**Management Response to the Terminal Evaluation of the Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand**

Project Title: Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand

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**Background**

The objective of the project is to mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into the performance management, development planning and budgeting systems of local government in Thailand.

This project supports the realization of this by providing a framework for the inclusion of biodiversity into the development planning, management and performance assessment mechanisms of local government organisations (LGOs). This has been achieved through working on the development of a national level framework to guide LGOs as well as developing the tools (including a Biodiversity Health Index) and capacity to implement it.

The project demonstrates how this approach can be achieved within the two pilot locations of Don Hoi Lord (Ramsar No 1099) in Samut Songkram Province and Bang Krachao an “urban oasis” within Samut Prakarn Province. In doing so the project will enhance conservation management of 69,618ha of land and marine area, as well as supporting the conservation of the habitats of a number of threatened species including the Great Knot (Calidris tenuirostris) (IUCN – VU), Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) (IUCN – NT), Eurasian Curlew (Numenius arquata) (IUCN – NT) and Asian Dowitcher (Limnodromus semipalmatus) (IUCN – NT), as well as a locally endemic earthworm (Glyphidrilus sp).

### Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

UNDP and the implementing partners of future projects must ensure full commitment during implementation by all critical project partners or reform the project strategy. As commitment during PPG does not necessarily translate into engagement during execution, the signature of all key project partners at the project document and, additionally, a memorandum of understanding at project inception should serve to consolidate the promised support even in the event of changes in the administration.

Regarding biodiversity monitoring, BEDO should partner up with ONEP and DLA to maintain a functional database to manage the results of the biodiversity monitoring that the application of the BHI needs. Biodiversity monitoring does not belong to BEDO’s primary competence and would require strong involvement by ONEP and the DMCR (in coastal areas and especially for fishery-related biodiversity). UNDP could support a more substantial involvement of these two agencies in the frame of the new GEF-7 project portfolio.

UNDP and MoNRE should partner up to link conservation measures to climate change adaptation benefits. This partnership should produce evidence for local officials on the benefits of low-regret ecosystem-based solutions like mangrove and gallery forest conservation against potential impacts of climate change, in this case, sea-level rise and rainfall extremes.

### Best practices and lessons learned

The provincial working groups established by BEDO could constitute an effective way to mainstream project concepts and initiatives into local government organizational systems and ensuring continuity/sustainability of project results after the project ends.

Linking biodiversity objectives to social goals through income-generating benefits constitutes the best entry point for local government, usually more preoccupied with the immediate necessities of constituents than, in their perspective, the vague potential consequence of the loss of biodiversity.

Densely populated, deeply humanized landscapes like the lower Chao Phraya basin and the Gulf of Thailand are better suited for biodiversity mainstreaming into governance or productive sectors, rather than declaration as protected areas. In these circumstances, enforcement of protection is bound to be costly, contested, and, therefore, unlikely to be effective.

This project was compromised by the underestimation of the transaction costs of coordinating a large number of relevant stakeholders with responsibilities. The potential benefits of coordination, cooperation, and synergies should be carefully considered against the mounting costs of convincing an additional partner to assist with the project. The transaction costs should instead be incurred at the PPG phase, by actively involving the required partners, and securing formal agreements that clearly state the contribution and benefits for each party.

When including biological indicators, the costs of setting up a sustainable monitoring system (who should be in charge, origin, and allocation of funds, etc.) and the time needed for changes in management to obtain a response from habitats and species should be considered. Moreover, external effects, such as upstream effects on water quality, should be addressed rigorously. This project also underestimated the costs of setting up biodiversity monitoring, as well as the process, analysis, and management applications of monitoring data. Setting up even basic participatory monitoring of biological resources involves significant time and expenditure to mobilize communities and experts, as well as the resources needed to select indicators, prepare the methodology and design the analysis and maintenance of the data generated.

**Recommendation and management response**

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| **Recommendation 1:** UNDP and BEDO should follow up on the formal commitment to the adoption of the biodiversity health index and its inclusion into local government planning and evaluation adopted at the national workshop on biodiversity mainstreaming held last March. A concrete roadmap must be formally agreed upon by the mains stakeholders, DLA/MoI and MoNRE, which can be connected to the new GEF-7 project in Petchaburi. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Management Response:**  Agreed. Executive Management of BEDO has already met with the Executive of DLA. They discussed the effective way to disseminate the BHI manual to all local government offices nationwide. The work programme on BHI dissemination has been developed for mainstreaming within different business united under BEDO as well as use as basis for new proposal to GEF7. BEDO has already submitted BHI to the Thailand Environmental Fund’s Sub-Committee on Proposal Review Committee on Natural Resources, under the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP). | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Key Actions** | **Timeframe** | | **Responsible** | | **Tracking** | | | | | | | | |
| **Comments** | | | | | | | **Status** | |
| * Development of road map towards a BHI adoption within MoI * Working with consultant from Suan Dusit University to expand the training to the LGO’s personnel in potential Tambons (Sub-district), Provinces | Mar 2020-Feb 2021  Jan - Dec 2021 | | BEDO  BEDO | | * BEDO should work with the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) to develop a road map. * Follow through the annual work programme evaluation of BEDO | | | | | | | Initiated  Initiated | |
| **Recommendation 2:** BEDO and DLA should continue to support its champion TAO (Laem Yai), which has adopted the BHI, and PAOs, (Samut Songkhram and Samut Prakarn), which could be adopting the BHI guidelines to provide practical examples to other LGO. This support entails also investing funds in developing the capacity of LGOs and DLA to implement the BHI, for instance, as suggested by DLA and BEDO, through the provincial structures of MoNRE and training capacities of KPI. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Management Response:**  Agree, BEDO has planned to proceed continuously in both provinces under the mission of BEDO through mechanism of organizations in MoNRE. Laem Yai and others potential Subdistrict and work with BEDO in many provinces. These will be prototype local organization to expand implementation of the BHI in plan and budget management. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Key Actions** | **Time Frame** | | **Responsible Unit** | | | **Tracking** | | | | | | | |
| **Comments** | | | | **Status** | | | |
| * Coordinate with Provincial Offices for Natural Resources and Environment and Provincial Office for Local Administration for developing potential of Local government organization in target Tambons, Provinces | Mar 2020 – Mar 2021 | | BEDO | | | Follow through the annual programme evaluation of BEDO | | | | Initiated | | | |
| **Recommendation 3:** BEDO and the Department of Fisheries should continue efforts with the fisherfolk in Don Hoi Lot towards sustainable fishing practices. These efforts should likely involve more stakeholders, including tourism entrepreneurs, and the Department of Coastal and Marine Resources. Given the opportunities presented by its tourism potential, the adoption of a voluntary good practices code could show the way for similar agreements in other areas of the country, including the Petchaburi province focus of the coming GEF-7 biodiversity mainstreaming project. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Management Response: Agree** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Key Actions** | | **Time Frame** | | **Responsible Unit** | | | **Tracking** | | | | | | |
| **Comments** | | | | **Status** | | |
| * Coordinate with Department of Fisheries and Organizations under MoNRE including provincial organization for proceeding continuously from SLBT project | | Feb 2020 – Mar 2021 | | BEDO | | | Follow through the annual programme evaluation of BEDO | | | | Initiated | | |
| **Recommendation 4:** BEDO and the DLA could consider, within the bounds of political propriety, encouraging the discussion of environmental and biodiversity goals in the political debate of the coming local elections, by showing local officials that people, and hence votes, are interested in measures taken to promote a healthy environment. | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agreed | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Key Actions** | **Time Frame** | | **Responsible Unit** | | | **Tracking** | | | | | | | |
| **Comments** | | | | **Status** | | | |
| Coordinate with DLA -MOI and related organizations for considering the importance of policy  Local Administration in Environment and Biodiversity Resource Management | Feb 2020 – Mar 2021 | | BEDO | | | Need to identify the potential Chief of Tambon Administration Office (elected person) who joined the Plant Genetic Conservation Project under Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Work with these champion group for change making process. | | | | Initiated | | | |
| **Recommendation 5:** BEDO and the Thailand Wetland Foundation should ensure the promotion of birdwatching tourism, which may provide a necessary economic incentive for local government to continue monitoring biodiversity. The advance of community-based sustainable shrimp powder that has shown promising results if linked to a code of good practice for the *Acetes* spp. fishery, together with the ongoing efforts related to the *Solen regularis* fishery. BEDO support will be necessary for the newly developed products (shrimp powder) and services (birdwatching tourism) in Don Hoi Lot. Income-generating projects developed in Don Hoi Lot pose more challenges than the more established GI mango production in Bang Khachao. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. BEDO will conduct under ordinary mission of organization and consider through annual budget. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Key Actions** | **Time Frame** | | **Responsible Unit** | | | | | **Tracking** | | | | |
| **Comments** | **Status** | | | |
| Development of community enterprises for conducting bioresources business. Upgrade products and services to create an economy based on biological resources. | Mar 2020 – Dec 2021 | | BEDO | | | | | Follow through the annual programme evaluation of BEDO | Initiated | | | |