

# Thailand and FAO

## Achievements and success stories

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## Introduction

Thailand became a member of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on 27 August 1947. Subsequently, Bangkok, Thailand was selected as a provisional site of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Far East in 1948 which was formally approved in 1953. Since then, FAO has been working closely and enjoying a good partnership with the Royal Thai Government through the Office of the National FAO Committee, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. The regional office was renamed the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in 1979.

Over the last three decades, and moving gradually from a recipient into a donor country, Thailand has contributed significantly to FAO to fulfil its mandates. The keen interest and personal involvement of Thailand's Royal Family in agricultural and rural development in the country have been crucial elements of the evolving partnerships between Thailand and FAO. In this connection, FAO has awarded the Ceres Medal to Her Majesty the Queen in 1979, and the Agricola and TeleFood Medals to His Majesty the King in 1995 and 1999, respectively.

At present, Thailand has achieved many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at a national level well in advance of the 2015 targets, and has set a timeline for ambitious targets that go beyond the original goals (MDG-plus). However, some regions and disadvantaged groups are being left behind, and disparities are widening in some cases.

The MDG achievement is largely due to continuous rural development activities and countless efforts by both the public and private sectors in the country. The ratio of poor people has been reduced from 33.69 percent in 1990 to 8.48 percent in 2007 following programmes to reduce poverty, improve nutrition and meet basic human needs. There are, moreover, special projects initiated by the government such as the debt restructuring scheme, the village fund, the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) fund, and the universal healthcare scheme supporting the operation.

Over the past half century, Thailand's agricultural sector has moved beyond self-sufficiency to making the nation a major food exporter. Today, Thailand plays an important role as a regional food centre and 'kitchen of the world', feeding its own population and contributing to the food security of people in and outside of Asia. Indeed, Thailand stands as the world number one exporter of rice sharing over 30 percent of the global rice trade volume, in addition to canned tuna fish, natural rubber, etc.

FAO's direct support – or field programme in Thailand – was initially mainly supported by UNDP which had provided since 1950 some US\$50 million for financing 136 FAO implemented projects till the early 1990s. In addition, FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) – funded from the Organization's own regular programme – started in 1977. Since then 105 full-scale and close to 20 small-scale TCP Facility projects with a combined budget of approximately US\$14 million have been approved by the FAO Director-General. Another financing modality for field programmes started in 1997, the worldwide TeleFood Special Fund, under which Thailand implemented 36 projects until now with a total budget of about US\$260 000. Finally, 17 donor funded Trust Fund projects were implemented – both long-term and emergency – since the 1980s with a total budget of US\$5.1 million.

In overall, 314 projects have been or are being implemented by FAO in Thailand with a total budget of US\$70 million. In addition, Thailand has benefitted from nearly 100 global/regional projects in which the country participated.

Prime areas of assistance during the last three decades include a) food and industrial crop development which supported Thailand to become one of the world's top food and natural rubber exporters and one of the leading producers of oil palm in the world, b) food safety and quality control towards export promotion and supply of safe foods to consumers, and c) poverty alleviation and the promotion of household food security to support poor farmers and disadvantaged groups in the society who were left behind of rapid economic growth. Thailand also received FAO emergency and rehabilitation support in response to natural disasters.

FAO has maintained a close partnership with the UN system coordination mechanisms in place in Thailand – including with the office of the UN Resident Coordinator for Thailand, the UN Country Teams (UNCT), and other UN agencies based in Thailand. FAO took a lead in bringing appropriate focus on agricultural, food and nutrition issues within the framework of the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) in Thailand.

## 1. Analytical summary

Taking full advantage of its 16 million ha of fertile arable land and a total agricultural labour force of 29 million, over the last 30 years, Thailand has firmed up its position as a world-leading agricultural producer and exporter – in line with the national strategy and policy to serve as the ‘kitchen of the world’.

The most important **agricultural exports** sectors are rice, natural rubber, oil palm, livestock, fisheries, fruits and vegetables. For instance, Thailand was ranked as the world’s number one exporter of rice, processed chicken and shrimp, processed and canned pineapple as well as tuna in 2008. That same year, its export-oriented food industry brought in \$24.2 billion – a significant increase of 35 percent over 2007, comprising 13.3 percent of Thailand’s total export’s revenue.

Thailand increased annual rice output by 3.1 percent from 1997 to 2007 and exported nearly 9 million tonnes of rice in 2010 – representing a share of over 30 percent in the volume of world rice trade.

The production of cassava increased by 4.6 percent in the decade throughout the 2000s, and sugar cane production increased by 2.7 percent during the same period to around 75 million tonnes.

Being an important actor in the international trade of food and agricultural products, Thailand is a key player in the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. The country has successfully built up its capacity to promote food safety and quality towards enhancing exports and meeting stringent food safety standards for its population. Combining the promotion of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), food quality standards and food inspection systems with sound value chain development, the country is now largely meeting global food safety standards and has established a firm basis to implement its ‘kitchen of the world’ policy, as outlined in paragraph 1.2.

Most recently, the country is moving toward bringing local certification of agricultural products closer in line with international standards. In this connection, ThaiGAP

was developed to help small farmers to overcome difficulties in applying for GlobalGAP certification. ThaiGAP standards assure food safety and quality of produce throughout the food chain starting from seeding at the farm to end products for consumers, in addition supporting small-scale farmers to acquire production skills meeting market needs and taking full advantage of globalization and trade liberalization.

**Poverty alleviation and promotion of food security** have been key issues in national socio-economic development planning over the past decades. Even today, they remained in the limelight when national policies are reviewed and formulated. Apart from the 10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011), government efforts have led the country to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals and the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has actually declined by more than a half between 1990 and 2004 to reach nearly 8 percent at present, well before the target year 2015. The proportion of people who suffered from hunger has also declined by more than a half and stood at 16 percent at the end of 2007.

### 1.1 Industrial crop development

Thailand’s climate and soil conditions permit the cultivation of a wide range of crops, and besides the traditionally dominant rice plantations, the country embarked over the last decennia on an ambitious long-term strategy for industrial crops development – such as rubber, coconut, oil palm and coffee. With the government successfully adjusting policies and investment programmes towards the promotion of food and industrial crop production and associated support measures to farmers, Thai farmers responded by expanding substantially the output of many agricultural products.

The most remarkable achievement of Thai agriculture over the last decades has been the sustainable and rapid expansion of industrial crops, in particular natural rubber and oil palm production. Together with rice, rubber and palm oil exports contribute significantly to the foreign exchange earnings of the country.

During 2010, Thailand exported 2.83 million tonnes of **natural rubber** – an increase of 6.3 percent over the decade till 2008, positioning the country as the number one world exporter (followed by Malaysia with 2.3 million tonnes).

The production of **palm oil** increased by 8.9 percent from 0.5 million tonnes in the year 1998 to 1.3 million tonnes in 2008. Thailand stood as the world's third largest exporter of palm oil, following Indonesia and Malaysia.

More recently, Thailand has shifted emphasis from horticultural production towards organic farming to ensure food safety and meet the demand of international and domestic markets.

## 1.2 Food safety and quality control

The food industry in Thailand plays a very important role in the overall economy of the country. Food exports are one of the major sources of foreign exchange earning. Fresh and processed fruits and vegetables are some of the main export commodities and the sector has experienced increased export restrictions which necessitated the compliance of international food quality and safety standards such as HACCAP, EUROGAP, etc. It is the objective of the government that exported food and agricultural products from Thailand conform to WTO SPS requirements.

Thailand is a member of the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. International trade in agricultural commodities is not only highly competitive but, more over, subject to stringent quality control measures, an area where the Codex – and its consultative processes – has an undisputable leading role. With Thailand's sustained policies for retaining the position of a leading food and agricultural exporter of a wide range of products, the country has over the years played an active role in Codex negotiations.

The Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's) are also the issues at the heart of Thailand's industrial food policies, so as to ensure that produce and packet products meet food safety (microbiological, chemical, physical) and quality requirements. These actions and requirements cover the

entire food chain from farm to table and are observed by a wide range of stakeholders in both the public and private sectors.

Besides the focus on industrial food safety, the country also has undertaken many nutrition projects aimed at improving knowledge of nutrition within households, particularly for women. Awareness of the need to improve the frequency and quality of meals is built up through participatory approaches based on the concept of FAO's Farmer Field Schools (FFS), originated by the Organization's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme – which has now become part of a national programme.



## 1.3 Poverty and hunger

Poverty and hunger have declined drastically in Thailand over the last three decades. With child mortality presently standing at 26 per thousand, the country is well on the way to achieve the Millennium Development Goal One and World Food Summit goal to reduce the number of hungry people down from 15 million in 1990 to 7.5 million by 2015.

Per capita daily calorie intake in 2010 was estimated at 2 490 kcal, up 16 percent from 2 175 kcal in 1990.

The poverty ratio in Thailand has declined considerably and at present hovers around eight percent. However, poverty is specifically concentrated in Northeastern provinces where nearly half of the total poor people live

with agriculture as a prime source of income; in the four most Southern provinces; and on Northern border mountain provinces where transport and other infrastructure development are considerably behind compared with other provinces. In addition, poverty and hunger among jobless and low-wage workers and their families in urban areas have become increasingly visible, especially during the food price crisis and financial crisis of 2007-2009.

Since then, Thailand's economy has successfully recovered and attained nearly 8 percent annual GDP growth in 2010. On the other hand, income disparity and social inequality between the rich and the poor are widening. In fact, there are huge differences in income levels between the upper 30 percent and the rest of the population. Thailand's impressive economic growth has contributed in improving overall living conditions, but the benefits of increased national affluence have not been distributed equitably.

## 2. Selected successful FAO programmes

### 2.1 Industrial crop development

**Rubber:** Rubber has been an important tree crop in Thailand with more than 5 million people directly dependent in it for a living, as planters, tappers, processors and traders. The government has supported rubber replanting since 1960, the year in which the Rubber Replanting Aid Fund was established – in parallel with an FAO report to the Thai government on the rubber planting industry (published as EPTA report 1253), advocating the need for an overhaul of country's rubber plantations, emphasizing that besides other factors, natural rubber production in Thailand would increase substantially through the implementation of accelerated rubber replanting with high yielding clones.

With loans obtained from the World Bank (WB), US\$12 million, and from the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), £18.4 million, the government embarked on an ambitious programme for replanting more than 500 000 ha benefitting over 300 000 holders during two phases from 1977 to 1986.

During these 20 crucial years, FAO with the support of UNDP has assisted rubber development programme in Thailand, providing technical expertise, training, equipment and funding totalling about US\$5.4 million for the following projects: *Rubber development* – phase I (1965-1970) and phase II (1970-1976 – THA/70/543), *Acceleration of rubber replanting* (1976-1980 – THA/75/021), *Bridging assistance for the acceleration of rubber replanting* (1980-1982 – THA/79/016) and *Assistance to the rubber replanting and research programmes in support of the second tree crop* (1982-1987 – THA/82/007).

The first two projects assisted the establishment and operation of the Rubber Research Centre in Hat Yai, while the latter three projects supported the WB/CDC-funded projects for the acceleration of rubber replanting and further expansion of plantations, in particular in the eastern and northeastern regions. Research activities were also carried out in several Rubber Research Stations for both replanting activities and the promotion of new rubber trees.

As a result of the rubber replanting scheme and the promotion of new rubber varieties, rubber production in Thailand increased significantly with average annual increases of 7.6 percent.

**Palm oil:** *Oil palm development* (THA/84/007, 1985-1996, \$1 763 348). Aimed at increasing national income and improve the economic conditions of farmers, especially small holders, the project improved and expanded production and marketing oil palm. Activities concentrated on promoting research for enhancing oil palm productivity and production, processing and utilization.

The project assisted the government in the establishment of an oil palm research programme at the Horticulture Research Station in Chumporn. The project also provided training and established a training centre for farmers, extension workers and low-level to medium-level trainers. The project produced a plan to establish a national oil palm agency to coordinate and lead oil palm development activities in Thailand.

## 2.2 Food safety and food quality control

Over the years, FAO implemented a series of projects dealing with food security matters. A few examples of successful projects are given below.

Already in the eighties FAO implemented a series of projects dealing with food safety, two of which from its own resources: *Strengthening food analysis, pilot study on food additives, monitoring of contaminant intake* (TCP/THA/44-5, 1984-1986, \$206 842) and *Workshop in fruit and vegetable processing* (TCP/THA/6764, 1987, \$6 000). A third project was funded by UNDP: *Food and agricultural products export control system*, THA/87/003, 1987-1993, \$878 299).

The project *Strengthening food control infrastructure* (TCP/THA/6712, 1997-1999, \$233 794) strengthened the Thai Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to implement new and important control measures to assure food safety and quality aspects of processed foods, including imports. The project was directed primarily at food inspection techniques employed by the Thai Food and Drug Administration.

Five years later, the two-phase project *Strengthening compliance of the SPS requirements for expanded exports of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables* (TCP/THA/2903, 2004-2005, \$336 204 – and TCP/THA/3104, 2007-2008, \$36 000) improved the safety and quality of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables produced in Thailand by ensuring that the production system met WTO's SPS standards and Codex safety requirements related to microbiological hazards in foods.

The project provided training and evaluation of GAP's, HACCP, training for the improvement of the inspection/certification programme, training on sampling/analysis techniques and Good Laboratory Practices (GLP's). Being a front-runner in knowledge management, the project improved e-information and data systems for DOA laboratories and inspection/certification and developed a website with information relevant for Thai exporters of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables.

Looking ahead, FAO support in the area of food safety is continuing with the project TCP/THA/3305 – *Enhancement*

*of laboratory capacity on food safety in primary production* (2011-2012, \$250 000) aiming at developing various analytical methodologies such as multi-residue analysis, methodology for simultaneous analysis of residues in central and regional laboratories, method validation (a pre-requisite for ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation) and chemical proficiency testing by the staff of ATSRG. Particular emphasis is given in this regard on system improvement and sustainability of the expected results of the project beyond the 2-year project period.

In addition, Thailand has also participated in Asia regional projects such as TCP/RAS/0169 *Regional training in meat inspection in Asia* (2001-2003, \$373 000). This project trained Thai meat inspectors in adequate meat inspection techniques and up-to-date meat hygiene and provided further guidelines and a basis for the establishment of national meat inspection training.

TCP/RAS/0172 *Meat processing and inspection* (2002-2003, \$282 254) increased the availability of animal protein to improve human nutrition in Asia/Pacific through technology transfer for improved manufacture of meat products; and the creation of market outlets and employment in the livestock and meat sector in Asia/Pacific.

In parallel, TCP/RAS/0170 – *Strengthening cross-border animal disease surveillance and coordination between China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam* (2003-2004, \$289 694) strengthened the diagnostic and epidemiological capability of the bordering countries of Thailand, enhanced communication between the participating countries and the international community and developed a strategy for cross-border control – by conducting training sessions on the epidemiology and diagnosis of the transboundary diseases, recommending improved disease reporting, surveillance and outbreak investigations, and assisting in linking national laboratories with world and regional reference laboratories.

TCP/RAS/3212 – *Pesticide regulatory harmonization* (2009-2010, \$373 546) provided technical inputs and raised capacities in terms of the trained human resources. Importantly, the assistance acted as a catalyst for the required changes and gave impetus to countries in



Southeast Asia to work together more closely and exchange more information to achieve the pesticide regulatory harmonization and to prevent poor quality and highly toxic pesticides from having adverse effects on human health and the environment.

Finally, and considering the growing importance of vegetables in the Asia-Pacific region, Thailand has benefited fully from the regional project GCP/RAS/153/DEN *Establishment of a seed association for public and private seed enterprises in the Asia-Pacific region (APSA)*. With the APSA headquarters based in Bangkok, in 1999 FAO collaborated with APSA and the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to organize a successful conference on seed policy issues covering the region. Thailand has also been an active member of various past and present regional projects on *Integrated Pest Management*, including the presently ongoing *IPM in vegetables programme* GCP/RAS/160/NET.

### **2.3 Poverty alleviation and promotion of household food security**

Providing direct technical support to the Royal Project on Crop Substitution, the FAO project TCP/THA/6653 *Vegetable cash production for opium replacement in the highlands of northern Thailand* was implemented during 1986-1988 with a budget of \$23 800. A large number of fruit, vegetable, medicinal, flower and ornamental crops were screened for their suitability in the highlands, as well as for returns from these crops as compared with those from opium poppy.

Partly on the basis of the outcome of the above project, an ambitious extension programme was initiated by the Royal Project Foundation, with support by FAO under the project TCP/THA/2252 *Improved extension and training for temperate zone fruit crops in northern highlands* (1993-1994, \$249 000). The project utilized a strategic extension campaign standard method in conducting its extension and training activities to support the Royal Project Foundation's programme on cultivation of temperate-zone fruit crops such as Chinese peach, Chinese pear, persimmon, plum, grape, Chinese apricot, strawberry, passion fruit and fig.

These early efforts have to some extent contributed to the later successful establishment of the marketing arm of the Royal Project Foundation, Doi Kham. This organization was furthermore supported by the project TCP/THA/8958 *Agricultural marketing development in northern provinces* (1989-1990, \$344 000) which undertook surveys to understand how the Muang Mai market in Chiang Mai operated as a secondary wholesales market for the northern region.

Besides the above support in the North of the country, in 1990 the UNDP-funded FAO project *Reforestation of denuded forest lands in Khao Kho* was initiated in cooperation with the Royal Thai Army and the Royal Thai Forest Department (THA/88/017, 1990-1994, \$1 006 556). When the reforestation project began illegal maize farmers, poor landless people from outside the area, violently opposed and even sabotaged it. However, project staff reached a compromise with them and, in the longer term, the project reduced illegal farming on designated forest land by providing 150 landless families the opportunity to settle in three new villages where each family was allotted 2.4 ha for agriculture and 0.8 ha for a homestead. The project also provided the farmers with training in agriculture, horticulture, livestock farming, aquaculture, community forestry, kitchen gardening, cottage industry development, health to enable them to engage in sustainable farming on their allotted land.

By attending to the needs of the people in the area, providing opportunities for land use and employment and improving security, the project helped reduce pressure on degraded lands. The development that was already beginning to be visible towards the end of FAO assistance to the area in 1995 has taken hold and continues to have positive effects on Khao Kho. The area today is known for its beautiful forest scenery and cool climate. A search for 'Khao Kho' on the Internet leads to several sites advertising this mountain range as the 'Switzerland of Thailand'. The rehabilitated forests have become an asset for tourism, bringing further benefits to the local population.

Income and prosperity distribution between regions and rural areas was the main focus of a \$3 million multi-disciplinary project funded by UNDP. FAO implemented part of the THA/93/002 *Rural income opportunities programme* during 1994-1998 for a total amount of \$633 076. Set within a national programme initiated in 1991 aimed to enhance cooperation between agricultural extension and agricultural research, the programme involved 1 100 villages in 44 provinces. Main achievements were:

- Decrease by some 600 000 ha planting areas with crops encountering pricing and marketing problems;
- Engage some 170 000 households with contract farming on 272 000 ha of land, consisting of diversified farming, fruit tree plantations, vegetables, cut-flowers, beel and dairy cattle, and aquaculture; and
- The number of farmers applying for credits from the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives jumped to 76 182 from 1 812 in 1990, aimed at investments in agro-industries in rural areas, mainly from juice processing using local crops, vegetables and fruits.

TCP/THA/3102 *Pilot project for poverty alleviation and promotion of food security in Northeastern Thailand* (2006-2009, \$492 747). The project provided technical

assistance to the government to increase agricultural productivity, and farmers' self-reliance and income of rural households in the project area, and formulated a national strategy for future expansion leading to improved livelihood and food security in the rural sector. The proposed national strategy for a five-year period covers poverty targeting; amalgamation of funds from different sources into the Village Fund; capacity building in village development plan formulation; conservation and uses of community forests and small-sale water resources; establishment of community learning centres; and high-level policy coordination.

UNJP/THA/033/UNO *UN Joint programme on integrated highland livelihood development in Mae Hong Son*: The government of Japan allocated \$4.6 million (Baht 150 million) through the UN Trust Fund for Human Security for a pioneering initiative over the next three years to improve the quality of life and reduce poverty among vulnerable groups in Mae Hong Son province. The project activities focus on three areas: agriculture and income-generation; natural resource conservation and management; and social protection. The UN Partnership Framework for 2007 to 2011 supports the government's efforts to reduce disparities and hence build a more equitable society – through concerted efforts among UN agencies – to empower the most vulnerable people in society and to build capacity of people in responsible positions to fulfil their societal obligations.

## Success stories

### 1. B.R. Sen Award for 1982 – Achievement in the development of natural rubber in Thailand

The B.R. Sen Award for 1982 was presented to Lim Poh Lob (Malaysia) for his achievements in the development of natural rubber production in Thailand.

The majority of FAO supported rubber projects were managed by CTA Mr Lim Poh Lob (Malaysia), starting in 1971 when he was assigned to the *Rubber development project* in Thailand (THA/70/543), where he helped to plan and organize the training of 9 500 farmers and about 600 staff members. He later introduced a tapping course in the FAO/UNDP *Rubber replanting project* (THA/75/021) to which he was appointed as senior development officer, followed by an assignment as senior officer on the Thailand *Rubber development project* (THA/79/016). In October 1982 he became Chief Technical Adviser on project THA/82/007 – *Rubber replanting and research programmes in support of the Second tree crop project*. The B.R. Sen Award for 1982 was presented to Mr Lim for his achievements in the development of natural rubber production in Thailand.

Mr Lim was involved at all levels in natural rubber production training and extension programmes. These have ranged from the purely technical – such as the introduction of new rubber clones, the establishment of demonstration plots, and suggestions for tree replanting schemes – to management and decision making – such as the preparation of proposals for loans from the World Bank and the Commonwealth Development Corporation.

His outstanding technical competence, combined with his skill in dealing with people, governments and financial institutions, have led to the achievements which culminated today in the bestowal of this Award.

### 2. Thailand's efforts to promote food safety and SPS

Thailand has experienced difficulties in meeting SPS requirements and quality and safety standards for fresh and processed fruits and vegetables imposed by many importing countries.

However, an FAO funded project – *Strengthening compliance of the SPS requirements for expanded exports of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables* (TCP/THA/2903, 2004-2005, \$336 204) – has successfully contributed to strengthening the safety and quality of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables produced in Thailand and improving the potential for exporting these products.

The project has assisted the Thai government in taking significant steps towards the development, introduction and implementation of GAP certification programmes in Thailand as well as provided training on implementation of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) in agri-industries. Additionally, the development of a comprehensive inspection manual for fresh and processed fruit and vegetable products for export has been facilitated under the project with the purpose of providing concerned government inspectors with a tool to inspect packing houses, distribution centres, manufacturing establishments and fumigation plants.

### 3. Mushroom training for disabled people

In the Asia and Pacific region, there are about 500 million hungry people, out of estimated 800 million undernourished in the world. Two third of the hungry and poor are living in rural areas. There is a high correlation between poverty and hunger. There may be ample food available in any specific country, yet individual persons or households, particular the rural poor, may not be able to purchase the food needed for a healthy life. FAO's main objective is to achieve universal

food security. Also the Asia-Pacific region should be free from hunger and poverty, and FAOs programmes are designed to address food insecurity and sustainable agricultural development in rural areas. Farmers with disabilities are among the poorest of the poor. Because of their disability, they are often not given the same opportunities to develop their potential capabilities, and live like active members within society.



The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) pioneered a training programme for disabled farmers in the poor northeastern part of Thailand with funding from its Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP):

*Mushroom production training for disabled people TCP/THA/8821(A) 1998-2000, \$224 705.*

The TCP technical capacity building activities were designed and implemented by a joint RAP officers team in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Thailand. The project strategy aimed at expanding the outreach and impact of mainly vocational training programmes for the promotion of non-farm and formal sector wage earning skills. It also included skills training for agro-based small enterprise development by disabled farmers. The activities were carried out in Ubon Ratchathani province in the Training Centre for Disabled People.

The FAO inter-disciplinary taskforce provided technical assistance and expertise on mushroom production, marketing, design and use of processing equipment,

criteria and guidelines for disability and gender response. It also dealt with awareness building, extension of technical skills and small enterprise development. As a result of the well-coordinated project inputs, many trainees became successful mushroom farmers and a few became trainers.

The pilot training and mushroom production activities were largely developed as part of “learning by doing”, guided by a successful Thai mushroom entrepreneur and national trainers and extension workers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. Yet to facilitate the further replication of this successful pilot project.

The project envisioned an expansion of activities following trainee graduation. A self-help disabled mushroom producers group was established to manage and maintain mushroom production houses at the Centre. This activity was made possible under a self-financed autonomous arrangement which contributed to future mushroom training by disabled trainers for disabled people.



The enthusiasm expressed by the faces of the disabled farmer’s trainees show their feeling of achievement as full and active members of society, both socially and economically, acquired during the training. They are now integrated into society and capable of taking care of themselves and their beloved ones.

#### 4. Mae Hong Son UN Joint programme for livelihood development – Delivering as One UN

Mae Hong Son is a remote, mountainous province located in northern Thailand, sharing a fairly long border with the Union of Myanmar. It is home for ethnic minorities of own distinctive languages and customs who account for more than half of the population of Mae Hong Son (about 250 000 people) and have limited access to government and social services such as health care and education. The province also hosts a large influx of refugees and migrants mainly from Myanmar, placing stress on its economic and social development capacity as well as making its rich natural resources susceptible to overexploitation.

Mae Hong Son's underperformance is evident in the latest two Thailand *Human development reports* released in 2007 and 2009, respectively, which ranked Mae Hong Son as the least developed province amongst all 76 provinces in Thailand when measured using the Human Achievement Index. The development of Mae Hong Son has been hindered by a number of factors including the mountainous terrain causing the settlements to be far apart and making it difficult to access and communicate, limited agricultural land (only 3.4 percent of the total area), inadequate health services, limited income generation opportunities, lower secondary education completion rates, insufficient infrastructure, and political instabilities in Myanmar along the border causing people from Myanmar to seek asylum and better opportunities in Thailand.

It was in this context that, under the leadership of FAO, which is the Chair of the UN Sub-Thematic Working Group on Livelihoods in Thailand, a group of 10 UN agencies responded to the human security needs and priorities of the province and vowed to help achieve the human development goals in Mae Hong Son by implementing the *UN Joint programme on integrated highland livelihood development in Mae Hong Son*. The programme is a result of a long consultation and brainstorming process amongst the UN agencies as well as between the UN team and the Mae Hong Son provincial government, which dates back to 2007. It is a pioneering initiative of bringing together the wealth of

diverse expertise from the participating UN agencies and joining hands with the Mae Hong Son authorities, the Royal Thai Government, local governments, and implementing partners in order to address the multi-faceted, complex development challenges facing Mae Hong Son. It also corresponds to the priority and focal areas identified in the UN Partnership Framework (UNPAF) 2007-2011 for Thailand.



*Preamble Signing Ceremony that pledged the joint effort and commitment to achieve the human development goals in Mae Hong Son*

In January 2010 the programme was officially launched during the Preamble Signing Ceremony held in the capital of Mae Hong Son where all the participating 10 UN agencies – together with the UN Resident Coordinator and the Governor of Mae Hong Son – formalized their commitments to working together over the following three years to improve the lives and opportunities of the people living in Mae Hong Son. With support from the UN Trust Fund for Human Security rendered by the OCHA Human Security Unit in New York (total US\$4.5 million), this joint UN initiative aims to, *inter alia*, improve the quality of life and reduce poverty among vulnerable groups in underserved areas of Mae Hong Son (MHS) through enhancing both protection and empowerment measures. The approach to achieve these development goals is threefold: improving the skills and thus income generating capability of target beneficiaries – poor farmers in remote communities, ethnic minorities, migrants, and camp-based refugees; sustainable management of natural resources; and increasing the opportunities in accessing social services such as health and education for the underserved and vulnerable populations.



Inter-agency collaboration and building partnerships with the MHS counterparts are important elements for implementing this programme as they bring together the comparative advantages of the respective UN agencies and the collaborators in a coordinated manner. Nine out of 11 outputs to be produced by the programme are being jointly undertaken by more than one UN agency. It will not be possible to produce other 2 outputs without aligning closely with the MHS counterparts and the implementing partners, either.

Indeed, the collaboration practiced and the partnerships developed amongst the stakeholders are key to the sustainability of this unique programme, in view of handing it over to the Mae Hong Son government in the final year of the programme execution. Experience, knowledge and capacity will not be built and remain in Mae Hong Son without working together closely.

To facilitate this process, the programme selected priority programme implementation sites, or *Common working areas*, where all the stakeholders concentrate their efforts and activities to maximize the synergy of the programme and increase its impact on the livelihoods of the target beneficiaries. Likewise, *Common operational guidelines* and an *External communication strategy* were developed as tools to work together and to facilitate executing the programme in harmony and consistency.

Furthermore, as part of the framework of joint implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the programme set up the Provincial Steering Committee comprised of the UN agencies, provincial and local counterparts, implementing partners and the Programme Management Unit; the high-level Programme Advisory Board consisting of the Heads of UN agencies and the Permanent Secretaries of line ministries; and forged Annual Work Plans that facilitates result-based monitoring and evaluation with information on baseline and target situations incorporated in the plans.

Towards the end of programme implementation, an *Integrated provincial livelihood development strategy* (tentative title) will be formulated to replicate the Mae Hong Son model in other provinces in Thailand or other countries and regions based on the experience and lessons gained from the programme.



*Community Health Worker's Training*

## 5. Poverty alleviation in the northeast

The northeastern region is one of the most important agricultural areas in Thailand, in particular for rain-fed rice production. The majority of the population are small-scale farmers who are dependent on agriculture for household income and livelihood and, as a group, they constitute the majority of the poor in Thailand.

The FAO funded *Pilot project for poverty alleviation and the promotion of food security in Northeastern Thailand – TCP/THA/3102, 2006-2009, \$492 747* supported small-scale farmers and poor rural households in northeastern provinces to reduce poverty and improve household food security through empowering the self-reliance of farming communities and stimulating cost-effective sustainable production systems and farmers' income. In parallel, the project stimulated capacity building and institutional mechanisms at village, sub-District, District and Provincial levels to maximize concerted efforts at different levels, and formulated the National Strategy for Poverty Alleviation and Promotion of Food Security in Northeastern Provinces in Thailand, with an aim to replicate and expand the project activities in other provinces in the country under the national ownership.

A few of the main success stories are:

- With support provided by FAO, an existing **rice cracker production** women's group in Baan Taku improved the quality and shelf-life of its products



- A **cattle raising group** of fifty households adopted an inventive investment and revolving fund strategy allowing the all members to receive animals within a four years period
- Few households in Baan Taku could utilize the **village water pond** for farming but with FAO support twenty farm households started dry-season cropping growing valuable field crops and vegetables such as sweet corn, groundnut, cucumber and long bean – allowing to increase the level of food security among the villagers
- With the FAO project, for **fodder production**, villagers set up a demonstration plot on public land. Land preparations, procurements of seed and fertilizers, and training on the demonstration establishment were carried out with FAO support, resulting in 380 tonnes of forage
- Two women's groups consisting of 40 member produced **fermented fish** in Baan Tabou. With support from the project the packaging and shelf-life of the produce was greatly enhanced, resulting in higher sales and creation of a financially sound revolving fund
- Thirty **tubewells** were constructed with FAO support as well as a farmer group's revolving fund, resulting in irrigation of over 10 ha of crop land. Growing vegetables such as shallot, chili, lettuce and long bean for own consumption and sale in the market, the value of production was estimated at Baht 2.85 million (close to \$100 000) for the dry season of 2008-2009.



The project produced replicable model interventions and strategies which led to the self-expansion of the project activities in all districts in the three pilot provinces using the government's own resources. This replication of the pilot activities was supported by a promotional video and a brochure on the success stories of the project.

Most recently, the successful outcomes of this FAO supported project have attracted proposals for further scaling up the poverty alleviation models, and an IFAD investment loan on \$30 million is under final consideration in this respect.

## 6. The National Medium-Term Priority Framework (NMTPF) in Thailand

Upon the request by the Royal Thai Government, FAO assisted the formulation of the NMTPF under an effective collaboration and close partnership with concerned Government Ministries/Departments and the support of UN Country Team, through active participation and contribution by the technical expertise available in FAO Regional Office using TCPF resources and general guidance provided from FAO HQ.

Funded by FAO's TCP Facility, the formulation of the NMTPF started in March 2007 with the aim to promote government ownership and put the ministry of agriculture in the leading position in the entire NMTPF preparation process. A Joint Brain Storming Workshop was organized by the ministry in Pattaya in June 2007, attended by 35 senior Government officials from more than 10 different line Ministries/Departments and 15 RAP technical officers, to review the first draft of NMTPF document prepared by the national consultant. Consequently, the draft NMTPF document was submitted

and discussed at the National Consultative Meeting held in Bangkok on 31 August 2007 for further comments and inputs. The meeting was attended by over 60 participants from donors, development partners, government agencies, NGOs and UN agencies.

The final version of NMTPF, which identified five priority thematic areas of FAO-Thai Government joint intervention in next 5 years 2007-2011, was approved by the Government Steering Committee in October 2007 and formally approved by Thai Government in January 2008.

The first meeting of the NMTPF National Implementation Committee was held in February and May 2008 with the participation of around 30 representatives from Thai government ministries and FAO which prioritized outputs and activities contained in the NMTPF for strategic planning and implementation, and categorized them into 3 funding groups (TCP, TCPF, TF/UTF) at programme level with priority setting for programme/project formulation and resource allocation/mobilization.

The NMTPF document was designed with a strong focus for its practical implementation with the definition of institutional mechanisms, immediate work plan and monitoring/evaluation plan, which facilitated the transformation of the framework document into the formulation of strategies and action plans including programme level actions such as project prioritization and formulation, and resource mobilization.

The NMTPF resulted in the realization of number of important and tangible outputs so far. For example, under the priority thematic areas number one – *Poverty alleviation in rural areas* – efforts focussed on three

poverty-stricken northeastern provinces where the majority of the population are dependent on agriculture. Based on the successful outcomes of pilot multi-disciplinary interventions implemented in the provinces under a TCP project – which strengthened local governance, counterpart capacity and ownership – the government decided to expand the project to all districts in the three provinces using their own resources. In addition, a national strategy for poverty alleviation and promotion of food security was formulated by the project.

The NMTPF formulation process facilitated valuable dialogue and mutual understanding among government counterparts, FAO officers and partners in UN and international community on the issues and priorities associated with agriculture and food security in the country as well as the tasks and mandate of FAO, which laid a foundation for a stronger partnership and future collaboration.

The formulation exercise effectively strengthened the capacity for result based management and multi-disciplinary team work among FAO staff as well as government line ministries.

Among the priority projects listed in the NMTPF (2007-2011), seven new TCP projects and 17 new TCPF sub-projects were approved, in addition to two donor-financed trust fund projects, i.e. the UN Joint Programme with FAO as the lead agency under the UN Human Security Fund (total budget \$4.5 million) and a EU-funded UN Joint Programme for aid to uprooted people (total \$1.1 million, with FAO contributing \$280 000).



## List of selected projects

Title	Symbol	EOD	NTE	Budget (\$)
Duck Disease Control Programme	TCP/THA/6701	1977	1977	115 900
Establishment of a Crop and Water Management Demonstration and Training Centre, Boromdhat	TCP/THA/6702	1977	1978	147 000
Huai Bang Sai Rural Development Project	TCP/THA/6703	1978	1978	80 000
Supply of Seeds	TCP/THA/8802	1978	1978	100 000
Acoustic Survey in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea	TCP/THA/8801	1979	1980	217 000
Improving Fish Utilization in Thailand	TCP/THA/0001	1980	1982	116 000
Rubber Replanting and Research	THA/82/007/ /01/12	1982	1991	949 084
Assistance Cooperatives in Paddy Procurement and Parboiling	GCPP/THA/024/NET	1982	1993	621 853
Development of Micro-Algae (Spirulina) Production	TCP/THA/2307	1983	1985	80 488
Pest Control for Secondary Crops	THA/83/015/ /01/12	1984	1993	418 328
Rehabilitation of the Agricultural Sector With Provision of Vegetable Seeds	TCP/THA/2313	1984	1984	122 518
Strengthening Food Analysis, Pilot Study on Food Additives, Monitoring of Contaminant Intake	TCP/THA/4405	1984	1986	206 842
Training on the Development of a Census of Fisheries	TCP/THA/4402	1984	1984	62 377
Oil Palm Development	THA/84/007/ /01/12	1985	1996	1 763 348
Strengthening the Soil and Water Conservation Programme in the East	TCP/THA/4408	1985	1986	66 682
Yield Increase Through the Use of Fertilizers and Related Inputs	TCP/THA/4512	1985	1986	99 185
Demonstration and Training in Wildlife Farming for Rural development	TCP/THA/4511	1985	1986	81 460
Training in On-Farm Water Application Technology	TCP/THA/6651	1986	1987	107 668
Forestry Development	THA/86/016/ /01/12	1987	1996	1 239 003
Food and Agricultural Products Export Control System	THA/87/003/ /01/12	1987	1993	878 299
Support to Forestry Extension in the Northeast	GCP/THA/031/SWE	1987	1993	519 179
Small-Farmer Group Marketing Improvement Programme in Northern Thailand	TCP/THA/6652	1987	1988	154 658
Development of Soilles Culture for Crop Production	TCP/THA/6759	1987	1989	80 300
Assistance to the National Meat Technology Training Centre	TCP/THA/6757	1987	1988	162 000
Rehabilitation and Improvement of Tea Production and Management	TCP/THA/6758	1987	1988	55 000
Watershed Development Phu-Wiang	THA/84/002/ /01/12	1988	1992	977 367
Fish Aquaculture Diets	THA/89/003/ /01/12	1988	1997	531 211
Agricultural Machinery Test Procedures Development	THA/87/001/ /38/99	1988	1996	425 464
Fish Aquaculture Diets	THA/87/004/ /38/99	1988	1996	234 444

Title	Symbol	EOD	NTE	Budget (\$)
Small Farmers Development People's Participation Project	GCP/THA/028/NET	1988	1993	232 664
Increased Yields and Income Through Fertilizers	GCPF/THA/029/AGF	1988	1995	167 854
Strengthening of Pesticide Formulation Quality Control	TCP/THA/7851	1988	1988	147 000
Coastal Land Reclamation in Southern Thailand	TCP/THA/6766	1988	1989	106 200
Assistance in Forest Inventory	TCP/THA/8853	1989	1990	133 000
Control Residues of Toxic Chemicals in Export Poultry Meat	TCP/THA/8956	1989	1991	225 600
Rehabilitation of Slopes Affected by Floods in South	TCP/THA/8957	1989	1991	134 000
Reforestation in Khao Kho	THA/88/017/ /01/12	1990	1994	1 006 556
Agricultural Marketing Development in the Northern Provinces	TCP/THA/8958	1990	1991	344 000
Farm Data Analysis for Agricultural Policy Formulation	TCP/THA/8959	1990	1991	143 700
Sericulture Development	TCP/THA/0051	1990	1991	260 000
Rehabilitation of Typhoon-Damaged Plantations	TCP/THA/0052	1990	1992	176 000
Policy Formulation and Planning for Rural Agro-Industrial Development	TCP/THA/0153	1991	1992	299 000
Agricultural Planning and Policy Analysis by Cappa	TCP/THA/2251	1992	1993	233 500
Reforestation in Khao Kho	THA/88/017/ /01/12	1993	1994	531 865
Improved Extension and Training for Temperate Zone Fruit Crops Cultivation in Northern Highlands	TCP/THA/2252	1993	1994	249 000
Rural Income Opportunities	THA/93/002/ /01/99	1994	1998	633 076
Training in Agricultural Policy Analysis	TCP/THA/4451	1994	1996	269 000
Review of Agricultural Diversification Policy	THA/94/01T/ /08/12	1994	1995	63 961
Animal Movement Control	TCP/THA/4452	1994	1995	202 000
Support to Agricultural Cooperative Building and Training in the North of Thailand	TCP/THA/4454	1994	1996	294 609
Eco-Development and Buffer Zone Management Planning	TCP/THA/4453	1995	1997	345 000
Improving Dairy Cattle Feeding in Northeast Thailand	TCP/THA/6611	1996	1998	234 000
Strengthening Food Control Infrastructure	TCP/THA/6712	1997	1999	233 794
Assistance to Sericulture Development	TCP/THA/6713	1998	2000	235 000
Support to Thai-Uncap Poverty Strategy Initiative	THA/98/001/ /08/12	1998	1999	40 000
Mushroom Training for Disabled People	TCP/THA/8821	1998	2000	224 705
Preparation Assistance for Natural Resources Management Project	TCP/THA/8923	2000	2000	251 000
Impact on Shrimp Farming on Arable Land and Rehabilitation of Resultant Salt Affected Soils	TCP/THA/8922	2000	2001	242 077
Elephant Care Manual for Mahouts and Managers	MTF/THA/001/IFW	2000	2005	81 032
Gender Responsive Technology en Monde Rural	THA/00/002/ /08/12	2001	2003	100 000
Emergency Supply of Agricultural Inputs to Flood Affected Farmers in the Southern Provinces of Thailand (recoded from TCP/THA/0166)	TCP/THA/9166	2001	2001	390 152

Title	Symbol	EOD	NTE	Budget (\$)
Capacity Building for Promotion of Cooperative Small Farmer and Woman Group Activities	TCP/THA/0165	2001	2003	174 744
Training of Integrated Crop Management Technologies for Production of Good Quality Rice Seeds	TCP/THA/0167	2002	2003	234 198
Sustainable Maize Production Through the Use of a Location Specific Nutrient Management Decision Support System	TCP/THA/2901	2002	2004	212 314
Training Programme for the Small-scale Dairy Sector	TCP/THA/2802	2002	2003	244 642
Emergency Supply of Agricultural, Livestock and Fishery Inputs to Flood-affected Farmers in Northern Provinces of Thailand	TCP/THA/2805	2003	2003	261 000
Emergency supply of agricultural inputs to flood-affected farmers in northern provinces of Thailand	OSRO/THA/201/ITA	2003	2003	144 300
Sustainable Use of Problem Soils in Rainfed Agriculture	TCP/THA/2906	2003	2005	257 426
Strengthening Compliance of the SPS Requirements for Expanded Exports of Fresh and Processed Fruits and Vegetables	TCP/THA/2903	2004	2005	336 204
Training Programme for the Small-scale Dairy Sector (Recoding from TCP/THA/2802 and thereafter from TCP/THA/2902)	TCP/THA/2902	2004	2004	85 537
Training of Integrated Crop Management Technologies for Production of Good Quality Rice Seeds – Phase II of TCP/THA/0167	TCP/THA/3001	2004	2004	68 239
Improvement of Coffee Quality and Prevention of Ochratoxin A on Robusta Coffee	TCP/THA/3002	2004	2006	359 909
Integrated pest management of coconut hispine beetle ( <i>brontispa longissima Gestro</i> )	TCP/THA/3003	2004	2005	52 059
Emergency assistance to the tsunami-affected fishing communities in southern Thailand	THA/05/002/ /01/12	2005	2006	663 100
Emergency assistance to support the rehabilitation in earthquake/tsunami-affected areas	TCP/THA/3004	2005	2005	397 433
Joint Japan/FAO emergency assistance to support tsunami affected coastal communities in Thailand	OSRO/THA/501/JPN	2005	2005	162 000
Japan/FAO joint emergency assistance for tsunami affected rural communities in Thailand	OSRO/THA/502/JPN	2005	2005	77 000
Emergency assistance in support of tsunami affected farmer communities in southern Thailand (TSU – REG/THAI-05/A02)	OSRO/THA/504/CHA	2005	2006	323 480
In-depth assessment of mangroves and other coastal forests affected by the tsunami in southern Thailand	THA/05/001/ /01/12	2005	2006	220 000
Emergency Assistance to the Tsunami-affected Fishing Communities in Southern Thailand (Strengthening the Coordination and Assessment of Fishing Resources and Inputs Provided by Tsunami Emergency Relief) – (REG/THAI-05/A01)	OSRO/THA/505/CHA	2005	2006	123 147

Title	Symbol	EOD	NTE	Budget (\$)
Pilot Project for Poverty Alleviation and the Promotion of Food Security in Northeastern Thailand	TCP/THA/3102	2006	2009	492 747
Policies and strategic planning for the Thailand irrigation sector reform programme	TCP/THA/3101	2006	2009	350 263
Strengthening compliance of the SPS requirements for expanded exports of fresh and processed fruits and vegetables (Phase II of TCP/THA/2903)	TCP/THA/3104	2007	2008	36 000
UN Joint Programme on Integrated highland livelihood development in Mae Hong Son	UNJP/THA/033/UNO	2009	2012	1 379 500
Certification of small-scale aquaculture in Thailand	TCP/THA/3202	2009	2011	370 000
Participation of tree plantation farmers for sustainable forest management	TCP/THA/3203	2010	2011	326 000
Sustainable solutions to the Displaced Situation along the Thai-Myanmar Border (Project Id 00072521)	UNTS/THA/032/EC	2010	2011	245 848
Emergency assistance to support the recovery of agriculture livelihoods systems of flood affected farmers	TCP/THA/3302	2010	2011	338 000
Enhancement of Laboratory Capacity on Food Safety in Primary Production	TCP/THA/3305	2011	2012	250 000
Aquaculture information management system in Thailand	TCP/THA/3304	2011	2012	212 000
Policy support to climate change adaptation in the agricultural sectors in Thailand	TCP/THA/3303	2011	2012	171 000

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