



Teak Mekong Newsletter

June 2019 - Volume 1(1)

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TEAK Mekong Newsletter support and facilitates teak networking in the Mekong sub-region through ITTO member countries and partners, and support sharing lessons of the project results through short news release, occasional papers, project related teak-based research and development information. The bi-monthly newsletter is released online through TEAKNET webpage www.teaknet.org and co-hosted by Kasetsart University, Thailand.

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Welcome to the first edition of the online Teak Mekong Newsletter !

Signing Ceremony of the Teak Project during the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) meeting at its 54th Session in Yokohama, Japan on 6 November 2018

International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) launches project on sustainable teak management in Greater Mekong Sub-region entitled *"Enhancing Conservation and Sustainable Management of Teak Forests and Legal and Sustainable Wood Supply Chains in the Greater Mekong Sub-region"*.

The Federal Republic of Germany through the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) financed the first stage of activity in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) covering 5 countries, namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. The signing ceremony of the agreement between ITTO and the Government of Germany for the commitment of funds to the teak project was held during the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) meeting at its 54th Session in Yokohama, Japan on 6 November 2018.



Matthias Schwoerer, Germany, and Gerhard Dieterle, Executive Director, ITTO, launching the project



Federal Ministry
of Food
and Agriculture



ITTO Teak Project launching Report

Day 1: 23 April 2019

ITTO teak project “Enhancing the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Teak Forests and Legal and Sustainable Wood Supply Chains in the Greater Mekong Sub-region” officially launched at Bangkok, Thailand during 23-25 April 2019

Teak (*Tectona grandis* L.f.) is one of the world’s most important and valuable hardwoods because of its outstanding physical and aesthetic qualities. Natural or planted teak forests are found in about 70 tropical countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and teakwood production and processing have enormous potential to contribute to the livelihoods of local communities and the economic development of nations. Given the importance of teak’s prominent position in the global timber market and its potential to contributing to national economic growth and local livelihoods, the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) at its 53rd Session in Peru in 2017 approved an activity entitled “*Enhancing Teak Management*” under ITTO Biennial Work Program for 2018-2019 as a comprehensive global teak support program to improve the management and marketing of both natural and planted teak in all three tropical regions.

Based on the such extended work of ITTO on teak, this project aims to assist governments, local communities and smallholders to enhance natural teak forest management, production and marketing to facilitate the establishment of legal and sustainable wood supply chains while improving local economy and local communities’ livelihood in the Mekong region.

Major objectives of the projects are:

- i) To enhance the conservation, sustainable management and use of teak genetic resources of natural and planted teak forests.
- ii) Deforestation-free, sustainable supply chains from controlled legal sources have been established in teak plantations or agroforestry systems in cooperation with smallholders or local communities.
- iii) To strengthen regional and international collaboration, information management, networking, policy development and outreach on the conservation and sustainable management of natural and planted teak forests.



Dr. Gerhard Dieterle, Executive Director of ITTO and Co-chair of Project Steering Committee delivered Welcome Remarks at the 1st PSC meeting

ITTO is executing the teak project in the GMS region. For implementation of country activities, the following Implementing Agencies has been specified:



Myanmar: Forestry Department/Forest Research Institute (FRI)



Lao PDR: National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI)



Cambodia: Forestry Administration (FA)



Thailand: Royal Forest Department (RFD) and Kasetsart University (KU)



Vietnam: Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences (VAFS)

Project duration and budget

The project duration is for 3 years from March 2019 to February 2022.

The total budget is US\$ 1,236,250 allotted to ITTO and the participating countries.

Project Administration

For effective implementation of the project, ITTO signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kasetsart University, Bangkok and assigned the Faculty of Forestry to serve as the Regional Project Manager (Project Leader) to coordinate implementing the teak project with National Project Coordinators from five participating countries.

A Project Steering Committee or PSC, chaired by the Director General of the Royal Forest Department is established to oversee the implementation of the activities and approve expenditure, while the Project Technical Committee constituted for the purpose supports the work of PSC through a periodic review of the implementation of the activities geared to the achievements of the Activity's objective.

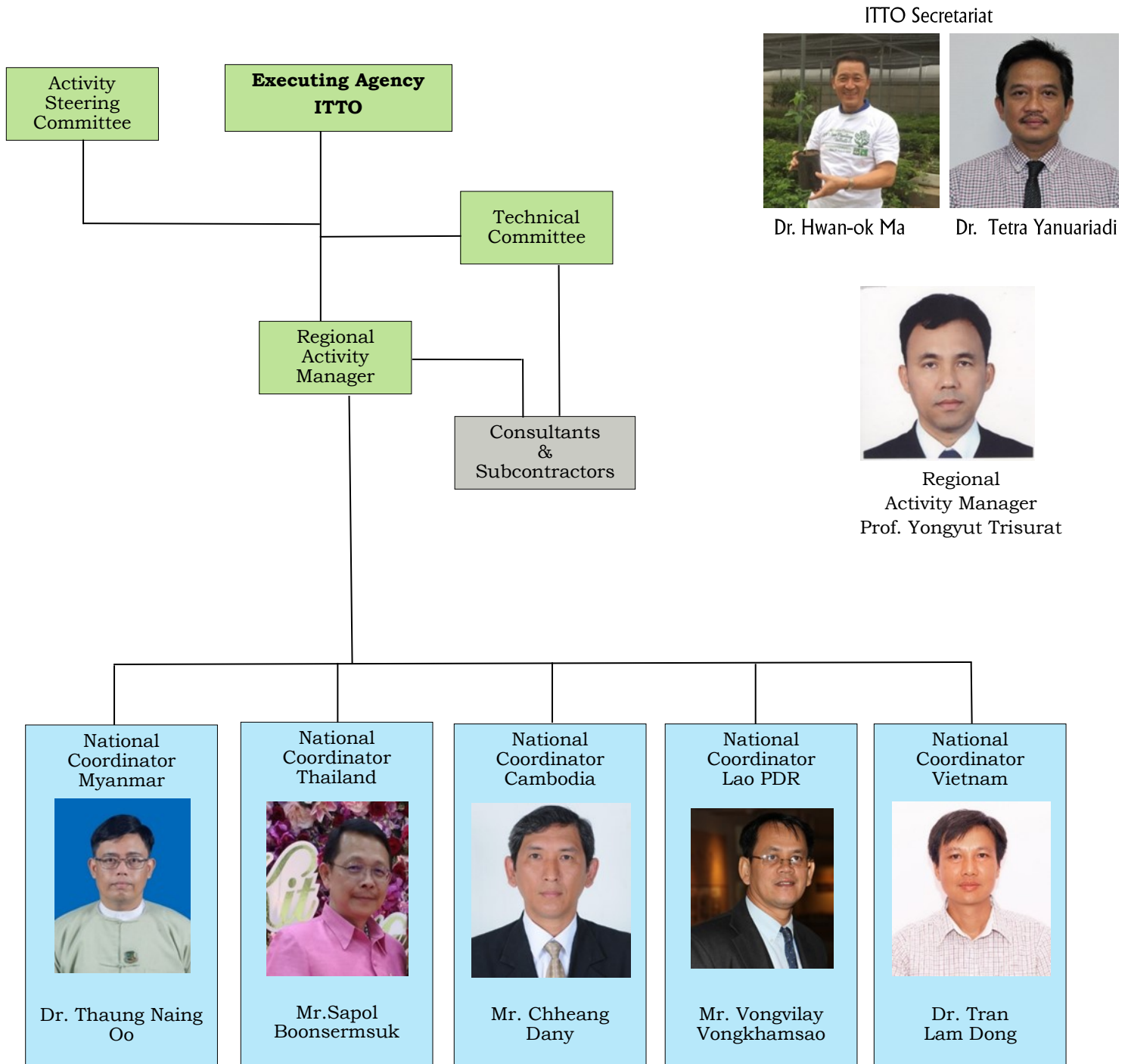


Mr. Athapol Chroenshunsra
Chairman, Project Steering Committee,
Director General of Royal Forest Department,
Thailand



Dr. Suwan Tangmitcharom
Chairman, Project Technical Committee,
Acting Senior Expert on Forest Plantation Extension,
Royal Forest Department, Thailand

Project Management Team



Project Activities

Project activities are implemented both at regional and national levels. Important activities include: establish demonstration plots for sustainable teak management; review and analyse opportunities for improved market accesses of teak wood and teak products from legal and sustainable sources; carry out a teak value chain analysis of smallholders to increase their access to markets; conserve teak genetic variation through improved management of existing seed production areas; seed orchard, and provenance/progeny trials, support and facilitates teak networking in the Mekong sub-region through TEAKNET; and organise workshops and training programs to facilitate policy dialogue, information sharing and knowledge management etc.

Dr. MA Hwan-ok from ITTO Secretariat briefly outlined the overall structure of the project and Prof. Yongyut Trisurat, Regional Project Leader outlined the implementation arrangements made for the project in the 5 participating countries. Dr. Tetra Yanuariadi from ITTO secretariat gave a short presentation of the rules and procedures for reporting the project results and cash flow and financial statements. Followed by this, the project leaders of five participating countries presented the 1st year plan of operation of the project in the respective selected regions in each country. The PSC reviewed the arrangements made and approved the project components with changes suggested by the project partners with the concurrence of ITTO and BMEL. The Project Technical Committee chaired by Dr. Suwan Tangmitcharoen evaluated the work plan presented by each participating country. Dr. Thulasidas from TEAKNET made a short presentation on the planned project activities, regional and international collaboration, networking and information sharing through TEAKNET platform and a bi-monthly short project newsletter to be published online was highlighted. The First Announcement of the 4th World Teak Conference 2020, which will be held in Ghana during 24-27 August was released on the occasion and distributed to the participants. Organization of the World Teak Conference in Ghana in 2020 is also a part of the ITTO teak project and a financial allocation of US\$ 52000 in this respect is envisaged. The PSC also endorsed conduct of the First Regional Teak Workshop in Myanmar in September-October this year and requested Myanmar Forest Department to suggest a suitable date for the purpose.

PSC & PTC Meeting

As part of it, the first Project Steering Committee meeting was held on 23rd April at Bangkok where, Ms. Silke Hertriche, representative from the funding agency, the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) and Mr. Athapol Chroenshunsu, Director General of Royal Forest Department, Thailand; Ms. Cludia, Counsellor for Food and Agriculture, German Embassy in Bangkok and Dr. Gerhard Dieterle, Executive Director of ITTO, Japan attend the meeting among other important dignitaries.



Dr. MA Hwan-ok from ITTO Secretariat



Prof. Yongyut Trisurat, Regional Project Leader

Launching Ceremony

Day 2: 24 April 2019

The ITTO Teak Project in Mekong countries is being jointly implemented by International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) and 5 participating countries. The project is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany through the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture for 3 years from 2019-2022. This project aims at assisting governments, local communities and smallholders to enhance natural teak forest management, production and marketing through the establishment of legal and sustainable wood supply chains.

The sustainable management of teak forests and the nurturing of legal and sustainable supply chains can make valuable contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, according to speakers at the launch of an ITTO teak project in Bangkok, Thailand, on 24 April 2019. The Greater Mekong Sub-region is the origin of the world's teak genetic resources, and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand have important natural teak forests.

Speaking at the project launch, *“Enhancing the conservation and sustainable management of teak forests and legal and sustainable wood supply chains in the Greater Mekong Sub-region”*, Mr. Athapol Charoenshunsu, Director General of Thailand's Royal Forest Department, said the Royal Thai Government had recently amended six forest-related laws to enhance local people's participation in the co-management of forest resources to meet their needs and well being and to assist in achieving the national target of maintaining at least 55% of the country's land area as forest. Mr Charoenshunsu said that, under the 2019 Forest Plantation Act, trees including teak planted on private property and in permitted areas would no longer be listed as protected but would rather be regarded as “economic species”, thus permitting tree owners to harvest them. “The ITTO teak project is highly relevant to the Greater Mekong Sub-region and has started at the right time to support the National Policy on Green Growth Economy towards the expansion of production forests in Thailand,” said Mr Charoenshunsu.

ITTO Executive Director Dr Gerhard Dieterle thanked the Government of Germany and its Ministry of Food and Agriculture, as well as the governments and institutions in the five participating Mekong countries, for their commitment to the establishment of legal and sustainable wood supply chains in the Greater Mekong Sub-region through ITTO. The aim of ITTO's Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains Programme, he said, is to assist tropical countries in pursuing enabling policy, institutional and financial conditions and incentives in a coherent and forward-looking way. Dr Dieterle said the teak project would give practical effect to the recommendations of the Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was published in October 2018. “Sustainably produced wood has a demonstrated capacity to assist in the transition towards a circular bioeconomy, from the tree in the forest to the shelves of finished products in the market,” said Dr Dieterle.



Launching Ceremony : Photo left to right: Dr. Ladawan Puangchit Vice President of Kasetsart University; Prof. Dr. Sanit Aksornkae, Senator-Thailand; Mr. Athapol Charoenshunsu, Director General of the Royal Forest Department; Mr. Jan Scheer, Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Economic Section, German Embassy to Thailand; Dr. Gerhard Dieterle, Executive Director of ITTO

(Photo by : Kasetsart University)

Mr. Jan Scheer, Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Economic Section, German Embassy to Thailand, said that, over the years, the highly valuable teak forest resource had declined both in quality and extent and may further decline unless urgent steps are taken. He recalled the long life of teakwood furniture products and stressed the importance of promoting the economic development and climate-change benefits of sustainable teak management. Mr. Scheer said the ITTO teak project would play an important role in the region, and he called for ambitious action, an inclusive approach and greater regional cooperation to ensure project success and to increase the benefits accruing to local communities and smallholders.

Ms. Silke Hertrich, German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, said the key to success was regional cooperation and good communication. There was clear political will in Germany to support efforts towards SFM, she said. The project would contribute to the sustainable use of a valuable resource through legal supply chains as well as to climate-change mitigation and the conservation of genetic resources. Ms. Hertrich said she looked forward to close regional collaboration in implementing the project in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

Dr Ludawan Puagchit, Vice President of Kasetsart University, said she appreciated the opportunity for her university to join the ITTO teak project. The involvement of academic institutions in government programmes of this nature would not only help improve the quality of implementation, she said, but also provide new opportunities for staff to take part in research and development activities of international importance.



Left: Mr. Jan Scheer, Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Economic Section, German Embassy to Thailand



Keynote address by Prof. Sanit Aksornkoae, Senator of Thailand's National Assembly

Prof. Sanit Aksornkoae, Senator of Thailand's National Assembly, said the economic, social and conservation values of sustainable forest management (SFM) are huge, and integrated SFM plans are essential for Thailand's economic development. He thanked ITTO for its long partnership with Thailand and other countries in the Greater Mekong Sub-region to increase capacity in SFM. The Thai Government, he said, had enacted a number of forest and land-related laws in recent years to enable farmers to promote teak farming in their homesteads and harvest for better economic benefits. "We need to promote sustainably produced wood products both for local consumption and for export for increased economic and social welfare and also for enhanced environmental contributions towards global climate-change action," said Senator Aksornkoae.



Keynote address by Dr Suwan Tangmitcharoen, RFD, Thailand

Dr Suwan Tangmitcharoen, from Thailand's Royal Forest Department, said more research and development, partnerships and networking for the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of teak genetic resources was essential for ensuring the sustainable management of teak forests in the sub-region.

The Project's Steering Committee held its first meeting on 23 April. It will host a regional capacity-building workshop on the sustainable management of teak forests in September 2019 in Myanmar. TEAKNET-India joined the project team and enjoys the role of information management and networking, and support the dissemination of the outreach material and short project newsletters every two months and publish it online.

Photo Gallery



Delegates of the Launching Ceremony



1st Meeting of Project Steering Committee and Project Technical Committee on 23 April 2019 @ Chaophaya Park Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

Field Trip to Lampang Province

Day 3: 25 April 2019

After the Launching Ceremony, the delegates departed to Chiang Mai in the afternoon. Field excursion was conducted on 25 April 2019. The first stop was Thung Kwian Teak Plantation being managed by the Forestry Industry Organization of Thailand. Ms. Pornpen Warawilawan, Managing Director of FIO introduced missions and responsibilities of FIO, while Chief of Thung Kwian Teak Plantation presented activities of the station. FIO was established in 1947 under the Royal Forest Department and it was separated from the RFD as an independent agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in 1956 and under the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Currently, there are 245 forest plantations under the FIO covering approximately 190,000 ha across the country. Dominant planted species include teak, eucalyptus, and rubber. FIO aims to be the leader of sustainable economic forest plantations to support the wood industry by 2023. The general guidelines to achieve this mission was developed since 2016 and used by all FIO forest plantations. At present, 32 plantation stations (including Thung Kwian Teak Plantation) are FSC certified, and few obtained FIO standard.



Ms. Pornpen Warawilawan, Managing Director of Forestry Industry Organization (FIO) introduced the responsibilities and activities of the FIO, in particular Thung Kwian Teak Forest Plantation

Thung Kwian Teak Plantation is recognized as one of the best plantation stations under the FIO. It covers approximately 16,000 rai or 2,560 ha. Teak is a dominant planted species. The rotation period of planted teak is 50 years but thinning is practiced when it is 6-10 years old and 20-30 years, respectively. The average annual growth rate of teak is 0.4 m³/year, which is below average than experiment plots planted with good quality seeds.



Teak log yard at Thung Kwian Teak Plantation in Lampang Province managed by the Forestry Industry Organization of Thailand

The second stop was Northern Seed Center under the RFD. The main responsibilities of this center are to conduct experiments for seed production and provide good quality seeds to selected stations. At this center, Ms. Chumnun Piananurak who was the former Chief of the Center and now the National Consultant introduced the various activities including the propagation by tissue culture methods, new breeds and ordinary seeds. Subsequently, the delegates visited the Ngao Silviculture Station. Ms. Chumnun Piananurak and Dr. Suwan Tangmitcharoen demonstrated the various breeding techniques, and criteria for selection of teak mother trees in Thailand.



Ms. Chumnun Piananurak, National Consultant, explained teak seedling production at the Northern Seed Center, Lampang Province
Photo by: Dr. Tran Lam Dong, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences



Ms. Chumnun Piananurak and Dr. Suwan Tangmitcharoen presented various breeding technique, and criteria for selection of teak mother trees in Thailand



A female worker at Thung Kwian Teak Plantations trained Dr. Tetra Yanuariadi (ITTO Secretariat) to stamp teak log
Photo by: Dr. Tran Lam Dong, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences



Ms. Silke Hertrich, the representative from German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, posed with teak seedling at Northern Seed Center, Lampang Province, Thailand
Photo by: Dr. Tran Lam Dong, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences



← Mr. Suchat Kalyawongsa, Director of Forest Research and Development Office of the Royal Forest Department and Administrative Officials welcomes delegates at Northern Seed Center in Lampang Province, Thailand
Photo by: Dr. Tran Lam Dong, Vietnamese Academy of Forest Sciences

→ Field Excursion at Thung Kwian Teak Plantations in Lampang Province managed by the Forestry Industry Organization of Thailand
25 April 2019 at Lampang Province, Thailand



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ITTO Teak Mekong Newsletter is a bi-monthly electronic newsletter of the Project Team which is intended for circulation among the stakeholders of global teak sector. The views expressed in the newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization. The readers are welcome to express their opinions or pass on information concerned with teak. However, we reserves the information on the project and publishing through this newsletter for our esteemed readers.

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