

The Process Framework for Avoidance of the Adverse Impacts on Indigenous Peoples and Involuntary Restrictions of Access to Resources
(Compliance with CEPF's Social Safeguard Policy)

Project title: Strengthening Local Community Networks for Restoration of Fish Habitats in Northern Thailand
Organization: Living River Siam Association (LRS)
Project Duration: 1 April 2015 - 31 March 2017

1. Project background

The lost and degradation of the habitats has caused direct impacts to local community's livelihoods. To solve these impacts, many villages along the rivers have restored fish habitats by creating Cultural Fish Conservation Zone (CFCZ) for many years. To create sacred area and declare the no-fishing zones, Buddhist monk ordination is applied for river ordination. It is their local wisdom to adapt to the decreased fish population for their survival based on their local knowledge, culture, belief systems, and social systems. After the success of couple communities in Lower Ing River Basin about ten years ago, CFCZ have been adopted throughout the basin. Now, sixty-two local communities have their CFCZs. Similarly, there are six communities in Upper Mae Chaem River have their CFCZs. CFCZs are a very important mechanism or institution in a community level to solve problems or adapt to the environmental changes.

However, this riverine-biodiversity threat still has not been solved efficiently because the causes are many and complex, such as deforestation, overfishing, dams, water pollution from cities and industries, and chemical use from agriculture. In addition, it needs to be solved by integrated and cooperative approaches. And it has to be done in river basin and national levels not just only in each community. Networking of the community institutions is creating a mechanism for people's participation in river basin and national levels. And the strengthened communities are the key for the success of network. To solve problems in higher levels, the communities in two river basins have set up their loose networks. For example, the nineteen CFCZ communities in Lower Ing River set up their loose network ten years ago by our support. However, the networks do not functioned well because of lack of continued supports.

After going back to work with the communities in these two areas, we, local NGOS, and the communities found that **the main problem** is that the local communities and networks are not strengthened enough to 1) continue implementing their CFCZs as communities' institutions or mechanisms, 2) understand the whole picture of the problems, and 3) participate in higher levels. To participate in the river basin and national levels, capacity building is needed to strengthen people's mechanisms in community, river basin, and national levels.

2. The project approach

The **goal** that this project can contribute to is that riverine ecosystems in northern Thailand are restored and managed by local institutions/mechanisms. The **objective** of this project is mechanisms in

community, river basin, and national levels for restoration of fish habitats and water resource management with people's participation in Ing and Mae Chaem Rivers are strengthened.

The **main approach** is capacity building for strengthening mechanisms in community, river basin, and national levels for the integrated restoration of fish habitats and water resource management by people's participation. We will focus on the local mechanism because it is the foundation of mechanisms in the higher levels. And local communities are the key actors who have knowledge, rights, and capacities. Implementing CFCZ can lead to understanding about integrated biodiversity restoration, water resource management, and other environmental problems in the areas, such as deforestation and cash crop. In addition, implementation of project's activities is based on the decision and participation of the local communities.

To achieve this objective, **three main results** are needed. In summary, mechanisms for the restoration and management in three levels are strengthened. CFCZs as community institutions are strengthened and linked together as river-basin mechanisms. The knowledge and plans are created, publicized, and submitted to decision makers. **The 1st result** is fish habitats are restored by local communities. **The 2th result** is river-basin mechanisms or networks in the two basins are strengthened. **The 3rd result** is the national mechanism or network between the two river basins is strengthened to engagement in decision making.

3. Assessment on the adverse impacts on indigenous peoples and involuntary restrictions of access to resources

Only six communities in the Upper Maechaem River are indigenous people, Karen. The less sixty-two communities in Ing River Basin are lowland people. We have a good relationship with the Karen communities for two years. In 2013, the Karen communities invited us to help them about the impacts that they will get from planned dam. The campaign against the dam of the communities got attention from the Media and public quickly and successful. Many groups of people from different sectors went to support them because the communities are very strong and well organized. One of the reasons why they are very well organized is that they are strong Christian communities. Groups and institutions in the villages have been set up for long time and very strong, such as village committees, youth and woman groups. Every Sunday, all villagers will go to their churches. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed to drink sale in the communities for long time. Village committees are very strong and powerful. All managements and activities in the villages have to be agreed by the committees. This includes the activities of our organization and other organizations

More importantly, our project implementation will be under the oversight of the Chairman of LRS's Advisory Committees, Dr. Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, very well-known and well-respect Anthropologist specializing in indigenous people. In addition, he is the Head of Center for Ethnic Studies and Development (CESD), Chiang Mai University. For more information about CESD, please visit <http://www.cesd.soc.cmu.ac.th/> To avoid negative impacts, we will closely consult the Chairman.

In summary the project will not get adverse impacts to indigenous people because 1) This project will support the existing CFCZs that villagers have created and practiced by themselves for long time; 2) The optional environmental-conservation activities implemented in the villages will depend on the needs, decision, and participation of village committees and villagers; 3) The

community's mechanisms are very strong; 4) LRS has long experiences working with local communities. And we have experiences working and good relationship with these communities; 5) We believe that local communities are the key actors; 6) The Chairman of LRS's Advisory Committees is very well known and respected as an Anthropologist specializing in Ethnicities.

4. Measures to avoid the adverse impacts and for mitigation

1) Before writing this proposal, we already discussed about this project with community leaders, and they agreed to participate in the project; 2) However, before starting the project, villagers will be informed once again about the project in Karen language in the meetings of the committees. All villagers, men and women, will be informed in their churches in Sunday, when all villagers go to churches. The document of project's information will be written in Karen language and given to villagers. In the documents, it will state clearly that communities can deny the project anytime if they want to, and can change the plan of the project; 3) Before starting the project, meeting of communities and the committees will be organized to design the activities that they want to do in their communities; 4) We will work closely with village committees to make sure that all activities will be based on the needs, decision, and participation of the communities; 5) Some part of budget for implementing the activities will be managed by the committees; 6) All activities will be managed by the communities. Project's staffs will be assistants and facilitators; 7) Visits by project staffs and our local partners will be placed regularly; 8) The existing Network Committee is the good mechanism to help avoiding the impacts

5. Monitoring avoidance of the adverse impacts

1) Community visits for communication and monitoring will be placed regularly by project staffs and our local partners in the area. And our Field Staff will live in the working site to closely work with the communities; 2) Online communication channels have been created, such as communication via Facebook and Line (a chat application on smart phone). Two chatting groups in Line application already created, the first chatting group is for the committees of the network. The second group is for networks' secretariat team; 3) The meetings of networks' secretariat team and LRS's monthly meetings are the mechanisms for monitoring the impacts; 4) Evaluation on impacts to villages and satisfaction will be conducted in the meetings of village groups and visiting by project staff. We will provide a form for villagers and the committees to give feedback;

6. Conflict resolution and grievance/complaint mechanism

Complaint Communication Channel/Mechanism

The Complaint Communication Channel/Mechanisms are; 1) Online communication channels are already created as mentioned above; 2) Community visits will be placed regularly to monitor the impacts; 3) Evaluation form and activities about the impacts mentioned above; 4) Village committees; 5) Meetings of the village groups; 6) The communities can complain directly to CESD because CESD has research project in the area and has good connection with the committees; 7) Communications and complains via existing Network Committees; 8) Existing official mechanisms, such as the local administration organizations and local authorities; 9) National Human Rights Committees; 10) Christian Networks and Committees; and 11) CEPF Regional Implementation Team in Bangkok;

All participating communities will be informed and given all contact details about the above channel/mechanisms by verbal and written document, so that they can raise any concerns directly with them.