

QUICK NEWS

Pact to promote sustainable community-forest management

Boonchob Suthamanuswong, director-general of the Royal Forest Department (RFD), and Tint Lwin Thuang, executive director of Myanmar's Centre for People and Forests, recently signed a memorandum of understanding in a move to promote sustainable community-based forest management and development.

It will also strengthen the capacity of community-forestry stakeholders and support organisations in Thailand.

The scope of cooperation under the agreement will include exchange of information and knowledge, exchange visits for technical officers and experts, and capacity-building of various stakeholders in community forestry development and management.

Boonchob underscored the importance of the agreement by saying, "This is a crucial partnership for the RFD because we know that the RECOFTC [the Centre for People and Forests], being a premier training centre for community-based forest management, can help enhance the department's efforts for a more inclusive and participatory forest management approach."

In past years, the RFD and the RECOFTC collaborated in national and international events focusing on climate-change mitigation and adaptation by working closely in projects such as the Asean Social Forestry Network, the CF Champions Network, and the "Second Regional Forum for People and Forests".

Both agencies had also been very active in technical capacity-building, and in the organising of community-forest networks in Thailand, with more than 1,000 members.

Recently, through the joint efforts of the two bodies, the "Bamboo Forum" was a big success. The forum was held in Bangkok with the objective of compiling bamboo management practices; developing capacities and opportunities in Thailand; and exchanging knowledge based on sustainable bamboo management in local communities.

It was well attended by government, non-government and community representatives.

Sharing Boonchob's point of view, Thuang said: "This is a momentous event for the RECOFTC. We've been a long-time partner of the RFD, but this is the first time we have formalised our partnership. This will definitely boost our Thailand community-forestry development and management strategy."

The RECOFTC was the first regional organisation to be established under Thai law and has worked for more than 25 years in the Asia-Pacific to develop the capacities of various government, non-government and people's organisations in community-forestry development and management.

Its mission is to see more communities actively managing more forests in the Asia-Pacific in order to ensure optimal social, economic and environmental benefits.

Since its founding in 1987, the RECOFTC has trained more than 25,000 people from over 30 countries in devolved forest management, from national policy-makers, researchers and practitioners, right through to local forest users.

Training services and learning events are complemented by on-the-ground projects, critical issue analysis, and strategic communications.