

## CEPF Final Project Completion Report

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Chumchon Thai Foundation
<b>Project Title:</b>	Empowering Thai Journalists for Accountable Transboundary Investment
<b>Grant Number:</b>	65883
<b>CEPF Region:</b>	Indo-Burma II
<b>Strategic Direction:</b>	6 Engage key actors in mainstreaming biodiversity, communities and livelihoods into development planning in the priority corridors
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$99,910.00
<b>Project Dates:</b>	March 01, 2016 - February 28, 2018
<b>Date of Report:</b>	November 06, 2017

### Implementation Partners

List each partner and explain how they were involved in the project

[Myanmar] Myeik 88 Generation, Karen Rivers Watch, School for Shan State Nationalities Youth, Kachin News Group, Shan Herald Agency for News, Karen River Watch [Thailand] Spiritual Education Movement, Network of Thai People in 8 Mekong Provinces, International Rivers, Salween Community Network in Mae Hong Son Province, Chiang Khong Conservation Group, Living River Siam, Regional Center for Sustainable Development Chiang Mai University, Thai National Human Rights Commission, Thai journalists from mainstream media- Thai TV Channel 3, Thai PBS, Thai Post Newspaper, Komchadluk, Matichon. In preparation for media trip, we coordinate with local civil society groups, scholars and relevant state agencies. The case of the Mekong River issues, for example, partners includes The Network of Thai People in Eight Mekong Provinces, Chiang Khong Conservation Group, and International Rivers, to prepare initial field information. We then coordinate with academics to gather their views, research, and analysis. To work with state bodies, we also work with Thai National Human Rights Commission. For our work on powerplant project in Southern Myanmar, we coordinate with local conservation groups, the 88 Generation, local Myanmar and Thai academics. Regarding the Salween River along Thai-Myanmar border and inside Myanmar, we work with local community networks including Salween Community Network Karen Rivers Watch, Shan State Rivers.

### Conservation Impacts



Summarize the overall impact of your project, describing how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile

**During the project period (March 2016-October 2017), we produce 540 news pieces published on [www.transbordernews.in.th](http://www.transbordernews.in.th), 403 translated news pieces published on [www.tranbordernews.in.th](http://www.tranbordernews.in.th), and 199 news pieces published/re-published on mainstream media.**

**Since the project started in March 2016, we organized the first media trip to the Salween River on Thai-Myanmar border. It was the International Day of Actions for Rivers that local Thai-Karen ethnic villagers organized an event to raise their concerns over the proposed hydropower dams on the Salween River. We brought around 6 Thai journalists to cover this issues and it was resulted in a fair number of media reports.**

**In August 2016, we organized a media trip to Southern Myanmar in Tanasserim and Myeik for 10 Thai journalists and academics to cover issues on Thailand's investment of a coal-fired power plant project. We tries to make the investigative trip holistic as much as possible, to we coordinated with different stakeholders in order to produce comprehensive news reports to inform public. In Myeik fact-finding activity in affected communities, we also invited around 12 Myanmar journalist to participate. It is a crucial opportunity for us, journalists from Thailand and Myanmar, to work together, build cross-border network, and exchange our knowledge.**

**Apart from the coal-fired powerplant, we also conducted a fact-finding to Myeik archipelago to cover sea gypsy and Karen ethnics that had been marginalized due to expansion on tourism investment both in Thailand and Myanmar. (Transbordernews has work on segypsy issues since 2007, particularly on land grabbing and communal rights to natural resources)**

**This is very important opportunity for Thai and Myanmar journalists to work together during the field trip and exchange activity, as the issues we covered are cross-border. It is more powerful when we work together to set up news agenda by news agencies from both countries.**

**Transbordernews works to regularly cover issues surrounding the Mekong River. We organized two media trip to the Mekong. The first trip was in late December 2016, when Thai cabinet issued a resolution to allow Chinese engineer team to conduct survey and design for the Lancang-Mekong Navigation Channel Improvement Project (called by locals as 'Mekong rapids blasting'). At that time there was no other news agency aware of the news, but we had worked on the issue for a long time so we wrote and circulate news reports on this, and made it became an important news during the year-end of 2016. We wrote to explain the transboundary impacts of the 'rapids blasting' that mean the entire ecosystem of the mekong in this section, not just improving navigation.**

**Regarding Pak Beng Dam project on the Mekong River in Laos, around 90 km. downstream of Thailand border, we organized a media trip to dam-affected area in June 2017. This was in collaboration with Chiang Khong Conservation Group, Living River Siam, and International Rivers. We also invited representatives from Thai National Human Rights Commission's sub-committee on Community Rights, to participate in the media trip.**

**On Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ)in Southern Myanmar, we works closely with local civil society groups in Thailand and Myanmar, to cover the issue regularly. We started working on this**

since 2012, when Myanmar was still under regime. The SEZ is large-scale investment from Thailand and has been widely opposed by affected people. For us, it is crucial to bring voices of those affected to be heard by Thai people.

Key output from the media trips are a satisfactory number of news pieces. Significantly, an outcome from the trips is better understanding of Thai journalists on the transboundary issues. This empower them to be able to continue their works to produce comprehensive reports on the issues (not one-sided).

On empowering civil society groups, in December 2016 we organized a workshop to train local media groups from Thailand and Myanmar ethnic states. Speakers are Thai journalists and academics. The workshop helps create linkages between civil society groups and Thai journalists from mainstream media. After the workshop, there are more news and information submitted to Transbordernews from workshop participants.

On news reporting, Transbordernews has produced very high number of news pieces, higher than what we expected when we wrote the project proposal. On our website [www.transbordernews.in.th](http://www.transbordernews.in.th), there are 540 news pieces we produced, along with 403 translated news from Thailand's neighboring countries. News and reports we produced/supported are carried/republished by mainstream media for 199 pieces. Our website has 705,770 visitors (average 35,289 visitors per month, or 1,157 visitors per day). There are 910,429 views (45,521 views per month, or 1,492 views per day). The most viewed article is on Chinese investment on banana plantation on the Mekong River bank in Laos (115,241 views). The website works as 'news basket' for other news agencies.

Our facebook fanpage [www.facebook.com/khaochaikhop](http://www.facebook.com/khaochaikhop), there are 20,633 followers, with 9,613 organic views perday.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
A reduction of Thailand's environmental footprints in neighboring countries. [3] Ensuring transparent and accountable oversea investment.	Final Impact Results: Playing our role as journalists on transboundary environmental issues, we believe it is crucial for us to monitor Thailand's investment, ensuring transparency and accountability. A concrete example of the impacts of our works is on Thailand's investment in Myanmar's Dawei Special Economic Zone. Prior to our work, there was only positive stories in mainstream media about the investment, and benefits that Thailand will gain from the port and industrial estate in Myanmar. When our team conducted field visit and covered the issues on social and environmental impacts, the public started to understand another side of the story and started to criticize/debate on the investment. This is paving the way to more accountable investment and minimizing social and environmental footprints. For the longer

	term impact, we see more products from our work covering Dawei SEZ. Our work helps amplify voices from local communities and civil society groups, and linking media from both Thailand and Myanmar. This will contribute to a reduction of Thailand's environmental footprints in neighboring countries.
Wider and stronger public awareness to pressure for good governance with regard to mitigating the environmental impacts of Thailand's oversea investment in neighboring countries	Our work to cover large-scaled banana plantation invested on the banks of the Mekong in Laos, and the new site in Chaing Ria's Ing River, has raised strong public awareness. The work contributed to bringing in other actors including local communities and relevant state agencies. As a result, the new site in Chiang Rai has been inspected and postponed until present. Here is a piece we wrote <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=12843">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=12843</a>

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Increased public awareness on Thailand's oversea investment and environmental footprint, including via more engagement with and better capacity of Thai media and local communities on the issues	We work to empower Thai mainstream media to cover marginalized social and environmental issues, particularly the transboundary ones. This helps bring voices of local community to higher level, and heard by governments. The case of our media trip to Southern Myanmar to cover coal-fired powerplant is one of the most successful in term of delivering more impact of the project. The way we jointly conducted filed investigative report with Myanmar counterpart, the way the news are covered in mainstream media in both countries, help exacerbate the impacts. This contributes to increased public awareness on Thailand's oversea investment and environmental footprint.
More news coverage under the project to raise public awareness and influence companies and/or government agencies to take steps to improve environmental performance.	An example can be our works covering Dawei SEZ, that we have been working on the issue since 2012 and during the project period, and producing a fair number of news coverage by ourselves and through mainstream media. Local community in Dawei, with support from the NGO SEM, has submitted a complaint to Thai National Human Rights Commission. The complaint is now under investigation of the Commission. The Commission then calls for meeting and information disclosure from company and relevant state agencies. We try to cover the issue in the more strategic way, raising public awareness and influence companies and government agencies to take steps to improve environmental performance. This is an example of news pieces that we cover the public forum with Thai National Human Rights Commission in Dawei <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16207">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16207</a> . English



	version of the story was published by The Nation <a href="http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/30307348">http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/national/30307348</a> Another case is our works to cover the Mekong Pak Beng Dam consultations (Procedure for Notification, Prior Consultation, and Agreement-PNPCA, under the 1995 Mekong Agreement). The consultation itself is vague and not participatory enough. We continuously covered the consultation process and raise public awareness. The local civil soc
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Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives

**It has been difficult time for Thai media during the past few years. Most of news outlets have lost their income from advertisement, due to economic problems and the change of audience's behaviors that turn to online media. Most of news agencies cut their budget on travel/fact-finding. Thus, it is worrisome that there would be less and less news coverage on social and environmental issues. Our works to organize media trips, workshops, and produce news on our website/news basket, have contributed to/filled this gap quite well. It is a success of our work under CEPF's support.**

**In short-term, our CEPF-funded project contributes to the increase of public awareness on Thailand's investment and environmental footprint. There has been more news coverage on social and environmental issues, and allow affected communities to speak and their voice is amplified by news reporting. We also successfully work/engage with companies and relevant government agencies. On the case of the Upper Mekong Navigation Channel Improvement Project, we works with journalist colleagues/partners to bring the issue to the highest level, Thai Prime Minister.**

**Another successful case for our work is the investigative report on cross-border illegal logging in the Salween forest along Thai-Myanmar border. We work closely with our local sources, organizing media trips, and circulating news reports to mainstream media. Our works contribute to internal inspection of government agencies.**

**On long-term impacts, our work creating linkages between civil society and journalists (in Thailand and neighboring countries) helps strengthen impacts of the news, especially on cross-border issues. Our journalists colleagues are able to raise questions to the policy-makers/ officials.**

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

**The Mekong region comprises of countries with different political settings and legal regulations. Conducting investigative report needs comprehensive considerations. A concrete example is our media trip to Southern Myanmar on Thai-invested coal-fired powerplant project, which is very sensitive in term of security. We works closely with our local sources and work on it in very careful manner. Complexity is also a case in Myanmar's ethnic areas where armed-conflicts occurs (such as Mong Ton and Hat Gyi dams in Shan and Karen states).**



**In Laos, it is also difficult/risky for Thai journalists to conduct fact-finding to work on Thailand's footprints on Mekong River hydropower projects. However, as we speak similar language, it is not too difficult to communicate.**

**In Thailand, military junta makes it more difficult for us to work freely. But we still try to work at our best capacity. We realize that if journalists stop duty, freedom of expression will be vanished.**

## Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
2	Expanded network of Thai journalists and those in neighbouring countries.	2.1	Two exchange and networking events organised for journalists from Thailand and neighbouring countries. One event to be held each year.	We organized one exchange and networking activity with our Myanmar journalist colleagues in Southern Myanmar in Myeik in 2016. Around 18 Thai and Myanmar journalists as well as academia participated in the joint filed trip to the coal-fired powerplant site along the Tenasserim River. The event was very useful in term of building mutual understanding among Thai and Myanmar journalists on cross-border investment and its social and environmental footprints. The local communities also obtain an opportunity to have their voice amplified as their concerns were covered in mainstream media both in Thailand and Myanmar. Here is an example of the news piece in English language <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=13681">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=13681</a>
2	Expanded network of Thai journalists and those in neighbouring countries.	2.2	Lists of participants (around 10-20 participants/journalists) and workshop reports.	There are 18 participants. Reports from the workshop/event are published. <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=13911">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=13911</a>
3	Stronger civil society and affected communities' voice to be heard through their media work.	3.1	At least two training and capacity building events organized for civil society groups and local communities, for 20-30 participants each time.	On empowering civil society groups, in December 2016 we organized a workshop to train local media groups from Thailand and Myanmar ethnic states. Speakers are Thai journalists and academics. The workshop helps create linkages between civil society groups and Thai journalists from mainstream media. After the workshop, there are more news and information submitted to Transbordernews from workshop participants.
3	Stronger civil society and affected communities' voice to be	3.2	Lists of participants and training reports.	There are 25 participants joined the capacity-building workshop. A report for the workshop is on this link <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=13681">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=13681</a>

	heard through their media work.			
3	Stronger civil society and affected communities' voice to be heard through their media work.	3.3	At least 10 citizen reports are produced by participants as results of the capacity-building events.	<p>During the project period, there are around 10 citizen reports produced by participants.</p> <p>Here is a list of examples.</p> <p>Pak Beng Mekong dam  <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16938">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16938</a></p> <p>Nam Ou River Cascade and hydropower impacts  <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=12577">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=12577</a></p> <p>Mekong River and Women  <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16097">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16097</a></p> <p>Academic's concern on Mekong Navigation Project  <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16066">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=16066</a></p> <p>Forest protection ceremony by Shan communities  <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=17131">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=17131</a></p> <p>Salween River and refugee  <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=17397">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=17397</a></p> <p>Salween River and refugee  <a href="http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=17422">http://transbordernews.in.th/home/?p=17422</a></p>
3	Stronger civil society and affected communities' voice to be heard through their media work.	3.4	Strengthened organizational capacity of Transbordernews to plan and implement conservation projects as demonstrated by increased civil society tracking tool scores over the project period.	Completed.
1	Thai journalists to cover more on Thailand-related transboundary development projects. News and investigative report for Thai media that raise	1.1	At least 20 news and reports produced by the team and journalists in each year (40 pieces minimum for	During the project period (March 2016-October 2017), we produce 540 news pieces published on <a href="http://www.transbordernews.in.th">www.transbordernews.in.th</a> , 403 translated news pieces published on <a href="http://www.transbordernews.in.th">www.transbordernews.in.th</a> , and 199 news pieces published/re-published on mainstream media.

	public awareness on Thailand's environmental footprints in neighbouring countries.		the whole project). At least 15 news and reports carried by mainstream media (newspapers, television) in Thailand and its neighboring countries.	
1	Thai journalists to cover more on Thailand-related transboundary development projects. News and investigative report for Thai media that raise public awareness on Thailand's environmental footprints in neighbouring countries.	1.2	If applicable, response from companies or state agencies to the issues covered by media resulted from the project.	<p>The most outstanding example is the response from Thai Prime Minister regarding the Upper Mekong Navigation Channel Improvement Project (Mekong Rapids Blasting) that Thai cabinet issued a resolution allowing a survey and design by Chinese company. We worked to cover the story and coordinated with journalist colleagues working in Thailand's top newspaper, to raise critical questions to the PM. The PM then spoke about transboundary impacts on the Mekong River development (dams and navigation) for the first time. The Chinese CCCC Consultant company also came to visit local civil society group /Chiang Khong Conservation Group' to explain the project.</p> <p>On Dawei Special Economic Zone, as we cover the issues of Thai investment in Myanmar, Thai National Human Rights Commission also investigate the complaint filed by local communities and conducts hearings/consultations from companies and relevant state agencies.</p>
1	Thai journalists to cover more on Thailand-related transboundary development projects. News and investigative report for Thai media that raise public awareness on Thailand's environmental footprints in neighbouring countries.	1.3	At least 24 news reports that will be produced by www.transbordernews.in.th for each year of the project (24 pieces for 2 years).	During the project period (March 2016-October 2017), we produce 540 news pieces published on www.transbordernews.in.th, 403 translated news pieces published on www.transbordernews.in.th.

Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

**Please see some of our selected news reports and activities on the appendix.**

## Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building.

Consider lessons that would inform:

- Project Design Process (*aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

**Different political setting in each Mekong country make us worked carefully. Our news sources are very crucial for credibility of our works. Our works in Thailand and neighboring countries requires careful preparation and flexibility. Here is a few lessons we learned.**

**[1] Organizing media trip to neighboring countries, we need trusted sources who can provide us analysis and knowledge for our plan.**

**[2] Journalist participants also need to understand the issues and prepared for situations in the field where freedom of expression might not be guaranteed.**

**[3] Making news reports in these transboundary issues, we need to be precise and stick to the truth. This will protect ourselves from possible lawsuit from companies, as the anti-SLAPP ( strategic lawsuit against public participation) is still not exist in Thailand.**

## Sustainability / Replication

Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

**Investigative report and journalism for marginalized social and environmental issues are needed but very challenging in the Mekong/Indo-china region. The works we have done, particularly creating news basket on our website is our success.**

## Safeguards

If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social, environmental, or pest management safeguards

Not relevant

## Additional Comments/Recommendations

Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF

## Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of CEPF investment

**Total additional funding (US\$)**

*\$18,400.00*

### **Type of funding**

*Please provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source, categorizing each contribution into one of the following categories:*

- A Project Co-Financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B Grantee and Partner Leveraging (other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project)*
- C Regional/Portfolio Leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)*

### **In-kind contribution:**

**Consultant 4,000\*2 years = 8,000**

**Office rent 4,200\*2 years = 8,400**

**Travel cost for training participants = approx 2,000**

**Total 18,400 USD**

## Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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1. Please include your full contact details (Name, Organization, Mailing address, Telephone number, E-mail address) below

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