature-lovers and interested groups who are the target audience. Local culture and norms as well as local living features will be encouraged to be maintained as local symbols.

Activity 1.3 Implementing a natural conservation and urban forestry program as part of the curriculum for local school children

The program will target school children within the project site and aim to educate them on the need to conserve their natural resources, know more about urban forestry management as well as to raise their sense of ownership of their homeland. The program will incorporate and build on the real examples from the demonstration sites.

Activity 1.4 Encouraging local volunteers and youth groups involve the education programs.

The long-term conservation of Bang Kachao will depend on the elimination of threats to the area. This will depend to a large degree on the long-term support of the local communities. It is essential that awareness and education programs should be set up to promote the value of Bang Kachao. The interpretative center will support the educational programs with static displays on the value of the area. Initially local volunteers and youth groups in the local communities will be encouraged to set up their groups while support in terms of capacity building programs will also be initiated.

Outcome 2. Establishment of biodiversity conservation area through ecotourism channels to achieve an increase in visitor numbers as well as in the income flow to the local people.

Activity 2.1 Developing facilities of the project site to provide more extensive experience to visitors

Facilities for supporting ecotourism will be significantly improved to create an experience for tourists. Currently, small numbers of bilingual interpretation signboards and guesthouses are available. New facilities including landscaping design (i.e. planting and maintaining trees along roadsides and on public land) will be developed to enhance the range of attractions to visitors. Training officials on suitable public tree care will be included in this activity.

Activity 2.2 Marketing the Bang Kachao site to potential visitors

Up to the present, some marketing has been carried out through media run by local tourist agencies most of which are located within Bangkok while local people have acquired less of the benefits from such business. However, the intention of this activity is to attract additional tourists and to expand the site's niche. A marketing program will be developed to attract the nature and culture-lover groups to experience the area. A local professional group will be encouraged to become established and then run the business. Marketing channels will also be developed, such as website presentations, while new materials will be created for visitors including a cycling/walking route map, firefly trip leaflet, boat-cruising maps, bird-watching guide, etc.

Activity 2.3 Training the local people as tour guides

One of the functions of the demonstration and learning center is as a training center for capacity building activities. Local guides will be trained to cover a broader area concerning the history, geography, flora and fauna aspects, touring and attractive route maps as well as other interesting topics. Bang Kachao will benefit from promoting the area and will receive more tourists.

Outcome 3 The maximized ecotourism attraction of the project site by improving the habitat for dependent flora and fauna species.

Activity 3.1 Developing conservation sites for feeding endemic fauna

By creating local feeding sites for local animals, birds and small mammals will be attracted to the feeding sites whilst creating a tourist spectacle. The initiative will be conducted by planting fruit trees through enrichment planting programs.

Activity 3.2 Maximizing the biodiversity of the project site by scientific management

Development of Bang Kachao as a demonstration and learning site for the public as well as an eco-tourist attraction means that the area must be able to cater for a substantially increased number of visitors without significant impact on the biodiversity of the area. A management plan will be formulated and amended as necessary through regular updating to encourage biodiversity on the site that can be maintained and improved. Specific attention will be given to the need to create local genetic conservation sites to protect the genetic biodiversity of endemic flora and fauna species. The conservation sites will be implemented as initiatives on both state land and on-farm.

Outcome 4 The available project information for the public outreach.

Activity 4.1 Documenting the project information

There will be documentation and information dissemination of all activities and results that may be useful to programs in Thailand or elsewhere. This will be made available through RFD's website including linkages to the websites of local administration organizations. Hard (paper) copies will also be made freely available to agencies or interested persons when

visiting the project site. This is expected to significantly boost the demonstration value of the project.

Activity 4.2 Reporting

The project supervisor will be responsible for maintaining an overview of the project's progress and success. Regular periodic reports will be prepared by the project manager and the project team and submitted to the project steering committee for approval before submission to the APFNet.

4. Project Sustainability

The project will become self-sufficient, as all activities being undertaken for biodiversity conservation and people participation will be managed using business principles. However, the business principles will be based on the sustainable use of biological resources that will ensure the long-term viability of this project. The basic existing facilities are already attracting visitors. The area will be a prime site for academic research on biodiversity, governance of public participation, and eco-tourism businesses. Other financial support will come from the budget of the RFD and local administrative organizations to continue the programs. Domestic and international groups will be encouraged to visit the area under arrangements with the RFD and other organizations.

Risk and uncertainty associated with the project will be lessened due to the strong support from the local communities and administrative organizations. The Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center will be in charge of management to ensure the continuous management of the activities within the area.

5. Management Structure

5.1 Project executive team and project steering committee

Coordination and supervision of the project activities will be conducted by a project supervisor (Deputy Director-General of RFD), project leader (Director of International Forestry Cooperation Office) and other divisions under the RFD. Some professional organizations will be invited to be local coordinators and join the project executive team. Detailed terms of reference for the project manager will be developed and will include lines of management and responsibility for project activities and output. Most staffs who would work in the project are already employed by the RFD and some staffs will be recruited particularly for specific proposes. A project steering committee will be established under the supervision of the project supervisor and members will be invited to participate.

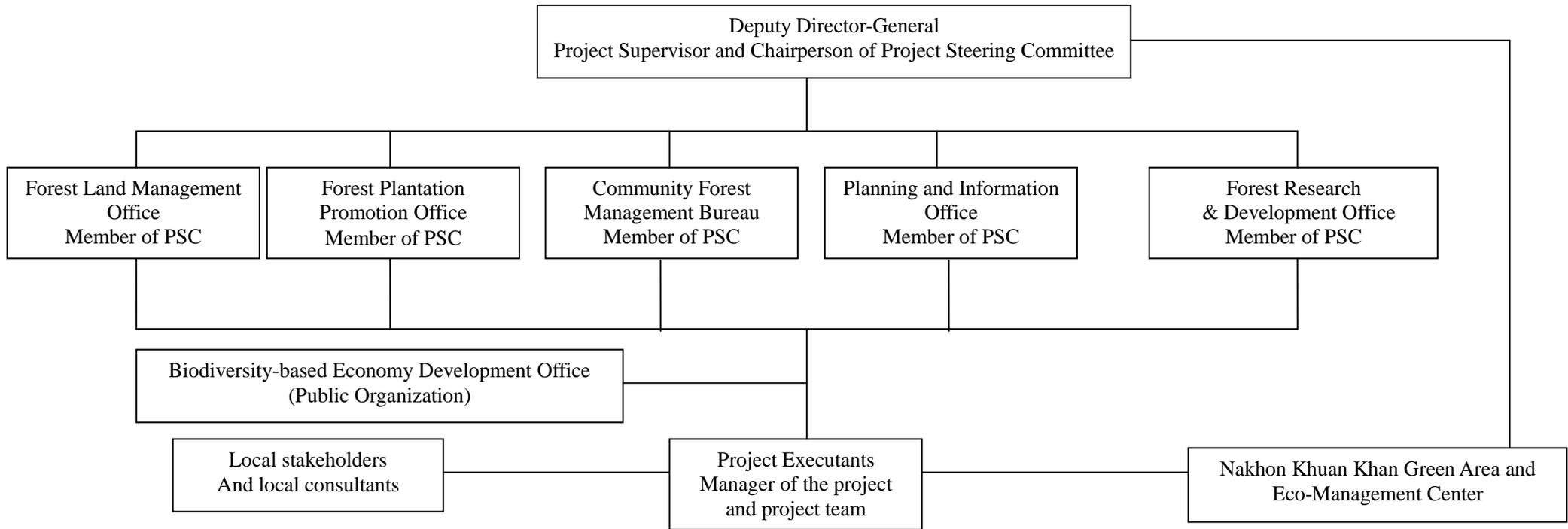
In particular, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be representative of related divisions within the RFD who are involved in Bang Kachao management. Furthermore, the Biodiversity-based Economy Development Office (Public Organization) will be involved as a consultant in skill development or ecotourism business promotion. The PSC will ensure that the activities of the various stakeholders involved are coordinated, with active participation and no duplication. Project staff will manage the development of the Bang Kachao Development Plan for the urban forestry demonstration and learning site in coordination with the Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center. Local stakeholders and consultants will ensure execution of activities and outcomes in compliance with the project's objectives. An organization chart of the project's management structure is provided on the

next page.

5.2 Supervision and financial administration of implementation

The project team will be responsible for day-to-day activities and the financial and administrative supervision of the project. A work plan will be developed by the project manager for the implementation team with each team member allocated specific tasks to be completed according to a set timetable. The work plan will be developed to fit in with the reporting period.

Organization Chart of the management structure of the project



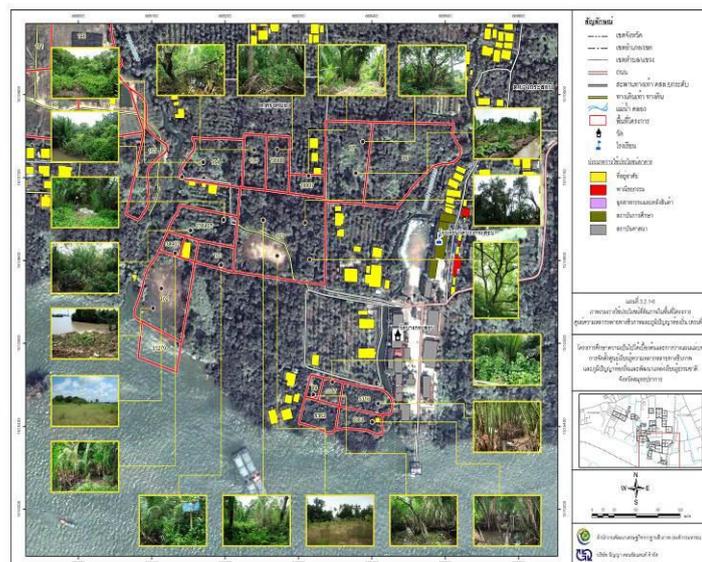
6. Financial system

Project financing by expenditure categories are summarized below. Detail of budget can be seen in Appendix C

Budget Category	Link to project outcome and activities	Total (\$US)		
		APFNet	Co-finance	Total
Inception fund	Project launching	-	1,000	1,000
Consultant	All	16,000	72,000	88,000
Personnel	All	22,400	60,000	82,400
Equipment	1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2	10,600	5,500	16,100
Flowing materials	All	14,000	6,600	20,600
Training workshop/Tour	1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2	53,600	24,200	77,800
Office administration	All	2,000		2,000
Internal monitoring*	All	-	2,000	2,000
APFNet evaluation and monitoring	All	10,000	1,000	11,000
Total		128,600	172,300	300,900

*Including internal financial auditing; Financial Division under the Royal Forest Department will be applied as internal auditing arrangement.

7. Reliability and Reproducibility



A brief explanation of these illustrations

These illustrations come from the interim report compiled by the Biodiversity-based Economy Development Office (Public Organization) in 2011. The study aimed to conduct a feasibility study for establishing a sustainable ecotourism program within the Bang Kachao area. Development options have already been determined based on what is needed to secure the conservation of biodiversity and the urban green area as well as what will contribute to the economic sustainability of this small island. Rehabilitation of native flora and fauna including the improvement of feeding sites for bird species are also included. This project site, if it is established, will receive contributions nationwide and internationally from the RFD and others.

8. ANNEX

Annex A: Logframe

Annex B: Work Plan

Annex C-1: Budget by Categories

Annex C-2: Budget by Activities

Annex A: Logical Framework Matrix for Strengthening Urban Forestry Demonstration site of Bang Kachao (Thailand) for Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Learning Center

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	Sources and means of verification	Assumption/ Risks
<p>Goal To maximize biodiversity conservation and strengthen urban forestry program through demonstration site and learning center establishment including ecotourism promotion and benefits flowing to local communities.</p>	<p>Sustainable management of the Bang Kachao area by encouraging people participation</p>	<p>Sustainable management and development of area would be enhanced by the second year of the project implementation</p>	<p>Revision of Bang Kachao urban forestry management plan</p>	<p>Economic and political sustainability in Thailand</p>
<p>Objectives To establish demonstration and learning sites for interested groups and visitors for the promotion of biodiversity conservation through ecotourism activities and to achieve an increase in visitors as well as income flow to local people. The habitat for flora and fauna species will be improved while information will be available through the public outreach program.</p>	<p>Improvement of biodiversity of the area can be gradually seen</p> <p>Local communities can gain benefits from the project while the area gains a wider reputation</p>	<p>At least 10% improvement in the biodiversity of the area would be found by the second year of project implementation</p> <p>Direct benefits start flowing to local communities by the first year of project implementation</p>	<p>Monitoring and evaluation will be reported</p> <p>Financial and other statements of community members/professional groups benefits</p>	<p>Economic and political sustainability in Thailand</p>
<p>Expected outcomes/activities 1. More visitors/ecotourists visit Bang Kachao demonstration and learning site while more income/other benefits flow to local community</p>	<p>Achieving the objectives, through key activities such as establishing the exhibition and interpretative center, maintaining the site character and value for ecotourism, maximizing biodiversity, developing facilities to provide more extensive experience to visitor, creating of jobs and business for local people. Major organization such as the RFD, BEDO, educational institutions, local administrations, etc. will be crucial in playing a role in the development and management of the area.</p>	<p>An increase of 10% in number of ecotourists and interested visitors within the first year of the project implementation, compared to the last year period.</p> <p>Existing of new interpretation signboards and new facilities.</p> <p>Development of new local enterprises as a result of this project</p> <p>An increase of 25% in the income from visitors flowing to local communities after the end of the project compared to current status.</p>	<p>Records from the report conducted by Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center.</p> <p>Financial reports of the professional groups within the area</p>	

<p>2. Native flora and fauna are rehabilitated and conserved through the demonstration project and planting program.</p>	<p>The tasks will be carried out under the management of the site to maximize biodiversity and via local members/youth group training. The activities are also supported by BEDO.</p>	<p>At least 10% of endangered flora and fauna will be conserved and enhanced in number.</p> <p>Number of tourists and interested group visiting the demonstration center by 25% compared to visits by the same in the year prior to completion.</p>	<p>Records of reintroduced flora species through enrichment program of Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center.</p> <p>Reports on biodiversity.</p>	<p>On going good relationships with business sectors through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program.</p>
<p>3. The number of fauna especially birds visiting the feeding sites and breeding at Bang Kachao area.</p>	<p>The outcome will be achieved and the activities will be conducted to develop conservation sites for feeding endemic fauna. This activity will be closely supervised by the Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center.</p>	<p>Increase number of new birds and other wild animal species found within the area.</p> <p>Number of bird watchers increases by 50% compared to visits in the year prior to completion.</p>	<p>Birds/wild animal species counts.</p> <p>Reports on biodiversity</p> <p>Wild animal volunteers program reports.</p>	
<p>4. Detailed information of all aspects of the demonstration and learning site project made available for implementation at other sites</p>	<p>Documents and other information will be available via the RFD and other public places within Bang Kachao. Hard (paper) copies of reports can be downloaded from the RFD website. Details of the natural conservation and urban forestry program will be included within the curriculum for local school children with coordination to local schools.</p>	<p>Number of requests for information increases by at least 25% compared to the year before project implementation.</p> <p>Increased support for Bang Kachao conservation by local communities.</p> <p>Existence of information on website and/or hard copy.</p>	<p>Records of Nakhon Khuan Khan Green Area and Eco-Management Center.</p> <p>Survey of opinions before and after.</p> <p>Existence of information on website and/or hard copy.</p>	<p>Urban forestry and green area conservation of Bang Kachao continues.</p>

Annex B: The project work plan reflects a project duration of 2 years (24 months)

Project Title: Strengthening Urban Forestry Demonstration site of Bang Kachao (Thailand) for Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Learning Center																									
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Leading partner
Overall Management /M&E, etc																									
Outcome 1																									
Activity 1.1																									
Activity 1.2																									
Activity 1.3																									
Activity 1.4																									
Outcome 2																									
Activity 2.1																									
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