



# NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

## FOREST LOSS MONITORING PROJECT





## **I. PSC AND PTC 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING**

After the project has been in operation for more than 4 months, it is time to report the results of the project to both project committees. On November 19, 2024, the project organized the 1st meeting of the Project Executive Committee (PSC) and the Project Academic Committee (PTC) for the project to strengthen the monitoring and tracking system to solve the problem of forest encroachment and land degradation in the conflict areas of Thailand.



Initially, to report the progress of the project, including the project implementation plan for the next 5 months before the project ends. In this regard, we have appointed the Project Steering Committee and the Project Technical Committee, which were announced on July 21, 2024. In this meeting, we were honored by Dr. TETRA YANUARIADI, (ITTO project Manager) and Asst. Prof. Dr. Trirat Niamsuwan, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Forestry, to welcome the participants, and Mr. Sampan Mee-Sit gave an opening speech. The key person was Mr. Suchart Kalayawongsa, who honored us by chairing the meeting. There were 33 participants attended the meeting. From the presentation of the project implementation by the project consultant team, we received the following suggestions from the committee:

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PSC AND PTC COMMITTEES**

The Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC) announced that drone flying activities should be careful not to close the border areas because it is a fragile area that may increase conflicts between countries and within Myanmar.

Mr. Sek San, Director of the Community Forest Office, objected that in order to participate in activities in the community forest, the project must submit the permission form to the provincial community forest committee.

Regarding organizing various trainings, especially Tissue Culture, it is appropriate. However, there are some plants species, such as konjac, that have been promoted for planting, but many farmers who plant without legal title deeds can legally harvest the produce, causing those farmers to turn to plant other species. Mr. Samphan Mee-Sit added that currently, the government has a project in line with the royal initiative of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn that supports the harvesting of crops in the project area, which can be done without violating the law. The chairman of the meeting, Mr. Suchart, assigned relevant agencies to jointly find a conclusion on this matter.



Another plant species that the project proposed can be used to promote farmers. In planting on their land to reduce harvested the products just from the forested area, namely bamboo, from the original species that we planned to promote income generation from bamboo as well. The results of the local handicraft products, Mr. Spol proposed an alternative ways that can increase the value of



bamboo and be more sustainable by Bio-char from bamboo, which is currently in demand in both domestic and global markets because it is a green product that can respond to climate change issues and is effective in agriculture, etc. by mixing with compost or soil improvement (article published in December 2019, Khao Hin Sorn Royal Development Study Center, Land Development Office Zone 2, Department of Land Development) and current information Bio-char is a component in water filter products, Mr. Spol expects that in the future there will be a large market for the Bio-Char product. If we change the project plan according to this, what should we do to submit it to ITTO for approval first?

### Regarding Modified Budget

For the remaining NCAPs budget, we proposed to purchase additional cameras and mobile phones that are efficient in supporting the data sent from the cameras and in implementing the SMART system. The committee agreed with this, but we must request ITTO approval again. Can the budget for the training that we will add Bio-char be adjusted or transferred?

In this regard, the project committees agreed with the results of the activities presented by the team and are happy to support the project in implementing the activities as planned.

I would like to thank Asst. Prof. Dr. Chakrit, Khun Saichon, Nong Piyachanok, and the team for making the meeting go smoothly and we are ready to travel.





## II. FIELD TRIP AT SALAKPHA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

As reported earlier, what our project has done and what it will do, and one of the project's heroes is the use of patrol systems and surveillance and tracking of activities in community forest areas by installing the NCAPs system, which uses a variety of cameras for different purposes. In areas with intensive human activities, such as the project's study area, we have chosen cameras that are effective at concealing themselves well, meaning that there must be no light coming out of the camera. And since we are using them to track people, the installation must be at a high place, with a real-time image signal, and the shooting distance must be clear and long-distance, and can work 24 hours a day. Therefore, each battery must last a long time so that we do not have to climb up to change the battery often because it is risky for the person who climbs up to install it, and it may also be easy for the general public to see it. Yes! Our camera location must be a secret only within the team.

In addition to the cameras used by the project, camera traps are also used for other different purposes, such as using them to capture wildlife images and for study. And wildlife surveys, etc. On November 20, 2024, the project, led by Dr. TETRA YANUARIADI, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Naris Phumiphaphan, Mr. Suchart Kalayawongsa, Mr. Sapol Boonsermsuk, Asst. Prof. Dr. Chakrit Na Takuatung, Mr. Sitthichai Jinamoy and the three ladies project member, went to observed the related project at Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary (SPWS), Mueang District, Kanchanaburi Province to observe the installation of cameras, tracking systems, and patrol systems.



Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary is considered the only area in Thailand that has developed a full-scale of patrol system. On this occasion, we were honored by the Assistant of Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary, Mr. Sutthichai Pho Phu Khiao, who led the team to provide knowledge to the project team. Starting with an introduction to the history of Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary, if anyone is interested, you can read more on the website of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation. Then, the team from Salak Phra Wildlife Sanctuary, they described the development of the patrol system from started to the present. Briefly, the staff of SPWS attended a training on camera installation and SMART PATROL organized by the Department of National Parks. Once they came back to develop the system until it became the form we have seen today. He also used this system to monitor elephant behavior in this area to reduce conflicts with communities around these sanctuaries, including using camera traps to survey wildlife populations, etc. There is also a SMART Patrol system, but it is not yet complete and is under development processes.



As Thai citizens, we would like to support you and wait to see the results. On the same day, through the coordination of Mr. Sittichai Jinamoy, we had the opportunity to learn about another type of camera installation system from a non-profit organization (NGO) called Panthera Thailand. From this opportunity we have chance to heard about an interesting story from Pantera Thailand' staff, we can summarize that the organization has developed camera traps for support its own projects. If anyone is interested, they can order this item. Talking about the Panthera camera trap system, it is easy to use and not complicated, the data collection is convenient, the installation is also very simple: place it on the ground but the camera is quite camouflaged. The reason it uses this format is probably because most of the organization's projects are carried out in conservation areas, so the risk of being seen is not high. Therefore, placing the camera on the ground is considered interesting. It is easy to install and easy to store. The images from Panthera's camera traps include both which is it capture the wildlife's and intruders who want to use and collect the resources in this area.

However, from this observation, the project committee has a better understanding of how the camera traps and camera installation methods used by the project are consistent with the project's objectives.

P.S. Ms. Sai Chon, the project's accounting, is not only good at finance and cooking. She makes very delicious papaya salad. Ten out of ten.





### III. PRE-SURVEY FOR TISSUE CULTURE AND BIO-CHAR WORKSHOP

Our project has planned many activities, and another important activity is to promote and increase the potential of the community to generate income from forest products in order to reduce dependence harvests on natural resources and become more self-reliant. It also helps to conserve resources and restore nature for a longer period of time. On December 14-16, 2024, the project team led by Dr. Chakkrit Na Takuatung, along with Dr. Phrit Ratcharak and two other team members, plus our excellent field coordinator, Mr. Phon, went to observe the place which expected to organize the Plant Tissue Culture and Bamboo Bio-Char training which will be held in January 2025 at Huai Sing School, Mae Sariang District, Mae Hong Son Province.



During this field visit, the team and lecturers from Huai Sing School discussed on the support of basic scientific equipment and specific equipment necessary for tissue culture it's on the project, which the school has allocated a place to prepare as a tissue culture laboratory. In addition, for the part of making Bamboo Bio-Char, the project, led by Mr. Sopon Bunsermsuk, the project executive committee, has introduced lecturers directly from Lampang Province to provide knowledge to the participants. And now we have ordered a kiln to be installed at Huay Sing School. It seems that we are ready for the training. Are you ready? If you are, wait to follow the next newsletter to see what the results of the operation will be.



### IV. UPDATE THE NCAPS

From the installation of 12 NCAPs cameras in the pilot areas of 3 community forests, including 1 national forest reserve in late October 2024, within a few hours after the installation, the team's phones began receiving images continuously as reported in the second newsletter in October, which is the statistics of the photos after the cameras were set up for 22 days. In this volume, the team will update the results of the camera installation in 2 months. Let's see what new things we have to see.





## V. NEW COMMUNITY FORESTS IN THE PROJECT

From our search for the last community forest in the project in late December 2024, we have a new community forest member, which is Ban Prathu Muang Community Forest, located in Khun Yuam District, Mae Hong Son Province. We must give credit to our field project coordinators who have not given up their efforts in finding a suitable area for the project.

Why we choose Ban Prathu Muang Community Forest? In selecting the pilot area for the project, the characteristics of the area were determined. The most important thing is that it is close to a temporary shelter for displaced people from Myanmar. Another characteristic is that the community forest is large, has resources, and a strong community forest management system. Above all, the community is willing to join our project. Is Ban Prathu Muang suit to conducted the project?

As the new community forest in the project, our field coordinator, Mr. Phon, has a hard job as a lecturer, coordinator, and team member to install the 3 cameras in this community forest. We must give applause to Mr. Phon for sharing his knowledge at every step without fail. Along with coordinating with our consulting team, Mr. Sittichai Jinamoy, and community forest members who are quite active and ready to accept new things all the time, making the camera installation results go well.

## HIGHLIGHT

In early December 2024, Professor Yongyut Traisurat, the project consultant, attended an international conference in Japan and shared the results of our project with the world community. We hope that the funders will see the determination of all the team members. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Professor Yongyut Traisurat.



**STAY TUNED! FOR THE NEXT VOLUME**



### MORE INFORMATION

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